

THE GOVERNING BODY OF FAIRFIELD SCHOOL

RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Resources Committee held at 1.30 pm at the School on Monday, 13 February 2017.

PRESENT

Mr G Denison (Chair), Ms D Johns, Mr T Pruchniewicz, Mr M Nield, Mr J Page (Acting Head Teacher).

In Attendance

Mr I Macdonald (Minute Clerk)
Ms R Thackray (Business Manager, Ravenshall School)
Mr S Walsh (School Business Manager)
Mrs J Tate (NLE)

46. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

47. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 OCTOBER 2016

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2016 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

a) Minute 39 - Budget

To be amended from "A: Yes. They are not paid directly" to "No"

b) Minute 39 - Budget

To be amended from "Q: Why have we only paid three months insurance to date" to "Why have we only received three months insurance to date".

c) Minute 39 – Budget

To be amended from "This would be offset by insurance for absence due to sickness" to "This would be partly offset by the budget".

d) Minute 40 – Staffing

To be amended from "Seven ETAs were on contracts which would end at Christmas" to "Seven ETAs were on contracts that would end at Spring Bank".

48. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

49. BUDGET

Mr Walsh provided Governors with a written summary of the budget position, the current accounts as supplied by the LA, and talked to the written summary covering:

a) Financial Position

Governors noted that the projected deficit had increased to £532,616 from the last reported figure of £437,000.

Mr Walsh said that all the income and costs that were expected are in the figures, but there may be some unexpected items.

b) **DELETION – See Minute 55.**

c) Top up Funding

Governors noted the reduction in funding caused by more children leaving the School than joining.

QUESTION: Governors asked if the School was satisfied that pupils joining the School were on the correct funding banding, and if they were not, does that mean that the School is in effect funding some pupils from the existing budget?

ANSWER: Mr Page said that there are discrepancies on the levels of funding to be and being received. Due to the time taken for assessments there will always be some uncertainty.

Mrs Tate said that this was not a problem unique to the School, other schools had the same problem and discussions.

Governors commented that there does seem to be a lot of time taken up trying to get the right funding for individual children.

QUESTION: In noting that pupils seem to come to the School with lower banding than is actually needed, Governors asked if the School could say it would not take a child without the right amount of funding being in place?

ANSWER: Mrs Tate said that it would be difficult to do as the School would not know what the right banding would be until the pupil has been in the School. This is a continuing problem, but it has to be said that some bandings do go up, but are not necessarily backdated to when the pupil joined the School.

Governors commented that funding should be backdated.

QUESTION: Governors asked how many pupils were currently on roll?

ANSWER: Mr Page said it was 125, but again it is difficult to be exact due to the number of pupils who are on assessment.

Mrs Tate said that there will come a time when, due to the School's budget, confirmation of income coming with a child will be needed before the child can be accepted into the School.

d) **DELETION – See Minute 55.**

e) The Way Forward with a Deficit Budget

QUESTION: In noting with concern that the deficit was over £500,000, Governors asked how the School could move forward with such a burden?

ANSWER: Mrs Tate said that discussions on a way forward had been taking place. The same question has been asked of the LA, but no solutions have come forward. It is not clear how the School can move forward with that burden which is mainly an historical financial position.

Mrs Thackray said that when the budget is set for 2017-18 at a meeting with the LA later in March, it is hoped that a balanced budget can be set with the measures on staffing costs already discussed.

Mrs Tate said it was clear that a good job was being done in the School from the Ofsted Report.

Governors commented:

- That the budget for 2017-18 is likely to be very tight.
- That the LA need to look to write off the current deficit to give the School a good chance to move forward and to further improve the provision for the pupils, as the School would be most unlikely to be able to clear the deficit.
- That the School is doing a good job as highlighted by Ofsted.
- That it could prove very difficult to appoint a Head Teacher with the budget deficit hanging over the School.

ACTION POINT: Mrs Tate to contact David Gearing to discuss a way forward.

f) School Fund

Mr Walsh provided Governors with an Audit Certificate for the School Fund.

RESOLVED: That the Audit Certificate be received.

QUESTION: Governors asked what the balance shown could be used for?

ANSWER: Mr Walsh said that the funds had been transferred to the main school account to cover agreed costs.

g) Benchmarking

Mr Walsh provided Governors with a Benchmarking Report.

Governors noted the position of the School with respect to other schools that reflected earlier discussions.

50. **DELETION – See Minute 55.**

51. PREMISES

QUESTION: Mrs Tate said that she had attended a meeting where the old problem around land transfer to the Trust had been discussed and it was said that there would be legal fees to be covered, and asked if it was known who was responsible for the legal fees?

ANSWER: Mrs Thackray said that these costs were down to the School as it was lawyers for the School who needed to be paid. £1,500 has been paid so far, there is no indication of the full costs, but there is a cost line in the budget.

ACTION POINT: Mr Page to chase up to establish the current situation and costs.

52. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr Walsh said that he had started to look at Health and Safety had had done some work around the Evacuation Plan.

Discussion took place on the reporting around Health and Safety to Governors.

Mrs Tate said that the School Leaders understand the need for Health and Safety and what needs to be done. There are regular briefings for staff around everyday practice.

ACTION POINT: Mr Walsh to keep Health and Safety at the top of the agenda in School, with minutes or notes taken at staff briefings.

53. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No items were raised under any other business.


54. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND POSSIBLE AGENDA ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the Committee shall meet at 5pm at the School on 2 May 2017, immediately prior to the FGB, to be able to make a recommendation to the FGB on the Budget for 2017-18.

55. AGENDA, MINUTES AND RELATED PAPERS – SCHOOL COPY

RESOLVED: That Minutes 49 (b), 49 (d) and 50 be excluded from the copy to be made available at the School in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

The Chair closed the meeting at 3.20pm.


Chair
Date 2/5/17