

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON TUESDAY 3 DECEMBER 2019 AT 18.30 IN THE BOARDROOM, NEWRY.

PRESENT:

Mrs Teresa Campbell (Chair)
Mr Brian Doran
Mr Tom Redmond
Mr Kieran Swail

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Andrew Saunders, Governing Body Chair
Mr Terry McGonigal, Director of Finance
Ms Joanne McGuigan, Assistant Director of Finance
Miss Lindsay Armstrong, Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting convened at 18.31.

A01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Judith Thompson and Mrs Kimberley Neill McCready.

A02. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The Chair reminded those present to declare at the commencement of the meeting any conflict of interests held in any matter to be discussed. Mr Saunders declared an interest as employee of the Ulster Bank Group.

A03. MINUTES OF MEETING 15 OCTOBER 2019

The Chair referred Members to the minutes of the committee meeting held on 15 October 2019. These were checked for accuracy and unanimously approved on the proposal of Mr Swail and seconded by Mr Redmond.

A04. MATTERS ARISING

Members noted that all matters arising from the previous meeting have been actioned.

A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

Mrs Campbell advised that an amendment is required to the dating of the Committee minutes of 29 May. The correction was sanctioned and the Chair signed the updated minutes as a true copy.

A06. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mr Doran presented the revised Terms of Reference to include specific reference to health and safety monitoring as recommended by Committee Members, and the review of insurance claims history of the College.

The updated Terms of Reference were unanimously adopted on the proposal of Mr Redmond and seconded by Mr Swail.

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A07. SRC MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS (inc Working Capital Report)

Ms McGuigan presented the Management Accounts to the end of October, representing the first quarter of the College's financial year. She advised that jobskills / education contracts are £463k favourable compared to last year's profile and explained that this is due to timing of draw down of money on completion of milestones.

Ms McGuigan advised that HE fees are at £118k adverse against the previous year's profile as a result of drop in enrolment and direct pay costs £121k favourable primarily due to vacant posts. She advised on changes to profiled activity in comparison to last year.

Ms McGuigan provided Members with capital expenditure figures relating to the new builds and an analysis of working capital. Discussion followed on the funding profile and timing of expenditure of equipment for new builds.

Ms McGuigan advised that the analysis of aged debtors, aged creditors and investment summary is consistent with prior years. She informed that prompt payment on receipt of invoice is lower due to staff vacancies, and advised on problems recruiting to finance posts.

Members noted the credit card expenditure summary.

A08. GOVERNING BODY IN YEAR REPORT

Ms McGuigan referred Members to the Governing Body Budget Report and advised that all cost lines were within budget. Members noted that the reporting fluctuates due to the timing of meetings and submission of claims.

A09. DfE FINANCIAL RETURNS

Mr McGonigal advised that resource budget is at 52%, slightly below the straight line profile, and advised on an approved overspend position with DfE.

Members noted that capital spend is well on target and were advised of a budget adjustment of £1.2k.

The following agenda item discussion took place between 20.32 and 20.35.

A10. CHARITABLE STATUS

Mr McGonigal referred Members to the Departmental letters of 26 April and 21 October regarding charitable status. He advised that the Charities Commission and DfC are not in a position to address the issue of FE colleges and charitable status in the medium to long term and that colleges will be in a position to avail of charitable status for at least the next two to three years.

Mr McGonigal advised Members that it was the College's intention to progress VAT reclaim going forward.

A11. DIRECT AWARD CONTRACTS

None to report.

A12. BANK MANDATE

Mr McGonigal referred Members to the approval agreed at the Finance and General Purposes Committee of 15 October regarding awaiting a new member of staff to commence employment within the Finance team.

He advised that the person is now in post and has been added to the bank mandate.

Members noted the information.

A13. COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS REPORT

Members reviewed the Complaints and Compliments report noting that the College has received 22 complaints / comments since the beginning of the academic year and that many of these have been addressed and closed.

Mr McGonigal informed of a slight increase in subject access requests and advised on the status of recommendations arising from the data protection internal audit carried out by Grant Thornton.

Mr McGonigal advised on one new whistleblowing disclosure currently being investigated alleging a misuse of funds and data protection concerns.

Members noted the excellent completion rate for staff undertaking mandatory GDPR training.

A14. POLICY REVIEW

- **Whistleblowing policy**

Mr McGonigal referred Members to minor amendments to the Whistleblowing policy to include disclosure to DfE, and informed of the new Departmental unit, Fraud and Raising Concerns.

Mr Redmond remarked on a good document setting out a validity of concerns.

A15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Swail advised the Committee on work he is undertaking on innovation as part of his post graduate diploma.

A16. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 3 March 2020 at 18.30 in the Boardroom, Newry Campus.

The meeting concluded at 19.09.

Teresa Campbell
CHAIR

3 March 2020
DATE