



MILLTHORPE SCHOOL

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING

Held on Wednesday 28th November 2012 at 6pm

Present: Mr Tim Hooper (Chair) Mrs Penny McIntyre
Mr Bill Schofield Mr Mark Glover
Mrs Eileen Robertson

In Attendance: Miss Amy White (Clerk)
Mr Alex Collins (School Business Manager)
Mrs Sheila Sweeting (Bursar)

		Action
1	Apologies for Absence & Declarations of Interests The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Trevor Burton (Headteacher), Bob Sydes, Matthew Burton, Steve Boorman and Richard Bridge. There were no declarations of interest.	
2	Election of Committee Chair Tim Hooper was unanimously elected as Chair of the Committee Proposed: Eileen Robertson Seconded: Penny McIntyre	
3	Review of Committee Terms of Reference <i>Previously distributed.</i> Governors reviewed the terms of reference and noted that the committee was in the process of recruiting one more member. Governors discussed that they monitored the appointment of staff but the primary responsibility was with the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher. Governors approved the terms of reference.	
4	Minutes of the previous meeting held on 1st May 2012 The minutes had been circulated prior to the meeting; they were agreed as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.	
5	Matters Arising Alex Collins, School Business Manager (SBM) reported that the conditions survey was a responsibility of the School and Community Committee. There were no further matters arising not covered by the agenda. <u>Action points</u> All action points had been completed.	

6 Review of Period 6 Monitoring Report

Governors received the period 6 monitoring report which had been previously distributed. The Bursar presented the report and highlighted the following:-

- The budget reflected 50% of the financial year
- Building and Maintenance costs (E12) had a variance of (£14,354) as a result of premises work completed over the summer holidays
- There had been investment in new computers and refurbishment which produced an estimated outturn of £116,992, a variance of (£15,492)

Governors considered the impact on the budget with reference to the proposal to appoint a new member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The Bursar noted that this was not considered in the current budget but would be considered for 2013-14.

Governors had a rigorous discussion about the appointment of an additional member of the SLT and the impact this would have on the budget.

The Chair expressed that governors needed to be aware of the proposal and explained that the school had a light management for a school of its size. The Chair reported that should the school lose a member of staff then the SLT would be significantly understaffed during recruitment. If an additional member of the SLT was appointed then there would be a significant impact on the budget as the commitment would result in continued cost over the years. The Chair acknowledged that the impact on the budget would be minimised if pupil numbers increased but if pupil numbers reduced then it would take five years to recover. Governors discussed that in the longer term the area was perceived to have an approximate 60% increase in pupils and the school would hopefully benefit from this increase.

Considering income the Chair highlighted that the school had a low level of income per pupil. The Bursar reported that the amount per pupil was fixed and additional funding was provided to support pupils with additional needs. The Bursar further explained that funding and intake predictions for 2013-14 could not be made as intake numbers would not be available until January 2013.

The Bursar highlighted that 70 – 80% of the budget was allocated to staffing costs and the budget was reducing while staffing costs were increasing. Following governor questions, the Bursar clarified that the majority of staff were on the higher pay scale and the biggest savings came when a UPS (upper pay scale) teacher left the school and was replaced by a NQT (newly qualified teacher).

The SBM commented that there was balanced risk. If the school did not recruit an additional SLT member it could be detrimental to pupils and attainment and impact on future intake. If a new SLT member was appointed there would be a significant impact on the budget. Governors considered the risks and discussed that the impact on the budget might not be as great a risk as the possible decline of attainment and subsequent Ofsted and intake implications. Governors acknowledged that intake was outside of the school's control but if pupils performed well then it could encourage others to choose the school.

The Chair explained that the school had made a member of the SLT redundant and the consideration of recruitment could raise issues, however, the Headteacher and LA were in agreement that there had been a change in circumstances. Governors agreed that they would like to consider in more detail all justifications and risks including impact on outcome and the budget.

Governors discussed that the school boiler was in need of repair and noted that this would have a significant impact on the budget. The SBM informed governors that the LA had given provisional agreement for a new boiler to be fitted during February half term 2013. The proposal needed to go to cabinet and be signed off and the school would need to maintain the current boiler until that time. Governors asked if the boiler could be fitted before half term and the SMB reported that preparation work would take eight weeks.

The Chair highlighted that the LA, not the school, would enter into the contract for the boiler. Governors agreed that it would be important to monitor the replacement of the boiler during the work. Considering savings, governors acknowledged that the boiler would provide some savings

in the long term and would be under warranty.

7 Revised Budget Report Proposals 2012-13

Governors received the Revised Budget, which had been previously distributed, and noted the deficit Cumulative Carry Forward of (£9,135) (S01).

The Bursar highlighted there had been a sickness contingency of £45,000 (E11) and £40,000 had been moved to cover supply, leaving a £5,000 contingency. Governors noted that there had been higher maternity and sickness cover needed during 2012-13.

The Bursar highlighted the £15,800 increased in budget for Premises and Occupational Costs (S11) due to a large overspend. The SBM reported that not all control measures had been in place for premises but this had been addressed. Governors asked for further information on the control measures and the SBM explained that a lot of premises work had been completed over the summer holidays and the amount of invoices raised had impacted on the budget. It was noted that the work could have been completed over the course of a few months and the cost spread. Governors asked if the Site Manager had delegated authority. The SBM explained that the Site Manager did have some delegated authority as not many people were on site during the school holidays and some work would need to be signed off. Governors noted that work had since been clearly set out and the SBM and Site Manager now hold monthly budget meetings to monitor spending in this area.

Governors discussed cash flow and agreed that it needed to be monitored closely. Following questions, the Bursar explained that invoices had to be paid within 7 to 14 days for smaller businesses and within 30 days for larger companies.

Governors asked if the budget was available at the beginning of the year. The Bursar explained that the budget was paid to the school on a monthly basis by the LA (although capital is usually paid in a single lump sum). Governors were informed that the LA deduct money at source for services they have provided, and if this coincides with a number of invoices requiring payment, there is a risk that the theoretical reconciled balance of the BAFS account could fall low or overdraw. In practice, it is highly likely that, at any given point, a number of cheques will remain unrepresented and therefore a satisfactory balance will be maintained. Governors asked if there was a charge for being overdrawn and the Bursar explained that the bank account is not able to go overdrawn but instead the school can arrange a cash advance from the LA, for which a small percentage charge is payable.

Considering Curriculum IT Hardware (E20), governors noted the increase in budget from £45,000 to £55,852 and were informed that this increase was to cover a new server and new computers. Governors asked if further work was required for ICT and the SBM advised that the new Network Manager would be assessing the network and planning works and cost. Governors acknowledged that there could be increased expenditure for ICT and asked if the school had a business risk register. The SBM advised that the school did not have a risk register but that this would be considered.

Governors discussed options including leasing equipment and buying computer tablets. Governors were advised that some equipment was leased and the network was not capable of supporting tablets. The SBM explained that the network needed to be updated and the school was considering a virtualised desktop to allow staff to use their own devices. The SBM further noted that there were substantial plans for the next six months.

With reference to Exam Fees (E21), governors noted the total increase from £66,500 to £83,678. Governors were informed that this was a result of registering pupils earlier for exams and paying for remarks and moderations. Governors noted there should be a reduction in this budget for 2013-14.

The Bursar highlighted that the school was due additional Pupil Premium funding but was unsure of the amount. Governors noted that the amount of funding per pupil had increased from £600 to £623.

Following governor questions, the SBM explained that Pixl Club brought together good practice on attainment across the country and it had had a significant impact on attainment in local schools.

Pixl provided examples of good practice on areas including curriculum, exam practice, assessment and revision. Governors noted that the LA had previously funded the club and the school had made the decision to buy back in to help with the main drive of Y11 interventions.

Governors unanimously accepted the Revised Budget 2012-13.

8 Schools Financial Value Standards

Governors reviewed the SFVS which had been previously distributed with draft answers and comments. Further to the information within the distributed SFVS, governors highlighted and discussed the following areas:

Section A: The Governing Body and School Staff

6. Does the school have access to an adequate level of financial expertise, including when specialist finance staff are absent, eg on sick leave?

The SBM advised that there was poor contingency in terms of day-to-day financial management as the school relied heavily on the Bursar. In order to address this concern the school was considering the proposal of employing a financial assistant. Governors considered the budget implications and the SBM explained that there was a need for additional financial resource on a part time, two days a week, basis at grade 3. Governors suggested sharing HR costs within the cluster of schools and the SBM acknowledged that this could be a possibility and highlighted that the net affect would be similar.

7. Does the school review its staffing structure regularly?

Governors noted that the support staff structure was on the agenda.

Section B: Setting the Budget

8. Is there a clear and demonstrable link between the school's budgeting and its plan for raising standards and attainment?

Governors noted that this was largely covered through the School Improvement Plan priorities and the school and governors were addressing ways of improving the link. The SBM highlighted that the school needed to demonstrate how it was spending Pupil Premium.

Section C: Value for Money

12. Does the school benchmark its income and expenditure annually against that of similar schools and investigate further where any category appears to be out of line?

The Bursar advised governors that she would be presenting benchmarking at the next Finance and Staffing Committee meeting.

Section D: Protecting Public Money

20. Are all staff aware of the school's whistleblowing policy and to whom they should report concerns?

Governors noted that the school had a generic CYC policy which was covered by trade unions.

Governors were informed that the SFVS did not have to be submitted with all sections answered 'Yes' as long as there was a reasonable plan to move forward and address issues. It was agreed that the SFVS would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee to be reviewed further and approved. Governors noted that the date for submission was 31st March 2013.

Scheme of Delegation to Headteacher

Governors reviewed the Scheme of Delegation which had been previously distributed and the Chair highlighted that the Headteacher had a £50,000 discretionary spend which audit considered high. The SBM explained that 0.5% of the delegated budget was approximately £26,000 and governors considered lowering the discretionary spend to this amount. Governors discussed that expenditure over £26,000 would likely be on ICT and within the awareness of the committee.

Governors agreed to reduce the discretionary spend within the Scheme of Delegation to £25,000 and subject to this amendment the Scheme was approved.

Governors' Authority to Postholders

Governors reviewed the Governors' Authority to Postholders, which had been previously distributed, and highlighted that the SBM was not included.

The following changes were agreed:

- All values of £50,000 would be changed to £25,000 in line with the reduction agreed for the Scheme of Delegation to Headteacher
- Amend “*Ordering office supplies within school budget*” to “*ordering office supplies within allocated school budget*”
- Include the SBM for the ordering of the following: education supplies, domestic supplies, office supplies
- Amend ordering of items in excess of £1,500 to “*Ordering any items between £1,500 and £5,000*” with the SBM having authorisation. Governors agreed to include that any item in excess of £5,000 should be authorised by the Headteacher
- Include the SBM for authorisation of invoice payment

Subject to the above amendments, governors unanimously approved the Governors’ Authority to Postholders.

Statement of Roles and Responsibilities for Financial Management

Governors received the Statement, which had been previously distributed, and it was unanimously adopted.

9 Support Staff structure changes

The SBM reported that the Headteacher had reviewed the support staff resource and considered structure changes to ensure that support staff were working where they would have the greatest impact.

Governors were informed that following the retirement of the full time Exam Data Manager, the school had appointed a Data Manager and Exam Officer. Governors were further informed that the Exam Data Manager role had been split to ensure there was sufficient focus on the different aspects of the role and a bigger impact on attainment. The new posts were full time but on a lower grade.

The SBM reported that a Network Manager had been appointed and that this was a standard role within secondary schools. Governors were informed that the Head of ICT did not have capacity to take on the role.

Considering the impact on the budget, the SBM reported that there had been some budget available for the SLT. This had been used to employ a Data Manager as the role was important and would allow more capacity within the SLT. The Bursar reported that the Network Manager position was in the Start Budget.

Governors discussed the composition of support staff and acknowledged that the school did not have a large support staff. Governors noted that changes had been incorporated into the Revised Budget. With reference to the SBM and Bursar roles, governors discussed that the separate roles allowed for increased focus and use of skills and that weaknesses of segregation and contingency had been addressed. Governors further discussed offering an apprenticeship for an additional finance assistant and noted that it would offer a career path and scope for learning and development.

Governors asked if there was scope to use existing staff to redeploy resources and offer development. The SBM advised that the SLT had considered this option but there was not sufficient capacity within the general office. The Bursar explained that the office workload fluctuated and the staff would not be able to commit to the finance assistant role. Governors expressed that they would like to know more about the role to ensure that all options had been considered, however, they acknowledged that additional support was required.

The SBM agreed to present a business case for the position and governors suggested that the school could consider approaching other schools that might have a part time and experienced assistant.

Further considering the budget, governors noted that the support staff changes mainly reflected educational changes rather than administration changes with the biggest change being for TAs and Student Support Officers (SSO).

10 Audit Report

Governors received the Audit Report which had been previously distributed and noted that Priority 1 (P1) risks were high, P2 medium and P3 low.

Area Reviewed: Bank Account – Priority 3

The Bursar informed governors that there had been some cash flow issues and explained that internet banking would be beneficial. Governors asked if other schools used internet banking and what the risks were. The Bursar advised that other school did use internet banking and that the risk was with transferring money. However, the Bursar explained that she just wanted the opportunity to view the accounts online.

- Governors unanimously approved the use of internet banking.

Governors were informed that the school had been given a procurement card by the LA which allowed them to spend £250 in one transaction and up to £2,000 a month. This allowed the school to order goods on the internet without having to process reimbursements.

Area Reviewed: Insurance – Priority 3

Governors were informed that the school had not asked for public liability insurance certificates from some smaller contractors. This was noted as a housekeeping issue and was being addressed.

Governors asked why groups letting the premises were required to produce their own insurance. The Bursar explained that if the building was being let the group needed to have their own public liability insurance. If the group did not have their own insurance the school could purchase it through the LA and add the cost to the letting charge.

Area Reviewed: HR – Priority 3

Governors noted that the auditors had found an instance where staff absence had been recorded on one form and not on another and this was being addressed.

Area Reviewed: Inventory – Priority 3

Governors were updated that the required inventory information was input into a spreadsheet which would be stored off site.

Area Reviewed: Publication Scheme – Priority 3

Governors received the Publication Scheme which had been previously distributed. The SBM explained that the scheme was a standard document and was the same for every public body.

- Governors unanimously adopted the Publication Scheme.

Area Reviewed: Data Security – Priority 2

The SBM explained that the school had a long term plan to ensure a secure data storage plan with information being stored on a server to minimise risk. Governors acknowledged that this would take time to arrange and enforce and in the interim the school was working on reducing the amount of sensitive data stored on devices. Governors were informed that storage devices and SLT laptops were being encrypted as a priority but that this was a significant undertaking. Governors suggested that there should be communication and awareness raised with all staff to ensure that there was good practice and password protection.

Governors agreed that reasonable steps needed to be taken in the short term.

Area Reviewed: Minibus – Priority 3

The SBM informed governors that audit had recommended weakly vehicle checks of the minibus and the school had compromised at fortnightly checks with pre-drive checks initialed by the driver. The Bursar highlighted only a small number of staff had the correct license to drive the minibus and the cost of training more staff was being researched. Governors expressed that if the minibus had to be hired the school might be less inclined to offer the range of events currently provided and agreed that the cost of training was worth investigating.

Governors expressed that they were satisfied with the audit report and the measures being taken to address issues.

11	<p>School fund</p> <p>The Bursar informed governors that there had been an independent audit of the School Fund on 31st March 2012 and the balances had appeared positive.</p> <p>A copy of the School Fund had been circulated prior to the meeting and was noted by Governors. The balance of the account was as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Balance for School Activities (£769.12) · Balance for Charities & Non-Uniform days £1,138.08 · Balance for Day Trips £4,008.50 · Balance for General Fund £10,146.09 · Balance for residential trips £10,298.78 · Balance for all accounts is £24,822.33 <p>Considering the General Fund, the SBM brought a proposal to governors to spend approximately £950 on the school trampolines. Governors were informed that there were two trampolines within school and one was broken beyond repair. This resulted in timetabled lessons using one trampoline for 25 pupils. Governors noted that the PE department could not cover the expenditure out of capitation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Governors approved the proposed spend out of the General Fund <p>The SBM informed governors that the Friends of Millthorpe had raised money to pay for a sound system in the main hall and this investment had made a significant improvement. Governors were informed that the final bill had been more than the £2,000 raised and the school would be contributing approximately £200. There would be an additional expenditure of approximately £300 for a new cabinet which would replace the computer desk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Governors acknowledged that the sound system enhanced the experience of most pupils and agreed that the additional contribution to the system and money for the cabinet could be taken from the School Fund. <p>Governors discussed the use of the School Fund and suggested that the school council and subject departments could be approached for proposals of up to £1,000. It was noted that Friends of Millthorpe were in a similar position and governors suggested that Friends could benefit from the publicity and governors could match funds through the School Fund.</p>	
12	<p>Policies</p> <p>12.1 Pay Policy Governors noted that the Pay Policy needed further updates and agreed that it would be deferred to the next meeting.</p> <p>12.2 Procurement Policy Previously distributed. The SBM advised that the Procurement Policy was not statutory but it was relevant to the committee. Governors unanimously approved the Procurement Policy.</p> <p>12.3 Examinations Policy Governors noted that there had been some minor changes to the Examination Policy. Appendices had been added and parents would be asked to pay in advance of the re-sit register. Governors unanimously approved the Examination Policy.</p>	
13	<p>Confidentiality</p> <p>There were no items of confidentiality</p>	
14	<p>Dates of future meetings</p> <p>13th February 2013 – sign off the SFVS</p>	

Meeting ended at 8.20pm.

Mr Tim Hooper
Chair of Finance & Staffing Committee

Date Signed

**Action Plan following the Meeting of the Finance Committee Meeting
Held on Wednesday 28th November 2012**

	Action	Agenda	Person	Date

Standing Items:

- School Fund

Items for Future Meetings:

- Benchmarking
- SFVS