

BOSTON COLLEGE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 16 JUNE 2015

1. **PRESENT**

Mr P Crolepy (Chair), Mr M Gallagher, Mrs A Mosek and Mr G Tawton

Also in attendance, Mrs J Hemmant (Clerk to the Corporation), Mrs F Grady (Vice Principal: Curriculum & Quality), Mrs D Holland (College Accountant) and Mr K Tharby (Director of Workforce Development)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr S McCracken and Mr P Scarlett

Attendance: 67%

Peter Crolepy chaired the meeting in Steve McCracken's absence.

2. **ACTION LOG**

Peter Crolepy brought Members' attention to the Action Log from the 20 April 2015 meeting. There were no Matters arising.

3. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 APRIL 2015**

Members received the Minutes from the meeting held on 20 April and agreed they were an accurate record.

An additional informal meeting had been held on 18 May which enabled Members to review the proposed budget for the forthcoming academic year. No Minutes were taken at that meeting.

4. **FINANCE**

Members received a Finance report from the Vice Principal: Corporate Services.

Janet Hemmant brought Members' attention to the draft budget and cashflow for 2015-16 and asked that they be approved. They would then be presented to the Board at their 8 July meeting. Discussed and noted that some adjustments will still need to be made to the 2014/15 forecast e.g. Apprenticeship growth 'in-year' which will not be approved until after the mini-budget has taken place on 8 July.

Members agreed that the additional meeting held on 18 May was a useful session and gave them the opportunity to seek and gain clarification of specific budgetary heads.

Janet commented that the 2015/16 budget was extremely tight and did not leave much room to accommodate changes.

Following discussion it was agreed the draft budget be presented with the financial plan to the Board on 8 July.

Cuts to funding will be affecting the College in a number of ways however it was pleasing to note that no staff redundancies have had to be made to date, unlike a number of other sector colleges. The College will be conducting a fundamental systems analysis, as agreed earlier, at the beginning of the new academic year to ensure fitness to face challenging finances in the future.

A lengthy discussion took place on the decisions made by Lincolnshire County Council regarding the funding of LDD learners. Out of 7 applications submitted by the College 6 were turned down and 1 was agreed but with unsuitable arrangements. This would equate to a loss of funding of around £100K for the College. LCC had made the decisions despite the College showing that in their opinion the learners were anticipated to make educational progress. Amanda said this was all very disappointing and she anticipated local MPs receiving correspondence from affected parents. The issue is also being taken to national level. Matt Warman, MP for Boston & Skegness had visited the College on 12 June and Amanda said she had also discussed this matter with him and he would be taking this up with LCC himself.

Janet then referred Members to the April accounts and gave a brief overview of their content and addressed a number of queries from Members. An error was noted on pages 15-21 relating to the Profit & Loss Account which should read 2014-15 not 2015-16.

A discussion took place on catering generally which included food sales which have been down, possibly due to a change in the bursary system, the FEAST contract coming to an end and the Cashless Catering system which will be installed and ready for use from September. Janet explained how the cashless system will operate on a biometric recognition application and is less likely to be abused than the current token system.

Janet reported that the debtors are being reduced and specific debtors were discussed in more detail. Regarding one court judgement being challenged, Peter advised that there is a situation of 'locus standi' i.e. Where a person does not have standing to sue, the person does not have a right to be heard by the Court in the legal proceedings and Janet was asked to follow this up.

Members accepted the April set of accounts.

5. **HUMAN RESOURCES**

Members received a Human Resources report from the Director of Workforce Development.

Keith Tharby drew Members' attention to the report and various appendices contained therein and gave an overview of their content.

A discussion took place regarding the amount of sickness absence, particularly with regard to two categories, namely hospital admission/operations and accidents, which were significantly higher than AoC data. Keith explained that these figures were down to unfortunate circumstances but were not related to anything happening on campus. Boston College is at the lower end of absence for colleges of its size re the AoC report on the range of days lost per employee. Amanda commented that it would be interesting to see the actual costs to the College for each of these absences, which must be significant.

Keith then went on to explain the new sick pay rules that have been implemented and how it is likely that the amount of days lost could be reduced. Robust monitoring has

taken place and there has been a downward trend in long term sickness absences which are been more actively managed.

Discussion then centred on recruitment and Keith said that HR are encouraging applications from ethnic minorities, however this has not translated into actual appointments at present.

Keith sought clarification on whether he should provide staff utilisation data within his report and after discussion it was agreed that he should provide this at every Finance and Resources Committee that he attends. ●

6. **PROPERTY**

Members received a brief verbal update from the Vice Principal: Corporate Services. Although this meeting did not have a property emphasis it was agreed that an update would be useful and discussions took place on the following issues:

a) De Montfort Campus

It is anticipated that the planning application will go through in July. Background to the Sport England objection was given and Janet explained how the College had provided supporting information to the planning authority about the application.

b) Skegness

Little progress has been made in negotiations with the landlord. However the letting agent had made recent contact with the College advising that someone is interested in a sub-tenancy. It was agreed that this could be an alternative consideration.

c) FEAST Centre

The schools meals training facility at St Nicholas' school is due to cease at the end of the summer term. Some on-going negotiations are taking place particularly regarding the TUPE issue.

7. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Janet Hemmant confirmed that the arrangements for Debbie Holland to act as College Accountant had been renewed for a further 12 months.