



MINUTES of Minutes of Extraordinary FGB to approve the 2020/2021 School Budget held via video conference on Thursday 17 September 2020 at 7.00 pm

Present:

Simon Bamford (SB)
Geoff Braham (GB)
Will Bromage (WB)
Alan Broomhead (AB)
Alan Dunstan (AD)
Vicki Hamilton (VH)
Neil McIntosh (NM)

Sarah Parish (SP)
Lucy Phipps (LP)
Jan Seal-Roberts (JSR) – Chair
Annie Temple (AT)
Clive Watts (CW)
Graham Webber (GW)

Apologies:

Linda Burton (LB)
Ken Coveney (KC)
Jesse Cleverly (JC)*
Jean-Francois Fava-Verde (JF)

In attendance:

Dawn Challis (DC) – School Business Manager

Minutes taken by Clive Watts

Governor challenge is shown in red

- Jan opened the meeting stating the sole purpose of the session was to review the proposed budget and approve if agreed. She then handed the meeting over to Alan Broomhead to provide a background and overview to the proposed budget.
- Alan outlined the phased approach taken by the finance committee in reviewing and discussing the first-pass budget created by Dawn and Simon. He gave a summary of the assumptions that had been used to build the budget and ran through a couple of measures that had been taken to remove the in-year deficits in the early years of the budget.
- Alan explained that since the initial budgeting process, government funding from 21/22 onwards had been increased which had made a positive difference to the budget. He also mentioned that Dawn had added Covid-related costs into the budget (extra cleaning, wipes and hand gel) to reflect the realities we will face.

Signed

Date

- By the final iteration it had become clear that the in-year deficit for year 19/20 had been substantially reduced down to approx. £9k, and that the school is now showing a healthy surplus for the next three years. Years 4 & 5 are a concern because there is no indication from government regarding what happens after the current pension and teachers' pay subsidies stop.

Jan asked Alan "what do you think a decent reserve would be"

- Alan pointed out that the current surplus is in line with that expected for an academy like Langtree to maintain (i.e. 2 months' salary for the entire school as a minimum). He also pointed out that there were still several unknowns as the exact numbers relating to the teachers' pay awards for 20/21 are unknown, and the admin staff pay award for 19/20 is still not finalised and will need to be back-dated to March.
- However, he stated that it was felt, with a surplus that was forecast as growing year on year, we should also be looking to do some capital investment and that Dawn had identified the urgent issue of the water pipes as a priority project.
- Dawn outlined the issue: the school is being metered for using substantially more water than it is using and believes there may be a leak in the underground pipes under part of the school. The total project to replace these has been estimated at approx. £340k but she has broken this down into three phases and the first phase would cost approx. £120k. This project would run the pipes above ground to make them easier to maintain and protect in the future.

Jan asked it this would have an aesthetic impact on the school.

- Dawn stated this side of the project had not been looked into in any detail as it was not felt the money would ever be available to do it!

Jan asked an open question to the committee as to what other things we should be looking into for capital investment.

- Simon stated he has been working on a list of other items he would like to be considered and is meeting with the SLT to gain their perspective.
- Neil commented "he felt it was a good budget as far as it went, but felt that in an ideal world of a business perspective, the finance committee should be also addressing the area of generating income not just expenditure" – which led to further discussion
- Alan agreed that it is something to look at from the finance perspective, but this also crosses into the fundraising team discussions (thus is already in our middle-term purview).

Vicki wondered if money could/should be spent on counselling

- Simon stated that some of the government COVID funding that had already been allocated to the school for catch-up was also for mental health support such as this.
- Annie said she had already been working with a couple of students and felt the need for counselling would only increase.

Jan asked Alan if there were any things in the budget that were causing him concern

- Alan responded that there were no major concerns, just a few uncertainties that had already been stated, so just the norm.

Jan then posed the same question about any concerns to Simon

- Simon's biggest concern is the uncertainty on the government funding situation once the current pension grant issue ends, but felt that this is too far into the future for now..
- Jan then stated that in the same way it is those unknown, unknowns that can be the real worries
- Alan commented that "in essence that's what the reserves are for".
- Will felt that infrastructure issues are always a major concern and always an issue.
- Dawn commented that the pipes are not the only things she is looking at, and that she had a long list of potential projects – but until now there has never been money to invest in repairs.
- Jan then brought the discussions to a close and asked if anyone had any other questions in relation to the approval of the budget? As there were no further questions, Jan asked the FGB to vote on approving the budget by a show of hands.
- **The budget was unanimously approved.**

Jan then closed the meeting at 7.35 pm