

## **NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE**

### **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 1 December 2009 at the Farm Lodge Ballymena Campus.

Present Mrs K Collins (Chairperson), Mr T Neilands (Director) and Mr P McCudden.

In Attendance Mrs B Crotty, Ms C Moore and Mr J Hunter.

### **UNRESERVED BUSINESS**

#### **11.1 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mrs L Wallis and Mr A Watt.

#### **11.2 Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interests.

#### **11.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 10 November 2009 were approved.

#### **11.4 Matters Arising**

##### **11.4.1 Sale of Land at Larne (minute 10.6.1)**

The Deputy Director Planning and Resources provided the Committee with an update regarding:

a) Sale of Lease of a small portion of land at Larne to Larne YMCA for the sum of £30,000. The Deputy Director stated that she and the Director of Finance would meet with the Chairperson of Larne YMCA in the forthcoming week to arrange payment terms; it has been suggested that the payment plan would involve monthly payments of £500 over a five-year period.

b) Sale of Lease of Playing Fields at Larne to Larne Grammar School. The Deputy Director advised the Committee that the College had received a cheque for £97,200, which is being held by the College solicitors. Before releasing it to the College they need reassurance that the College is not selling land, which has already been sold. The Deputy Director informed the Committee that considerable effort had been made in gathering evidence to establish that the land belonged to NRC. She anticipated that the College's solicitors, on the basis of colloquial evidence, would soon be in a position to release the cheque.

##### **11.4.2 New Skills Centre, Newtownabbey (minute 10.6.2)**

The Deputy Director Planning and Resources informed the Committee that the contractors were on target in respect of the construction of the new Skills and the Heavy Motor Vehicle Blocks, and the refurbishment of the Engineer Block. There had been a delay in the Kitchen area caused by a dispute with Northern Ireland Energy concerning an additional power supply. The contractor may require an extension of time to complete the contract as a result of this delay and this would involve the College in additional expense. To minimise the time delay and costs, it is intended to rent a new temporary mobile kitchen at £20,000. The Project

Board would be asked to approve this sum from the contingency fund at its meeting on 3 December 2009.

The Deputy Director informed the Committee that the road at the back of the College had had to be realigned. It was noted then that Northern Ireland Railways had constructed a boundary fence on College lands. The College solicitors were writing to NIR concerning the encroachment.

In response to a query as to whether the contract should be signed 'under hand' or 'under seal', the Deputy Director stated that the contractors were willing to extend the deadline for signing the contract until 31 January 2010. She advised the Committee how the contractors had arrived at a cost of £30,000 to complete the contract 'under seal'; the contractors had advised that the extension of the limitation period would increase their liability and necessitate increased insurance cover.

**The Committee agreed that the Project Board should make a recommendation to the Governing Body on 13 January 2010 as to whether the contract should be signed 'under hand' or 'under seal'.**

#### **11.5 Chairperson's Communications**

There were no Chairperson's communications

#### **11.6 Correspondence**

The Director informed the Committee that he had received an e-copy of the draft Learning and Skills Improvement Services Report: Purposeful Governance. It was noted that the Report was to be considered in conjunction with the recommendations of the thirteenth Public Accounts Committee Report of 2 July 2009 regarding Fermanagh College of Further and Higher Education. He advised the Committee that the Report would be distributed to Governors

#### **11.7 Monthly Management Accounts**

The Director of Finance presented the Monthly Management Accounts for the period up to 31 October 2009 indicating that the College had a surplus of £196k on continuing operations and an historic surplus of £523k, which was £634k ahead of budget. The bank balance as at 31 October 2009 was £6.3 million.

Mention was made of additional maintenance expenditure on the installation of a new boiler at Trostan Avenue at a cost of £40,000. Higher than expected vandalism had also led to increased maintenance costs.

#### **11.8 Data Protection Policy**

The Committee received a draft Data Protection Policy. The Committee noted that the College must comply with the Data Protection Act in the collection and use of data and in the processing of personal data; the College's Data Protection Policy provides details of the principles underpinning the Act and of the responsibilities it places on staff and learners.

It was further noted that the Policy, which reflects the format recommended by the Information Commissioners, had been screened and approved by the Executive Management Team.

The Deputy Director Planning and Resources stated that it was necessary to add a clause indicating that the College reserved the right to charge a fee in respect of subject access.

**The Committee agreed that the Data Protection Policy, revised to include an additional clause regarding subject access fees, be approved and forwarded to the Governing Body.**

### **11.9 Any Other Business**

There was no further notified business to transact.

### **11.10 Next Meeting**

The Chairperson reminded the Committee that the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 2 February 2009 at the Ballymena Campus commencing at 5.30 pm.