

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF A BOARD MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY  
24 MARCH 2005 AT 2.30 PM IN THE BOARD ROOM**

**1. PRESENT**

Mrs M Alexander (Chairman)

Mr P H Aiken  
Councillor P Brannigan  
Mrs S R Brownlee  
Rev J Byrne  
Mr M P Campbell  
Alderman F E Crowe  
Dr P Cunningham  
Mrs M E Donnell  
Councillor J Feehan  
Mrs S M B Fitzpatrick  
Councillor I E B Hanna  
Councillor J Hanna  
Alderman G A Hatch  
Councillor A B Lewis  
Mr C Mackin  
Councillor W J Martin

Mr W Mayne  
Mr P C McAleavey  
Councillor P P McAleer  
Mrs D A McBride  
Mrs C M McCaul  
Rev C D McClure  
Councillor P McGinn  
Councillor S McRoberts  
Very Rev L M McVeigh  
Councillor B Monteith  
Very Rev S Rice  
Mr J W Saunders  
Mr A G Sleator  
Rev Canon F D Swann  
Rev Canon W R Twaddell

**2. IN ATTENDANCE**

Mrs H M McClenaghan, Mr W Burke, Mr T M Heron, Mrs K Ryan, Mr G P Butler and for part of the meeting Mr G Doran.

**3. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor J F Bell and Councillor W J McIlwrath.

**4. APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS**

On the proposal of Mr Aiken seconded by Alderman Hatch, the report\*\* (B/03/05/2) prepared by the Human Resources Manager was adopted.

*(Mr P C McAleavey, Rev C D McClure and Councillor P McGinn entered the meeting at 2.42 pm.)*

**5. MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2005**

On the proposal of Mrs McBride, seconded by Alderman Crowe the minutes\* (B/2/05/3) of the meeting held on 17 February 2005 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman and the Chief Executive.

**6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**6.1 PAYMENT OF RATES ON SCHOOL BUILDINGS**

Mrs McClenaghan reported that officers were investigating whether the Board may be able to claim rates exemption on Controlled Youth Centre buildings and Outdoor Education Centres. The Board would be kept informed of any developments.

**6.2 REPORT TO DCAL ON THE FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE**

Mrs McClenaghan reported that the Library Service expected to live within their budget for the 2004/05 year.

**6.3 DE LETTER TO CHAIRMAN: REAPPOINTMENT OF SERVING MEMBERS TO THE BOARD**

Mrs McClenaghan reported to members that she had sought clarification on whether Board members could be permitted to remain on the Board after they had completed two terms. Mrs McClenaghan informed members that the response she had received from the Department of Education failed to address the question she had asked. Mrs McClenaghan assured members she would continue to press for a clear answer to her question.

The Chairman reported that she had raised the matter with Mr G McGinn and Mrs K Godfrey of the Department of Education stressing the benefits of retaining experienced members during this difficult period. Mrs Alexander informed members that to date she had only received an acknowledgement letter.

**7. MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING HELD ON 10 MARCH 2005**

On the proposal of Mrs Brownlee, seconded by Fr Rice the minutes\* (B/3/05/5) of the meeting held on 17 February 2005 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman and the Chief Executive.

**8. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

It was agreed that the financial scheme would be considered later as a substantial item on the agenda.

## **9. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

### **9.1 MANAGEMENT OF EU FUNDS THROUGH THE PEACE PROGRAMME**

Mrs McClenaghan reported that the Southern Education and Library Board has submitted a Tender to DFP to be selected as the Implementing Body for Measure 2.2 of the Peace II Programme under the Extension arrangements from 2006 to 2008. The Measure will result in the investment of a further £5 million into the youth education sector for the promotion of peace and reconciliation across Northern Ireland. SELB will continue to be the lead body on behalf of the five Boards and our youth education partners in YESIP. DFP will make their decision on awarding the contract for managing Measure 2.2 at the end of April 2005.

## **10. REVIEW OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION : CONSULTATION**

A copy of the Press Release issued by the Review Team was circulated to members (B/3/05/08). Members were informed that hard copies of the Report were to be received by the Board the following week and that members would receive a copy. Members were advised that the Report was on the RPANI website as shown in the Press Release.

Alderman Hatch commented that he was glad to see the Northern Ireland Local Government Association had been listened to in relation to the District Councils but he said there were a considerable number of issues that needed clarification by the Review Team. He reported that at the start of the process the Review Team had declared that they were starting with a clean sheet and that finance was not driving the review yet the main headline which had been promoted by the Review Team was in relation to the millions of pounds to be saved as a result of the implementation of the Review.

Councillor J Hanna commented that it was obvious that there were other agenda items being followed by Mr Gardiner and his colleagues in relation to the cutbacks previously discussed. He further commented that there did not appear to be the necessary finance available to support the proposed new arrangements.

Mrs Fitzpatrick commented on the need for a close examination of the impact on education resulting from the report, particularly in relation to CASS and the Youth Service. She expressed her disappointment at the lack of reference to the Pre-School Sector within the Report.

Mr Aiken highlighted the fact that similar exercises in England had not resulted in the predicted savings. Mr Aiken also reported that the Youth Service Advisory Committee had given initial consideration to the Review at their meeting the previous evening and he informed members that the Committee would be considering the report in more detail at a future meeting.

Councillor Lewis said that the problem was too much dictation and not enough consultation from the Ministers concerned. He said that Mr Gardiner was putting the education of young people at risk.

It was agreed that the Review would be placed on the agenda of the April Board meeting for detailed discussion.

## **11. DE RESOURCE ALLOCATION PLAN 2005/06 : DETERMINATION OF SCHEME**

The Chairman reported on the meeting that the Minister, Mr Gardiner, had held on the 15 March 2005 with the Chairmen of the 5 Boards. At that meeting the Minister had again made it clear that each Board must live within its budget and he explained what would happen if members failed to agree a financial scheme. The Chairman informed members that the Minister had agreed that there could be some easement in terms of redundancies but this would only be the case where collaborative arrangements had been reached between Boards. Personnel Services across the 5 Boards was given as an example by the Minister. The Chairman reported that the meeting had lasted over an hour and a half and that unlike previous occasions the Minister had been prepared to listen to those present about the impact of the cutbacks.

The Chairman reported that she had asked the Minister if there were any items of proposed savings that he would reject. In response the Minister had intimated that he would regard children having a hot school meal and being able to cross the road safely as being important.

Mrs McClenaghan reported that she had met all of the political parties and was visiting each of the District Councils to provide them with details of the implications of the current financial situation. She reported that some of the political parties had met the Minister, Mr Gardiner, and that one political party had met the Secretary of State, Mr Murphy, to discuss the issue.

Councillor Lewis raised concern that the proposals which were being discussed had been rejected at the previous meeting and asked that Senior Counsel opinion should be sought about the position of the Board regarding the interpretation of the minutes.

The Chairman informed Councillor Lewis that notice had been taken of his comments and that the paper would be looked at in the light of the changes that had occurred since the previous meeting. She reminded him the Board had agreed that a decision on the Financial Scheme would be considered at this meeting. The Chairman invited Mr Heron to speak to the paper outlining the changes that had occurred.

Mr Heron provided members with an overview of the proposed financial scheme contained within the tabled paper (B/3/05/9). He highlighted the position regarding earmarked funding and the representations that had been made to the Department of Education about rationalising the number of earmarked funds to free up finances for the financial scheme. He informed members that as a result of this £216,000 earmarked for school security had been transferred to the general budget of the Board and that it would be up to members as to how this funding would be committed.

Mr Heron stated that it appeared from previous discussions that the Board's two priority areas were School Crossing Patrols and Special Education.

The Chairman then told Board members that they could prioritise their expenditure against this money.

Mr Mackin highlighted two meetings that had taken place between the Primary and Secondary Teachers' Consultative Committees and Board officers. He congratulated the officers on the clarity of their presentations but said that unfortunately the message was the same. He accused Mr Gardiner of providing a diet education to children and young people in the schools in Northern Ireland. He said that it was very disappointing that the Board member who had proposed £6.7 million of cuts was not present at this meeting.

Mrs Alexander reminded members that they could not choose to send in part of a scheme but had to submit a complete scheme.

Councillor Lewis in reply stated that when he heard the choices it was evident that no real choices were being given. He highlighted the fact that everybody present was involved in education and that a very strong message being given to children was to stand up to bullies. It was therefore very regrettable that members of the Board were not standing up to the Minister who was trying to bully them into making cuts.

Councillor Lewis proposed that the Board reject the proposals contained in the paper and that no scheme should be submitted.

The Chairman reminded members of the consequences of such a decision.

Councillor Lewis in response asked for a recorded vote to take place and for a very strong message to go out from the Board that they were against the cuts.

Mrs Fitzpatrick sought clarification from Mr Heron as to whether these were the only areas which the Board had control over and had the ability to make cuts.

Mr Heron confirmed that this was the case.

Mrs Fitzpatrick in response drew attention to the number of 2 year olds in the Nursery School Sectors and asked if this could be addressed.

Mr Heron confirmed that the funding for these was in the Aggregate Schools Budget and outside of the areas for which funding decisions had to be made.

Mrs McCaul provided members with a detailed account of the discussions that had taken place at the Special Education Committee on the morning before this Board meeting. She provided members with details of the refocusing of the various services and highlighted that there would be reductions in classroom assistance and the peripatetic teachers but that these were based on sound educational research and on the promotion of independence rather than dependence of the children and young people availing of the services.

In response to a question from Councillor Monteith in relation to consultation Mrs McClenaghan provided details of consultation that had taken place already and further meetings planned for the week beginning 4 April. This included meetings with the Councils, Trade Unions and other interested bodies and public meetings.

Councillor Monteith in reply stated that information giving was not consultation rather consultation was about finding a solution. If the decision was already made by an English Minister then the consultation was a sham. He highlighted the fact that he had asked in November for consultation to take place and that Board officers should have been looking at options. He said it was important that the members showed they had the backbone to stand up to the bully that was Mr Gardiner.

Councillor Monteith seconded the proposal of Councillor Lewis that the proposals be rejected.

Councillor J Hanna sought and obtained information from Mr Heron about details of the Teachers Costs heading within the paper. Councillor J Hanna went on to say that Mr Gardiner had let down children in the education system throughout Northern Ireland. He highlighted that this was particularly the case within the SELB area where members had managed to live within their budgets. Councillor J Hanna said that regrettably the members had no other choice than to be realistic about the current situation. He highlighted the fact that the choice was between taking a responsible attitude by putting forward a scheme or have a Commissioner running the affairs of the Board.

Mrs McBride highlighted the inaccuracies in the presentation of the budget figures by Mr Gardiner, particularly in relation to the inclusion of the capital funding within the figures presented. She also challenged the assumption that fewer pupils means less costs.

Alderman Hatch advised members that they should be resolving to put the responsibility for some of the issues involved in the cutbacks back into the court of the relevant Government Department concerned. He gave the example of crossing the road safely to go to school and the lack of pelican crossings provided at schools. He highlighted the contrast between the Northern Ireland situation and that in England where pelican crossings or other similar features were provided at all schools.

Mr Sleator asked for clarification about whether the one million pounds set aside for redundancy would be enough to cover the costs. Mr Heron in response said that the figure represented the professional view of the officers but confirmed it was not possible to be totally precise about the actual figures because there were so many variables involved. The actual costs could not be calculated until the individual cases had been costed.

Mr Aiken said that it was obvious that Mr Gardiner wanted the Boards to bring forward the implementation of the findings of the Review of Public Administration and that this was what was behind the current funding pressures.

Mr Campbell informed members that he had recently had the opportunity to speak to the Minister, Mr Gardiner, and that he had used the opportunity to point out the impact of the cuts on the education of children and young people.

The Chairman invited Mrs McClenaghan to inform members about what provision there was in Standing Orders for a recorded vote. Mrs McClenaghan read out paragraph 15.2 which provided for a recorded vote if 5 members other than the member making the proposal supported the request.

The Chairman asked if members supported the recorded vote. Five members other than the member making the proposal supported the request and it was agreed that a recorded vote would be taken.

The Chairman asked Councillor Lewis to repeat his proposal. Councillor Lewis proposed the following motion:

“While we are prepared to look at reasonable savings we are not prepared to look at the savage cuts which will impact on the education of our children. I therefore propose we do not submit a scheme.”

The Chairman then put the proposal to a vote and the following was the result:

For the proposal (7)	Councillor P Brannigan, Councillor J Feehan, Councillor A B Lewis, Mr C Mackin, Councillor P P McAleer, Councillor P McGinn and Councillor B Monteith.
Against the proposal (21)	Mrs M Alexander, Mr P H Aiken, Mrs S R Brownlee, Rev J Byrne, Mr M P Campbell, Alderman F E Crowe, Dr P Cunningham, Councillor I E B Hanna, Councillor J Hanna, Alderman G A Hatch, Councillor W J Martin, Mrs D A McBride, Mrs C M McCaul, Rev C D McClure, Councillor S McRoberts, Very Rev L M McVeigh, Very Rev S Rice, Mr J W Saunders, Mr A G Sleator, Rev Canon F D Swann and Rev Canon W R Twaddell.
Abstentions (3)	Mrs S M B Fitzpatrick, Mr W Mayne and Mr P C McAleavey.

The motion was therefore defeated.

Following the rejection of the motion the following six members each declared in turn that they were resigning from the Board:

Councillor A B Lewis, Councillor B Monteith, Councillor P P McAleer, Councillor P McGinn, Councillor J Feehan and Councillor P Brannigan.

*(Councillor P Brannigan, Councillor J Feehan, Councillor A B Lewis, Councillor P P McAleer, Councillor P McGinn and Councillor B Monteith left the meeting at 4.01 pm.)*

Mr Mackin asked that it be recorded that he would not be resigning but remained opposed to the proposed cutbacks.

*(Mr C Mackin left the meeting at 4.04 pm.)*

Alderman Hatch then proposed, and Councillor McRoberts seconded, a motion of no confidence in the Minister for Education in Northern Ireland, Mr Barry Gardiner, for failing to:-

- a) Obtain sufficient funds from the Department of Finance and Personnel to meet the educational needs of the children of Northern Ireland ; and
- b) Devote sufficient time and energy with his civil servants to ascertain the impacts this would have on front line services and the school estates.

The motion was then put to a vote, 23 members voted for the proposal and 2 members abstained. The motion was therefore carried.

Canon Swann proposed a motion that the Board accept the scheme as put forward in the papers with the proviso that the Accounting Officer had the flexibility to decide on the reallocation of the funding that had previously been earmarked for school security to the Board's priority areas.

Mr Campbell in seconding the motion commented that he was seconding the proposal but not on the basis of being bullied but he was doing so to support our schools and so that a Commissioner would not be appointed.

*(Mr P C McAleavey left the meeting at 4.08 pm.)*

Mrs McCaul commented that the high level of attendance of Board members at this meeting was indicative of the commitment of members to the education of children and young people. She thanked Board officers for the professional manner with which they had carried out the difficult task of developing the scheme. She also thanked the Chairman for her work in securing approval for the scheme.

Dr Cunningham drew attention to the positive reputation that the SELB had for their work in Special Education. He thanked officers for the sensitive manner in which they had carried out the review of services in Special Education.

Alderman Crowe commented on the arrogance of Mr Gardiner and drew attention to his own high regard for the officers of the Board. He drew particular attention to the work carried out by Mrs McClenaghan.

Mr Aiken commented that it was unfortunate that a Government which was committed to inclusion had pushed members to such an extent that they had excluded themselves from the Board.

Members agreed the motion with great reluctance with 22 members supporting the motion and 2 members abstaining.

Mrs Alexander thanked members for their kind comments and for supporting the motion.

*(Rev J Byrne, Dr P Cunningham, Alderman G A Hatch, Councillor W J Martin, Very Rev S Rice and Rev Canon W R Twaddell left the meeting at 4.20 pm.)*

## **12. YOUTH SERVICE – BUDGET 2005/06**

Mr Aiken in presenting the minutes noted that the total recurrent budget of £3,780,000 represented an increase from the previous year of approximately 6.38%. Mr Aiken drew the attention of members to the fact that DE has introduced a new formula for the allocation of funds for the Youth Service across the 5 boards without any consultation with the Board on this new formula.

Mr Aiken referred to substantial inescapable commitments regarding salary increases and NILGOSC contributions and to the fact that the budget proposals included a general inflationary increase to all budgets of 2.5% and finance set aside to offer an enhanced rate of pay to caretakers in the voluntary sector, in line with those in the controlled sector.

Mr Aiken noted the various increases to the general schemes of assistance and a new structure of charges for the use of outdoor centres that would bring the SELB into line with other boards. Mr Aiken thanked officers for their work in the production of the proposals and the clarity of the presentation at the YSAC meeting held the previous night.

Mr Aiken proposed, and Mrs McRoberts seconded, the adoption of the minutes and this was agreed by members.

## **13. LAND AT KILLICOMAIN ROAD, PORTADOWN : DISPOSAL**

Mrs McClenaghan provided members with an overview of the current position regarding the disposal of land at Killicomaine Road, Portadown.

Canon Swann proposed, and Mr Aiken seconded, a proposal that the Board confirm that it is satisfied to sell the land to the highest bidder. The proposal was agreed by the members.

## **14. LAUNCH OF CORPORATE PLAN 2005-2008**

Mrs Alexander in launching the Corporate Plan noted that the plan had been produced in a format at the lowest cost which was considered acceptable.

## **15. EDUCATION COMMITTEE : MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 8 MARCH 2005**

Mrs McBride in presenting the minutes drew attention to the inputs from the Education and Training Inspectorate and the Forum of Nursery Teachers and commented on how

useful these had been. She also drew the attention of members to the three Development Proposals for the proposed closure of Ardmore, Granville and Loughbrickland Primary Schools on 31 August 2006 or as soon as possible thereafter. She informed members about the inputs from the Ardmore delegation and Mr Butler regarding the three schools.

Councillor J Hanna expressed deep regret that the closure of Loughbrickland Primary School was being proposed. He expressed the hope that a local Minister of Education might look differently on the proposal. He informed members that the proposed closure would result in there being no protestant school in Loughbrickland.

Mr Sleator drew attention to item 8 of the minutes in relation to PRSD and commented that he was surprised and disappointed at the poor quality of the training. Mrs McClenaghan, in reply, advised members that the Regional Training Unit which was responsible for the training had been advised of the concerns of Board members and that steps were being taken by RTU to remedy the situation.

Mrs McCaul expressed her concerns about the underlying principles of PRSD and to particular concerns about the impact of the process on teaching principals. Mrs McCaul also expressed her concerns about the time commitment required from members of the Board of Governors to implement the process.

A number of other members supported the comments from Mrs McCaul. Mrs Brownlee stated that while she supported the concept of professional development for staff she considered that the PRSD model was more complicated than required.

On the proposal of Mrs McBride, seconded by Mr Saunders, the minutes\* (E/3/05/13) of the meeting held on 8 March 2005 were adopted.

*(Councillor S McRoberts left the meeting at 4.29 pm during discussion of this item.)*

**16. SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE : MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2005**

On the proposal of Mrs McCaul, seconded by Mrs Donnell, the minutes\* (SE/2/05/14) of the meeting held on 17 February 2005 were adopted.

*(Councillor J Hanna and Mr W Mayne left the meeting at 4.45 pm after discussion of this item.)*

**17. 2005/06 BOARD EXPENDITURE : PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE – DCAL LETTER OF 4 MARCH 2005**

Mrs Ryan updated members on the current position regarding the funding for the Library Services. She confirmed that despite earlier concerns the Library Service expected to live within the budget for 2004/05. Mrs Ryan also reported that the £104,000 savings identified to date for the 2005/6 budget would be adequate if the book fund was retained at £400,000 for this year.

**18. LIBRARY COMMITTEE : MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 1 MARCH 2005**

Mr Campbell in presenting the minutes drew attention to minute 5.1. Mr Campbell reported that it was agreed that the Chief Librarian should attend the Annual Joint Conference in April 2005.

Mr Aiken alerted members to the issue of staff shortages resulting in the temporary closure of a Library. Mrs Ryan informed members that while staff in many Libraries had dealt with staff shortages by being as flexible as possible, in other places this was more difficult.

On the proposal of Mr Campbell, seconded by Mr Aiken, the minutes\* (L/3/05/16) of the meeting held on 17 February 2005 were adopted.

**19. BEST VALUE COMMITTEE : MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 27 FEBRUARY 2005**

Alderman Crowe in presenting the minutes drew attention to the considerable work of the Committee that had been completed over the last year.

Mr Aiken asked that a best value review be undertaken on the Library Service in the new programme. In response Mr Heron informed members that in the light of the publication of the Review of Public Administration document no programme had been agreed yet. He undertook to take account of the request from Mr Aiken when the programme was drawn up.

On the proposal of Alderman Crowe, seconded by Mr Sleator, the minutes\* (BV/3/05/16) of the meeting held on 17 February 2005 were adopted.

**20. AUDIT COMMITTEE : MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2005**

Mr Sleator presented the minutes and drew attention to the fact that any changes to the Audit Committee arising from the Treasury issue of an Audit Committee Handbook would only impact after the new Board was formed.

On the proposal of Mr Sleator, seconded by Mrs McBride, the minutes\* (A/2/05/18) of the meeting held on 17 February 2005 were adopted.

**21. MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE : MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2005**

The minutes\* (M/2/05/19) of the meeting held on 17 February 2005 were noted.

**22. CONSULTANTS' SELECTION PANEL : MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 3 MARCH 2005**

On the proposal of Canon Swann, seconded by Alderman Crowe, the minutes\* (CSP/3/05/20) of the meeting held on 3 March 2005 were adopted.

**23. ASSOCIATION OF NI EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARDS : EXECUTIVE COUNCIL : MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 2 FEBRUARY 2005**

The minutes\* (B/3/05/21) of the meeting held on 2 February 2005 were noted.

It was agreed that discussion on whether the Conference should include an overnight stay would be left to the next Board meeting. The Chairman reported that she had submitted all the required reports on single term members to the Department and she advised members that following the publication of the advertisements for members in the local papers members should telephone the number supplied to confirm their details.

Canon Swann thanked the Chairman for her handling of the three meetings relating to the budget savings and this was endorsed by all the members present.

The meeting ended at 5.13 pm.

---

**CHAIRMAN**

---

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

---

**DATE**

\* Paper circulated

\*\* Paper tabled

GPB  
15 April 2005