

WEYMOUTH COLLEGE CORPORATION <u>Minutes of the Virtual Board Meeting held on 2 February 2021</u>			
Members Present:		In attendance:	
Richard Noah	Chair	Sue Ratcliffe	Clerk to the Corporation
Nigel Evans	Chief Executive	Jenny Stiling	Associate Member
Jane Nicklen		Rob Cole	Director of Finance
Steve Webb		Phil Templeton	Vice Principal
Andy Matthews	Vice Chair	Julia Howe	Interim Principal
Lyn Bourne		Kelly Bush	Vice Principal
Rod Davis		Natalie Merry	Director of Apprenticeships and Employer Services
Peter Vowles			
Jacqui Gerrard	Vice Chair		
Megan Barnes			
Louise Matthews			
Ian Bates			
Jack Dickson			
Chris Brook			
Lucas McCallum	Student Governor		
Jade House	Student Governor (apologies) <i>Attending the beginning of the meeting only to address members.</i> <i>Apologies for remainder of meeting</i>		

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting taking place via MS Teams. All agreed to recording the meeting.

Jade House joined the meeting to speak on behalf of the students who were experiencing difficulties with remote learning. She wanted to share the thanks on behalf of the students who had been in touch with her. To show how understanding and helpful staff had been in making resources accessible and enabling use of certain resources in these difficult times. Staff had shown how they understood how it was affecting students and were doing all they could to help. The Chair emphasised his thanks and those of the Board to all staff.

Jade left the meeting

Apologies for Absence

12/2021 An Apology was received from Jade House.

Declarations of interest

13/2021 In line with her declared interests; Jane Nicklen reminded the meeting that she is a Trustee of Adventure under Sail, a partner in the project to be discussed at item 8.

Notification of Any Other Business

14/2021 There was one additional item added to the Financial Report at Item 5; an update on the financial implications relating to the ongoing negotiations on exiting the Redlands lease. In addition, there are two items to add to the Principal's report: The Strategic Plan and Virtual Apprenticeship week.

Minutes of the Meetings held on 19 January 2021

15/2021 The minutes of the meetings held on 19 January, 2021, copies having been previously circulated, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to inserting the following sentence at the end of minute 05/2021. "It was agreed three quotations should be sought, where possible, for future procurement exercises"

It was also agreed to provide further clarity in the minutes on the reported reduction in the EBITDA figures between the budget and the P4 and P5 reports. (Note to the minutes – amendments made and revised copy on the GVO).

Financial Report

16/2021 i) P5 Finance Report - The Director of Finance presented the P5 Report, previously circulated and briefly mentioned at the last meeting.

Members noted that the first quarter IFMC has been submitted to the ESFA. This submission covered the actual figures for December and a projected forecast until July 2022. Unlike the first submission, it was not required to be submitted to the Board before submission.

Members noted:

- The budget reforecast EBITDA was £687k, unfortunately due to lockdown No.3 this now stands at £628k.
- The College continues to access the Job Retention Scheme (furlough) for January to (projected) 12th February for 92 staff.
- Autumn term COVID19 impact for 2020/21 presents a loss of income of £510k & net cost of £387k. The expected furlough income and savings in utilities etc. will help to alleviate some losses.
- 31st December 2020 cashflow was £1,288k (this includes a net capital balance of £310k, the TU £300k and ESFA advance of £240k) and whilst higher than original budget cash flow forecast, it confirms repayment of £100k advance in December and planned balance of repayment in May 2021 (£240k) subject to College's ongoing financial assessment of the COVID19 pandemic.
- Cash flow projection based on re-forecast budget confirms cash balances above TU minimum level of £300k for 10 months of the year.
- There remains a cashflow concern in March and July which will be reliant on careful creditor payment management.
- Discussions continue with the ESFA regarding the proposed repayment of £240k in May 2021. It is important to note that the College's reforecast 2020/21 budget EBITDA of £687k is significantly below the total debt and interest repayments of £902k. During the Autumn the ESFA stated that further consideration would be given to the May repayment should there be a further national lockdown. The College will discuss this as part of the monthly ESFA Financial Notice to Improve meetings.

ii) Opportunities and Risks

Members considered the highlighted areas in the Opportunities and Risks section of the report and were pleased to note:

- Increased income for High Needs students - Spring payment £1.2 million, with £1.4 million expected next year.
- NCS – impact next year with programme delivery expected to drop by £130k.
- Repayment of advance of funds in the budget for May.
- Creditors and debtors remain stable.

- Strong position in cashflow in March as LEP capital funds boost the balance.

Members reported they were pleased with the amendments to the presentation of the report including the column actuals relative to forecast and the separation of pay costs.

It was noted that at a recent governor training session an "approaching percentage targets" outcome, not precise numbers were more useful, it is a challenge for college to reach the 65% target.

iii) Redlands – Members asked about Furlough costs at Redlands. The Director of Finance explained staff have been on and off furlough since March 2020 and in full during lockdown periods. The Outturn £59k which will continue in full for February but also into March – when leisure can re-open. Members asked if we are obliged to pay full salary when furlough is 80% and was scaled back in the Autumn. It was noted that it is a College decision, a commitment to pay 100%. This would be an alternative to a conversation/ consultation with staff. We would be put in a difficult decision if it was not started at the beginning and they don't agree, we risk not receiving grant. We have not entered into a conversation.

ii) Risk Register

17/2021 The Director of Finance presented the updated Risk Register November version which had been presented to and reviewed by the FEC Commissioner. The following items were highlighted:

- Remote learning arrangements.
- Covid Testing programme
- Safeguarding – remote learning guidelines
- Capital Projects - Provision for students.
- Repayment of the £340k v cashflow – this will be discussed next Wednesday with ESFA
- Developing KPI's

Louise Mathews joined the meeting

Student Governor Update

18/2021 Lucas reported that students were awaiting clarification on exams especially for A level students. The Vice Principal Curriculum explained that the consultation on proposals ended on 29 January, so unfortunately there was nothing known yet to reassure students. He promised feedback as soon as was possible. He also encouraged students to engage with activities provided by staff and to highlight straight away if help was needed.

Principal's Update

19/2021 The interim Principal presented her written report, previously circulated. Members noted the following points:

- There is a Feasibility study on Maritime proposals – separate item
- Additional link activities with Board members, new internal committees will be established which will have involvement from board members.
- Examination assessments – consultation closed, we are still waiting to hear outcome.
- Strategic planning – move forward with the sub group meeting – draft, currently with designers. It has been circulated to stakeholders with the use of a survey.
- Management Essentials programme – this has been well received. This was supported by the Staff Governors.
- Board Members who have offered to be involved with a staff development request from Lyn, Dates to be confirmed, perhaps towards end of June.
- An invitation to apply to the Capital Transformation Fund.
- Virtual open evening today

- National apprenticeship week next week.
- KPI dashboard is being prepared based on examples. These will be temporary with new list linked to the Strategic Plan, from September. It is proposed to provide annotation and training.
- Apprenticeship week - final plan to be circulated this week. Members were told about the outline plan for each day with host employer breakfast on Friday via Zoom.
- Virtual open of Engineering Centre – This has been moved to June Open Day with a live event.

Curriculum Items

20/2021

i) Future Proposal – Dorset Maritime Training Proposal

The Board received information and a funding proposal paper. The Principal outlined a proposal looking at how to develop maritime provision. Working with Lyme Regis Boatbuilding Academy to prepare a bid for investment funding for a feasibility study. We would lead and be a partner in the study.

Jane Nicklen identified her involvement with the charity Adventure under Sail, a sail training organisation. The Boatbuilding Academy, working with other partners on the possibility of a maritime curriculum at the College, looking at local need from both employers and young people.

Members were told about interest from other parties and the potential for ongoing funding opportunities. Members expressed provisional support for what could be an exciting opportunity and highlighted the importance of a due diligence exercise.

Members were reminded that there were some previous attempts at a similar project which did not progress and all agreed a feasibility study was the most sensible way forward, as was the prospect of looking at the Maritime Engineering provision linked to Sunseeker and operated by Bournemouth and Poole College, and the needs of fishermen and fishing trades opening up wider opportunities as there is an identified shortage of young people in the industry. This route may also attract support from DERA and the MMO.

ii) Link Visit Report

The Report from Louise Matthews was received and uploaded to the GVO, following her meeting with Employer Services. She wanted to acknowledge that colleagues had worked hard to continue to keep the Apprenticeships involved and working. The Chair reported he had undertaken a virtual visit, but it was not the same as being able to visit the site, but there was interesting feedback and an opportunity to keep in touch.

FE Commissioner's Report (Visit 2 December 2020)

21/2021 The Board noted that the final version of the report had been received earlier in the day (2 February 2021) and had been uploaded to the GVO. Members noted some changes to the draft report. However, whilst the Action Plan was based on the original draft report, it would be reviewed and updated and progress monitoring will come to Board as will the action plan uploaded fortnightly to the GVO. It was confirmed a Meeting of the Search and Governance Committee was planned to review recommendation 1.

The Commissioner will plan to revisit in May. However, in the email accompanying the report, it stated that the Commissioner was aware of the time limits and the lockdown and asked that the College do its best to work to original dates. They recognised the circumstances. It was suggested they want to see action being taken, direction of travel. Proposals will be presented to the Board at their March meeting.

Recruitment of Principal and Chief Executive – Report from the Selection Panel

22/2021 Confidential Minute

Any Other Business

23/2021 i) Training Resources - The data and slides from recent governor master classes are now uploaded to the training section on GVO. Please comment on GVO and provide other useful resources to upload in the future.

Members noted:

- ii) College Creative Arts Festival. Website set up. date 5 March
- iii) Industry link day in June – date to be confirmed.
- iv) Safeguarding committee - 126 students EHCP risk assessments for those working online and at home. Thanks to SENCO lead and the team, lot of risk assessments.
- v) Dorset local plan in consultation.

Date of Next Meeting

24/2021 The next meeting was confirmed as 30 March 2021

Signed _____ Chair

Virtual Meeting – 30 March 2021

CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

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Lucas McCallum	Student Governor		

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting taking place via MS Teams. All agreed to recording the meeting.

CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

Redlands Financial Commitments

16/2021 (iii) The Director of Finance updated members on the ongoing regular discussions with Dorset Council concerning exiting the Redlands lease.

Dorset has concluded that the External provision is a viable concern, but there are questions over internal provision. They are currently reviewing over 150 booking lines to see if they can be re-provisioned in other local provision. There is progress being made and in the near future full details of 4 option appraisals will be presented to both the College – via Weyco Directors and the Corporation, and the Council to consider the following outline options:

1. Status quo – not an option for the College supported by our letter to Dorset Council.
2. Return to Dorset Council - operational model – more expensive than current
3. Returned to Dorset Council - external provision remain. Provide office and changing rooms, some refurbishment work. with halls and other areas demolished and levelled. Unclear yet but seems preferred option with finance work to do.
4. New build option – financially upfront cost looks unaffordable but detail unknown

Members noted that any exit model will have financial implications for the College.

- *The Initial proposal is to use £150k of ESFA capital funding as a starting point.* The 3G Sink Fund is £220k, but it has been used to prop up Redlands. It is in the accounts but cash is not there. The 3G pitch is in a reasonable condition, we have learned that the Football foundation cannot input a 50% contribute due to Covid. Pandemic.

- The College cannot afford a lump sum input, therefore in addition to the ESFA capital input it is proposed to input an investment of £33k per annum for 3 years, *making a total of £250k. input.*
- We understand that a capital receipt could be traded off, there is a possibility of some Section 106 monies. and it is possible Dorset Council will reduce their asset base, Negotiations are still ongoing,
- We are Looking to exit by end of July for year end and budget purposes.
- Weyco Directors will consider proposals on 16 March.

The Board agreed to support the financial proposals in principle.

Recruitment of Principal and Chief Executive – Report from the Selection Panel

22/2021 Confidential Minute

The Board received an update and proposals in a report presented on behalf of the Selection Panel. The Chair explained that Jacqui Gerrard and Sue Ratcliffe have done quite a lot of work on this so far.

Jacqui Gerrard outlined the process followed and how she had prepared the first draft of an advertisement, and then after input and further feedback from Panel members, it has been collectively refined and the final draft is presented for Board approval. Jacqui further explained that using the AoC Benchmarking report on salaries, the proposal on a salary range was agreed in the aim of attracting a healthy selection pool. We are therefore ready to advertise, after final agreement on wording and costs, from the Board, whilst still gathering all final supporting documentation.

The Clerk referred members to section 2 of the Report, detailing the proposals for consideration. She reminded members we are required to advertise nationally, the Instrument and Articles are prescriptive on the selection panel membership, which shows a minimum 5 members. The current members propose an additional two members following the loss of the previous vice-chair. it is therefore suggested that Lyn Bourne, with curriculum expertise and Andy Matthews the second Vice Chair be included in the Selection Panel, making a total of 7 members. This is the group the Board task with organising and arranging the recruitment and selection process.

RESOLVED to approve:

- The revised membership of the Selection Panel (total 7)
- The wording of the advertisement and advertising proposals.
- Closing Date 31 March 2021.
- The budget to a maximum of £3000 for advertising with AoC and FE Week
- The timetable as presented.
- 24/25 May interviews.
- Progressing external involvement.

Proposed by the Selection Panel. Members. Vote Unanimous.

Salary proposal – considerable discussion followed concerning the suggested salary proposal, a range from £105k - £115k per annum.

- The Board were reminded this proposal had resulted from a lot of research using the AoC Benchmarking report on salaries, the aim of which is to attract a good selection pool.
- The survey completed annually shows the minimum, median and top range, taking into account regional data and college size. This data was used to make a judgement at the lower/minimum levels, acknowledging that Weymouth salaries are considerably below the regional minimum.

- The lower salary proposal is £10k more than the current salary. It was emphasised that a range was proposed to attract candidates, the upper end of range only to be considered for an exceptional candidate.

The Chief Executive shared concerns over institutional stability and how staff will react to this increased salary proposal in an environment of little or no pay awards for staff in recent years. He suggested as well as attracting the best candidate, members need to be aware that the new Principal must lead in the need to repay loans into 2026-2027. He further suggested what is needed is stability in the college, to repay loans and move on.

Members responded that whilst fully appreciating the Chief Executive's views both at a personal and institutional level, the Board need the right person, they need to attract the right people to apply, the research shows we are not paying the going rate.

Members commented and suggested:

- The very best candidate will not want to come; this college needs nurturing.
- Understanding the sentiments expressed, a number of board members have experienced situations where salaries increase when a new post holder is appointed. We want what is right for the college – based on research and accepting we are below sector average.
- Realistically it's a hook but also levelling up a little bit. But still a long way below average.
- It is highly typical recruitment is to attract and then keep them. Education perception world is fair, its not fair, its the norm!
- Nobody works to make money in education, its not just about loans, it's about learners.
- It cannot be avoided; it is more difficult to attract than retain.

The Chief Executive highlighted potential feelings of the Senior Leadership Team members, who have been responsible for all operational delivery, they did it, they took the College to where we are now. Teacher's salaries are embarrassing. The Staff Governors highlighted staff morale, we've all been in this together, how will it affect morale bringing someone in on a new wage. It would be important to involve staff and students on the interview days.

Jacqui Gerrard assured members that all points raised were considered by the Selection Panel, looking at internal compatibilities, and a selection on criteria is what we are looking for. Staff and Students will be involved in some way as part of the process. If criteria is not met, we won't recommend an appointment.

The Chair asked if there was any counter proposal or request for the Selection Panel to review? There was no change or counter proposal forthcoming. Therefore, the Board voted on the original salary proposal.

RESOLVED the proposal submitted by the members of the Selection Panel, seconded by Lyn Bourne was approved. In her support of the proposal Lyn suggested sufficient research has been done.
Vote 11 in favour, 3 abstentions.

Signed _____ Chair