

SPARSHOLT COLLEGE HAMPSHIRE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
SEARCH COMMITTEE
held on 27 April 2017 at 12.00 pm

¹PRESENT Mr M Coombes (E); Mr N Hopkins (E); Mr T Jackson (P).

In attendance: Mrs S Willson, Clerk to the Corporation

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- 1 There were no external interests to declare. Some of the matters covered by the agenda were relevant to College post held by each of the Committee members and it was agreed that any member would step out of the meeting if this was considered necessary by the other members.

MINUTES

- 2 **Resolved** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

ANNUAL REVIEW OF BOARD MEMBERSHIP

- 3 The Committee had received the report of the Clerk which summarised the membership of the board and its committees and considerations including succession planning for future vacancies. It was noted that the minutes of this meeting provided the annual report of the Search Committee to the Board. The full report received by the Search Committee is also available to any member of the Board from the Clerk.
- 4 The report provided the current data regarding the skills of Board members and equality and diversity, including comparisons with the College's staff diversity data and references to the AOC survey on the composition of English FE college boards (May 2015).

Board membership

- 5 The Committee noted that it was the policy of the Board that governors served a maximum of two terms of four years, except in exceptional circumstances such as appointment to the role of Chairman of the Board. This was in line with the Code of Good Governance adopted by the College in 2015 and with best practice in other sectors and the Committee agreed that it was appropriate to apply this policy of two terms to reviews of Board membership in 2017/18 and planning for future Board vacancies.
- 6 The Committee noted that two members, Neil Hopkins and Chris Wilson, were due to complete their first term of office (of four years) in July 2017 and that Roger Fawcett was due to complete his second four year term of office in December 2017.
- 7 Neil Hopkins confirmed that he would be willing to serve for a second term. The Clerk agreed to contact Chris Wilson to confirm his willingness to serve. Under the Board's policies, re-appointment was also subject to the results of a performance survey.

¹ (E) = External; (P) = Principal; (S) = Staff; (St) = Student; (C) = Co-opted Committee Member

- 8 **Resolved** – that the Board be recommended to re-appoint Neil Hopkins and Chris Wilson for a second term of office of four years from 11 July 2017, subject to the results of performance surveys to be circulated to all member of the Board.
- 9 Recruitment of two external governors was covered by a separate report but, with reference to the skills audit information, the Committee agreed there would be value in appointing a governor with legal skills.

Chairman and Vice Chairman

- 10 The Committee noted that the Board is responsible for appointing the Chairman and Vice Chairman from amongst the external members in accordance with the Instrument & Articles and the Code of Good Governance for English Colleges. The current Chairman and Vice Chairman were appointed to their offices for a term of four years respectively from 1 August 2014 subject to satisfactory annual performance review.
- 11 The Clerk noted that this year's performance review surveys were due to be issued in June and would report to the July Board of Governors meeting.
- 12 The Committee discussed succession planning and the appointment process for the Chairman of the Board, given that the current Chairman was due to retire in July 2018. More information about the process would follow to the Board in the Autumn term.

Committee membership

- 13 The Committee noted that two co-opted members of committees were reaching the end of their current terms of office and that there was a vacancy for a co-opted member on the Quality & Standards Committee (Q&S).
- 14 Discussing the co-opted members on the Resources Committee, the Committee noted that Ms Shaw had indicated she would be willing to continue to contribute to the College as a co-opted member of in or in some other capacity at the Resources Committee meetings, while recognising that the demands of her external role means that she is likely to continue to need to send apologies for some meetings.
- 15 The Committee agreed that Ms Shaw brought significant financial expertise and independent challenge to the Committee's discussions, although it was harder to keep up to speed with strategic developments at the College if she was unable to attend more than one meeting each year. Given the current mix of skills on the Resources Committee, the Committee agreed that it would be beneficial to extend Ms Shaw's co-opted membership for a year and then review again.
- 16 **Resolved** – that the Board of Governors be recommended to re-appoint Susan Shaw as a co-opted member of the Resources Committee for a term of one year from 1 August 2017.
- 17 The Committee noted that Mr Beck was due to complete his final term of office as a co-opted member of the Audit Committee on 12 December 2017 and agreed that the membership of the Audit Committee be reviewed ahead of the October Board meeting and in light of the outcome of the recruitment campaign for external governors.
- 18 Discussing the vacancy for a co-opted member on Q&S, the Chair of Q&S agreed that it was useful to have a co-optee and suggested that the SLT consider inviting a local head teacher or other local senior educationalist to further extend understanding between the College and schools.
- 19 **Resolved** – that the Principal consider with the Deputy Principal possible individuals to invite to join the Quality & Standards Committee as a co-opted member.

- 20 The Committee noted that the Board had agreed that appointments of chairs to the Audit, Curriculum, Employers & Marketing Requirements (CEMR), Q&S and Remuneration committees be made by the full Board. A year previously it had been anticipated that it might be timely in July 2017 to make some changes to the chairmanship of committees. However, with the vacancies on the Board, succession planning considerations and the views of individual members expressed during the year, the Committee agreed that it might be more appropriate to reappoint the current committee chairs for 2017/18, while noting that committee membership and chairing could be refreshed during the year once new governors were in place.
- 21 Additionally, the Committee noted that a potential vacancy during the year on CEMR, with Roger Fawcett's second four year term of office coming to an end in December 2017.
- 22 The process for the Board making committee chair appointments would require changes to the terms of reference of the committees and the Clerk would present recommendations to the Board in July.
- 23 The membership of committees would be considered further on completion of the recruitment process for the two external governor vacancies.
- 24 **Resolved** – that the Board be recommended to reappoint the current Chairs of the Audit, Curriculum, Employers & Marketing Requirements, Quality & Standards and Remuneration committees for 2017/18 on the basis that the Board could review committee membership and chairing again during the course of the year.

Senior Post Holder Succession Planning

- 25 The Search Committee discussed succession planning in relation to the position of the Principal and the other Senior Post Holders (the Deputy Principal and Director of Finance & Facilities) annually and through the Chairman's regular dialogue with the Principal about his own plans and those for the SLT.
- 26 The Principal updated members on various succession planning considerations. In relation to mid/long-term succession planning for the role of Principal, the Principal reflected on the need for candidates with strong commercial acumen, as well as understanding of land-based provision, and ways in which senior management posts could be structured to provide the relevant skills collectively.
- 27 The Committee welcomed the thought that the Principal was giving to succession planning of the senior post holder roles and wider succession planning in the College. The Committee noted that the Principal would consider the recruitment process for senior post holder roles, in advance of any vacancies arising, and that this would be revisited a future meeting.

RECRUITMENT

- 28 The Committee had received the report of the Clerk which proposed the recruitment plan for two external governor vacancies on the Board, including the role specification, communication/marketing methods and timetable.
- 29 Discussing the role specification, the Committee agreed that the ability to operate effectively at board level and to have a reasonable level of financial understanding was key. While it was still the case that accountancy and legal skills would be useful to the Board, the Committee decided that the recruitment should be opened up to seek individuals from a range of professional backgrounds in order to encourage a stronger field of candidates.

- 30 It was therefore agreed that the role specification could be summarised more concisely on this basis and merged with the role description.
- 31 The Committee also agreed with the proposals to widen the recruitment campaign to include extended print advertising, a targeted mailing to local organisations and the posting of (free) adverts on national recruitment websites.
- 32 **Resolved** – that the Clerk launch the recruitment campaign for two external members of the Board of Governors on 18 May with interviews to be planned the week commencing 19 June.
- 33 The meeting closed at 4.10 pm.