

AQUINAS COLLEGE
FINANCE AND BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

Date: 9 June 2009
Time: 5.30 pm
Venue: The College

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Mr J Beckitt, Miss M Braithwaite, Mrs P Lynch, Mr A Moss and Dr A Smith.

Miss M Braithwaite in the Chair

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr G Hill	Assistant Principal
Mrs D Blackburn	Assistant Principal
Mr D Pearson	Assistant Principal
Mr T Conlon	Clerk to the Governing Body

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr P Feehily and Cllr T P McGee

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Governors and Staff were asked to declare any interest, which they may have in any of the items on the Agenda for this meeting. No interests were declared.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meetings held on 20 January 2009 were agreed as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

a) Loan Facility – Minute 13

Mrs Blackburn reported on a meeting that she had held with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee to discuss the loan facility for the capital project. Mr Pearson had also attended the meeting. At the meeting it had been agreed that the amount of the loan would be £2.3m at a fixed rate of 5.285% for 22 years commencing in March 2011. The repayments would be £177,000 per annum compared with the old loan at £209,000 per annum

Dr Smith advised Governors that at the end of the capital project there would be a building worth £42m but the debt repayments would be significantly less than previously envisaged due to the low interest rates.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

Mr Hill introduced a paper that had been prepared by Neil Lowe, Health and Safety Adviser, which had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting. The paper covered the following areas:

- a) Issues as a result of the building work
- b) Plans for when the new building is occupied

It was noted that the LSC had visited the college in February 2009 on a “seeking assurance” visit and classed the college as “exceeding expectations” in relation to health and safety. During the visit clarification had been sought in relation to students undertaking work experience. Mr Hill advised Governors that if it was classified as “Work Shadowing” the implications for health and safety checks were less onerous.

A discussion took place on ill health related statistics that had been collected by the college with particular reference to staff absent due to stress related problems. Further information will be given to Governors in the Annual Health and Safety Report. Dr Smith advised Governors that he felt that the college had a good record in helping staff who have stress related problems, but at some stage it has to be remembered that you need to think of the implications for other staff.

RESOLVED: That the report be received.

6. CHARGING POLICY FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES

Mrs Blackburn introduced a paper that had been circulated prior to the meeting that gave details of the proposed fees to be charged for Adult and Continuing Education Courses for 2009/2010.

For 2009/2010 the charge is 47.5%, which will increase to 50% in 2010/2011. Most fees have been increased by 2.2% from 2008/2009. The proposed charge for ECDL in 2009/2010 cannot be compared with the charge for 2008/2009, because the course has been split into two modules instead of a full certificate. There has been no change to the college policy for those students who are on Means Tested Benefit.

Dr Smith reported that in a recent report in The Guardian it had been suggested that in education age discrimination starts at age 25 because up to that age courses are free.

RESOLVED: That the fees as set be recommended for approval to the Governing Body.

7. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

Mrs Blackburn introduced the Management Accounts for May 2009 that had previously been circulated. A discussion took place on the May Accounts with particular reference to the following:

- a) The forecast retained surplus of £333,000 is higher than last month and is due in the main to a reassessment of the interest charges included in non pay costs.
- b) The revised forecast outturn for 2008/2009 is £50,000 and this falls as you go through the year

- c) The costs of the capital building work incurred up to May 2009 are £19,334,129 against a budget of £41,458,326. Capital grants claimed amount to £18.154.085. The college has financed around £2m of the work so far.

If Members had any questions on the May Accounts they were asked to contact Mrs Blackburn.

RESOLVED: That the Accounts for May 2009 be received.

8. BUDGET 2009/2010

Mrs Blackburn and Dr Smith drew Governors' attention to the papers that had been circulated prior to the meeting in relation to the proposed budget for 2009/2010. The papers contained a) a spreadsheet of cash income and expenditure b) the same converted into accounting format and c) a text summary.

The LSC has confirmed that the income from them for 2009/2010 will be £8,949,820 compared with £8,719,579 for 2008/2009 and is an increase of £230,241 or 2.6% from 2008/2009. The draft budget shows a contingency reserve of £335,793. This is consistent with 2007/2008 and this level of surplus is required to allow the college to cover the increased charges for interest and other costs when it moves into the new building.

Dr Smith advised the Governors that the teaching staff budget was likely to increase by £40,000 due to the number of staff who are on or will be taking maternity leave. In addition there are a number of staff on long term sickness. The support staff budget is likely to reduce by £40,000 which will counter the increase in teaching staff costs.

Governors were reminded that the capital project has a major impact on the balance sheet. The budget reflects the new capital project as far as is possible and all figures are based on the capital project submitted for final approval. There could still be timing differences as the year goes by between the budgeted and actual cash flow. As the year progresses, these figures will be revised on a regular basis.

Dr Smith advised Governors that he and his senior management team valued the expertise that Mrs Blackburn had shown in dealing with the complexity associated with financing the new building programme.

RESOLVED: That the draft budget as presented be recommended to the Governing Body for approval.

9. NATIONAL FUNDING POSITION

Dr Smith advised Governors that there is likely to be a 1% real terms cut in the budget for 2010/2011 and that the future years are likely to be tough in terms of budget allocations. From April 2010 following the demise of the LSC the college will receive its budget from the Young People's Learning Agency via the local authority.

10. BUILDINGS REPORT

A paper prepared by Mr G Hill that summarised the latest position in respect of the following areas of work had been circulated prior to the meeting.

a) Mobile Classrooms – In May 2009 a serious leak developed in one of the mobile classrooms. This happened after the L6 had started their exam leave, so classes were re- allocated. The repairs should be completed in time for the start of the new academic year.

b) Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) – The acquisition of the new MUGA has brought with it problems associated with unofficial use. It has been necessary to introduce security patrols and CCTV cameras. The situation has improved in recent weeks and it will be monitored closely.

11. NEW BUILDING PROJECT

Mr D Pearson, Assistant Principal gave an update on the developments since the Governors last meeting. Governors noted the following developments:

a) Work is progressing on the aluminium cladding to the front of the building and brickwork to the rear.

b) The work on the interior of the building was starting to take shape.

c) The MUGA is now in use and landscaping will progress over the next few weeks.

d) The site is clean and tidy and extremely well run.

e) Staff are working on the planning of the interior of the building

f) The target date for completion remains May/ June 2010.

g) The college continues to keep local residents informed of developments. A meeting with the three local councillors and neighbours was held on 11 May 2009 and another meeting has been arranged for 23 September 2009 at 6.30pm at the college.

12. AUTHORISATION OF THREE YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN

The three year financial plan has to be submitted to the LSC by the end of July 2009.

RESOLVED: That the Governing Body be recommended to authorise the Chair of Governors to sign the Three Year Financial Plan on behalf of the Governing Body.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Dr Smith advised Governors that the end of term celebrations would be held on 10 July 2009 at 12.00 pm in the Joseph Mayer Building overlooking the MUGA and all Governors were invited. It would give them an opportunity to view the magnificent new games area.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The College Calendar had not yet been approved but the provisional date for the next meeting was Tuesday 13 October 2009 at 4.30pm, subject to the Clerk checking with Cllr McGee and Mrs Dove that the change in time was okay with them.

Signed _____
Chairperson

Date _____

Terry Conlon
Clerk to the Governing Body

Miss M Braithwaite
48 Sandy Lane
Romiley
Stockport
SK6 4NH

11 June 2009

Dear Mary

Finance and Buildings Committee

I attach a copy of the draft minutes from the Finance and Buildings Committee meeting held on 9 June 2009.

I would be grateful if you would let me have any comments/amendments as soon as possible so that the minutes can be sent out prior to the Governing Body meeting on 23 June 2009.

Please telephone me on 483 5266 with your comments.

Many thanks.

Yours sincerely

Terry Conlon