

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF A BOARD MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY,  
20 FEBRUARY 2003 AT 2.30 PM IN THE BOARD ROOM**

**1. PRESENT** Mrs M Alexander (Chairman)

|                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Mr P H Aiken           | Mr P C McAleavey       |
| Councillor J F Bell    | Councillor P P McAleer |
| Councillor P Brannigan | Mrs D A McBride        |
| Mr M P Campbell        | Mrs C M McCaul         |
| Alderman F E Crowe     | Rev C D McClure        |
| Dr P Cunningham        | Councillor S McRoberts |
| Mrs M E Donnell        | Very Rev L M McVeigh   |
| Councillor J Feehan    | Councillor B Monteith  |
| Mrs S M B Fitzpatrick  | Very Rev S Rice        |
| Councillor J Hanna     | Mr A G Sleator         |
| Councillor W J Martin  | Rev Canon F D Swann    |
| Mr W Mayne             |                        |

**2. IN ATTENDANCE**

Mrs H M McClenaghan, Mrs K C Ryan, Messrs W Burke, P J A McGee, T M Heron, W B Weir, Mrs C Lavery and for part of the meeting Mr J F Curran.

**3. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Rev J Byrne, Mrs E Gill, Councillor I E B Hanna, Alderman G A Hatch, Mr C Mackin and Rev Canon W R Twaddell.

**4. APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS**

The report\*\* (B/2/03/2) prepared by the Human Resources Officer was adopted.

**5. MINUTES**

Mrs McClenaghan said that the final sentence of the penultimate paragraph of minute 9 was unclear and recommended that the sentence be replaced by the following wording:- "Alderman Hatch proposed that the Proposal be sent to the Department of Education without comment. This was seconded by Councillor McRoberts. When the Chairman called for a vote the following votes were cast:-" Subject to this amendment the minutes\* (B/1/03/3) of the meeting held on 16 January were approved as an accurate record and were signed by the Chairman.

**6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**MILLINGTON NURSERY SCHOOL (5.1)**

Mr Burke drew attention to Appendix 1 to the Pre-School Education Expansion Progress Review circulated with the Education Committee minutes, in which the Section dealing with

Craigavon showed that the size of the age group, based on P1 enrolments in 2001, was 1,207 and that the number of pre-school places was 982, about 90% of the age group. Mr Sleator asked if Millington Nursery School could have more full time places bearing in mind that the number of part time places was greater than those for which there was a demand. Mr Burke explained that the school could have additional places only by converting its limited number of full time places to part time. The Governors had already made it clear that they did not wish to create part time places. Mrs Fitzpatrick pointed out that it was Government policy to fund a greater number of places by making them part time. Mr Sleator said that the Board should nevertheless register its concern that many locations did not have adequate provision, particularly when some places were taken up by underage pupils. Councillor Hanna said that no provision was available in Scarva and that the Board should not simply accept that situation.

## **7. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

### **7.1 ABSENCE OF REV CANON W R TWADDELL**

The Chairman said that Rev Canon Twaddell was currently in hospital. It was agreed that the Chief Executive should forward to him the good wishes of the Board.

### **7.2 VISITS TO BOARD FACILITIES**

The Chairman reported that she had visited various locations in the Kilkeel area, that she had been present at the opening of the technology block in Clounagh Junior High School and that she had attended a concert presented by the South Ulster Concert Band. She said that this was a valuable facility for school leavers to continue with their music.

### **7.3 MEETING WITH MINISTER**

The Chairman reported that, together with the Chairmen and Chief Executives of all the Boards, she had met the Minister to discuss the Review of Post Primary Education. The Minister had listened to the points made to her but had stressed that she did not wish to make any decisions which would be difficult for a devolved administration to implement.

### **7.4 PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION IN HEADSHIP**

The Chairman reported that Mrs McClenaghan had attended a graduation ceremony for teachers who had obtained this qualification. About 8 of these were employed by the Board and she suggested that members might wish to meet them. It was agreed that Mrs McClenaghan should arrange for them to meet members at the March or April meeting.

### **7.5 OFFICE VISITS**

The Chairman reported that she had visited staff in a number of Sections including Catering, Maintenance, Purchasing, Transport, Youth, LASS and Inter-Board Services. She had now completed her visits to Charlemont Place and Beresford Row

and had been received courteously by all staff. Mr Aiken thanked the Chairman for the effort she had put into these visits and Mrs McClenaghan said that they had been much appreciated by officers.

## **8. FINANCIAL SCHEME 2003/04 : DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ALLOCATIONS**

### **8.1 RECURRENT ALLOCATIONS**

Mr Heron said that he wished to explain the strategy behind the recommended Resource Allocation Plan. He believed that it was important for members to understand and agree the strategy before considering detailed figures. He drew attention to the Department's letter\* (B/2/03/6.1) dated 31 January, particularly paragraph 8 which explained the new method of distributing money between Boards. The changed basis would have given the Southern Board an additional £2.4m. However, the Department had decided to phase it over 4 years and the Board would therefore receive an additional £600,000 for 2003/04. He also drew attention to the details contained in Appendix B and to the 33 "earmarked" allocations listed in Appendix D. While these were an important and welcome source of funding to schools he pointed out that a disproportionate amount of officer time was needed to administer them as special allocations and it would be preferable for the majority to be embodied within the block grant.

He then presented a paper\* (B/2/03/6.2) showing the block grant to each Board for the current and incoming financial years and a paper\* (B/2/03/6.3) giving a breakdown of the effect of the increases in real terms. He said that while the allocation was not sufficient to meet the Board's financial needs the increase of 5.26% was to be welcomed and was higher than predicted inflation. He explained that the next paper\* (B/2/03/6.4) set out the strategy which had been used to determine the recommended allocation to each service. He drew attention to paragraphs 3 and 4 (a). In relation to special education he said that it was a demand determined service which had shown an increase in excess of 10% in each of the last few years and recommended that any effort by the Board to secure additional funding should concentrate on special education.

Mr McAleavey said that Mr Heron's recommendations had been generally accepted by the Joint Financial Panel and that where it had expressed reservations Mr Heron had amended the strategy in line with the Panel's views.

Councillor Hanna and Rev Mr McClure said that they were Governors of a school where a teacher had been issued with a protective redundancy notice for several years in succession. While in previous years it had been possible to withdraw the notices it was highly unsatisfactory that it had been necessary to make a decision which had a detrimental effect on staff morale and on parents' perception of the future of the school.

The Chairman asked if the Board wished to amend the strategy which had been used by Mr Heron. The Board agreed to accept it.

Mr Heron then presented a paper\*\* (B/2/03/6.5) showing a breakdown of the proposed recurrent financial scheme. The scheme was adopted and it was agreed to submit it to the Department of Education. The Chairman said that the Board should express concern at the very short interval between the issue of the letter on 31 January and the requirement to submit a Resource Allocation Plan by 21 February.

*(During the discussion of this item Councillor J Feehan and Councillor W J Martin left the meeting at 3.49 pm.)*

## **8.2 DEPUTATION**

The Chairman said that the Minister had indicated that, while she was heavily committed in the immediate future, she was willing to meet a deputation when a date could be arranged. It was agreed that the deputation should consist of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, Dr P Cunningham, Mr P C McAleavey, Mr A G Sleator, the Chief Executive and the Head of Corporate Services.

## **8.3 CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS**

Mr Heron presented a letter\* (B/2/03/6.6) from the Department of Education dated 7 February and a paper\* (B/2/03/6.7) showing the differences between the initial allocations in the current and incoming financial years. He explained that as almost all the money was allocated for specific purposes the only decision to be made was the distribution of the £2,537,000 under the heading "Other Capital". Bids were still being received from the various Sections and he asked the Board to defer a decision. He would present a paper to the Services Committee which would make a recommendation to be considered by the Board at its March meeting. Mr McGee referred to Appendix A to the Department's letter and amplified the contents. He stated that capital starts in 2003/04 had been approved and that 3 starts had been approved in the Southern area:-

- Annaghmore and Tullyroan replacement Primary School
- St Joseph's Convent Primary School Meals Kitchen, Newry
- St Teresa's Primary School Meals Kitchen, Lurgan

In reply to a question from Mr Sleator, Mr McGee said that the Board's officers had hoped that the Department would approve 4 projects including a major alterations scheme at Banbridge Academy and perhaps a fifth project under PPP arrangements, Dromore new Primary School.

*(During the discussion of this item Councillor J F Bell and Very Rev S Rice left the meeting at 4.00 pm and Dr P Cunningham left at 4.16 pm.)*

## **9. FINANCIAL SCHEME 2003/04 : DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, ARTS AND LEISURE**

Mrs Ryan presented a paper\* (B/2/03/7.1) giving details of the recurrent allocations for the current and incoming financial years. She said that a significant increase was appropriate

bearing in mind that the 5 Boards' public library services were the worst funded in the United Kingdom. The increase of 8.62% should nevertheless be welcomed.

*(Mr W Mayne left the meeting at 4.18 pm.)*

#### **10. JOINT FINANCIAL PANEL : MINUTES**

Mrs McClenaghan apologised to Mr McAleavey for the error in recording his name as Chairman. Mr McAleavey said that the minutes were nevertheless a very well written document which recorded the views of the Panel as expressed at a long but useful meeting. He drew the Board's attention to minute 6, particularly the reference to officers' efforts to clear the maintenance backlog, the fact that the Board's Headquarters and LASS expenditure was the lowest of the 5 Boards, the appointment of new officers without consulting with teacher members of the Board and the need for a contingency fund to ease schools into the new funding arrangements. The minutes\* (B/2/03/8) of the meeting held on 11 February were adopted.

*(Councillor S McRoberts left the meeting at 4.22 pm.)*

#### **11. CORPORATE PLAN**

Mrs McClenaghan presented the revised draft plans\* (B/2/03/9) which had been written after consultation with various bodies. She had been encouraged by the number of responses, some of which had been very detailed. She referred in particular to a letter from the Permanent Secretary of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure.

She drew attention to a number of changes which had been made as a result of suggestions put forward either by Board members or by others who had responded. Mrs Alexander asked members who wished to suggest further changes to contact Mrs McClenaghan as soon as possible. It was agreed, subject to any further suggestions by members in the near future, that the Plans should be printed as the final documents.

*(Mrs M E Donnell left the meeting at 4.29 pm.)*

#### **12. TEACHERS' STAFFING COMMITTEE : MINUTES**

The minutes\* (TS/2/03/11) of the meeting held on 4 February were noted.

#### **13. EDUCATION COMMITTEE : MINUTES**

##### **13.1 TEACHERS' SALARIES (6.3)**

Mrs McBride drew attention to the comments of Mrs Donnell and Mr Mackin in the second paragraph of the minute. She said that the entire Committee had opposed the suggestion of a Principal Teacher being responsible for more than one school.

### **13.2 CLASSROOM 2000 (10)**

Mr McAleavey said that while he had expressed some misgivings about a firm's past performance he believed that it was inappropriate that it should have been identified in the minute. In fact he had been able to resolve difficulties with the firm and currently had a good working relationship with it. It was agreed that in future cases minutes should not identify firms.

The minutes\* (E/2/03/10) of the meeting held on 4 February were adopted.

### **14. PROPOSAL AS TO PRIMARY (INCLUDING NURSERY) AND SECONDARY EDUCATION NO 179 (ANNAGHMORE AND TULLYROAN REPLACEMENT PRIMARY SCHOOL) : REPORT**

Mrs McClenaghan reported that the Department of Education had approved this Proposal.

### **15. SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE : MINUTES**

#### **15.1 VISIT TO LISANALLY SPECIAL SCHOOL (4.1)**

Mrs McCaul drew attention to the fact that the meeting had taken place in a special school and said that members had been impressed both by the facilities and by the warm welcome they had received. Councillor Brannigan as Chairman of the Board of Governors of the school thanked Mrs McCaul for her comments.

#### **15.2 APPEALS TO SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS TRIBUNALS (4.4)**

Mrs McCaul drew attention to the heavy workload on special education staff in relation to appeals. While the minute recorded that the majority of appeals were later withdrawn the officers had already invested the same amount of time in preparing for the hearings in such cases.

The minutes\* (SE/1/03/13) of the meeting held on 16 January were adopted.

### **16. SERVICES COMMITTEE : MINUTES**

#### **CODE OF PRACTICE FOR BOARD MEMBERS (8.1)**

Mrs Alexander reminded members that if this minute was adopted it would be their duty to withdraw from any meetings where there was detailed discussion about any school or college of which they were Governors.

The minutes\* (S/1/03/14) of the meeting held on 30 January were adopted.

*(Mr A G Sleator left the meeting at 4.43 pm.)*

**17. LIBRARY COMMITTEE : MINUTES**

**17.1 SERVICE DEVELOPMENT : ARMAGH BRANCH LIBRARY (9.2)**

Mr Campbell drew attention to the fact that a mobile library would provide a temporary service when this Branch was closed for refurbishment.

**17.2 LIBRARY SERVICE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (11)**

Mr Campbell commended Mrs Ryan for the presentation of this draft plan which she had prepared in a very short time.

The minutes\* (L/1/03/13) of the meeting held on 28 January were adopted.

**18. ASSOCIATION OF NORTHERN IRELAND EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARDS - EXECUTIVE COUNCIL : MINUTES**

The minutes\* (B/2/03/16) of a meeting held on 15 January were noted.

The meeting ended at 4.45 pm.

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**CHAIRMAN**

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**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**DATE**

\* Paper circulated

\*\* Paper tabled

21 February 2003  
WBW/LMcC