

Minutes of Meeting held on Friday, 25th September 2020

A special meeting of Louth and Meath Education and Training Board commenced at 1pm.
The meeting took place remotely in the light of government direction
regarding the Covid 19 virus

CATHAOIRLEACH:	Cllr. Nick Killian
BAILL I LATHAIR:	Cllr. Maria Murphy, Cllr. Sharon Tolan, Cllr. Wayne Harding, Ms. Siobhán Greer, Ms. Karen Tobin, Cllr. Emer Tóibín, Mr. Bill Sweeney, Cllr. Damien O'Reilly, Cllr. Marianne Butler, Ms. Máirín Uí Fháinnín, Ms. Roisin Duffy and Cllr. Antóin Watters
LEITHSCEIL:	Cllr. John Sheridan, Cllr. Eileen Tully, Cllr. Deirdre Geraghty-Smith, Mr. Fabio De Araujo and Mr. Paul Dermody
AR FREASTAIL:	Mr. Martin G. O'Brien, CE Mr. Brian Murphy, Director of OSD Ms. Sadie Ward McDermott, Director of FET Mr. Frank Smith, APO Corporate Services Ms. Sinead Murphy, APO Land and Buildings Ms. Carmel McEvoy, Corporate Services Mr. Denis Rowan, Denis Rowan & Associates

Having welcomed attendees to the meeting, the Chairperson advised that the meeting was being held on-line due to government directives regarding the Covid 19 virus. The Chairperson thanked LMETB staff for making the necessary arrangements and thanked members for attending remotely.

The Chairperson advised that having been advised of the receipt of an email from Mr Phil O Flaherty, a senior official of the Department of Education, in relation to staffing issues for Advanced Manufacturing project in Dundalk he had called a Special Meeting of the LMETB for 1pm today. He had called the meeting to discuss the implications of the email for the project currently underway.

APOLOGIES

Apologies were noted from Cllr. John Sheridan, Cllr. Deirdre Geraghty-Smith, Mr. Fabio De Araujo and Mr. Paul Dermody

It was resolved **R. 01/09a/2020** to invite Mr. Denis Rowan, Consultant, to the meeting to provide information on the project and to answer any queries the Board had.

Proposed: Ms. Siobhán Greer

Seconded: Cllr. Marianne Butler

1. Correspondence Received

<i>Date Received</i>	<i>Subject</i>
24/09/2020	From DoES re. Advanced Manufacturing Training Centre of Excellence Staffing
25/09/2020	From Chairperson LMETB Board re. Calling of Special Board Meeting for Friday 25/9/20

2. Order of Business

The Chairperson asked the Chief Executive (CE) to take members through the correspondence received. The CE read the contents of the email concerned into the minute of the meeting. The Chair invited Mr Rowan to brief members on problems to date and potential implications for LMETB pertaining to same.

Mr. Rowan highlighted a number of matters for the benefit of members:

- Enterprise Ireland, IDA and industry experts all agree that the key person in the AMTCE is its head.
- AMTCE bears no resemblance to a training centre. Therefore, the training centre staffing framework is not appropriate or adequate
- SOLAS agreed this position at an early stage in the planning of the AMTCE,
- Ireland and its business community needs the AMTCE particularly in the context of the Brexit transition arrangements ending on the 31 December 2020,
- One of the risks of an innovative project such as AMTCE is that staffing is not of an appropriate level,
- Candidates of the required calibre are being recruited by multinational corporations and so are particularly difficult to source
- As recently as yesterday the importance of the role of the Head of this facility was once again emphasised to LMETB by the Institute of Manufacturing Research (IMR)

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Rowan for his input and invited comments and questions from members.

Cllr. Harding noted that LMETB is ahead of the curve in progressing the AMTCE to this point, that the centre warrants the necessary investment and that a strong response is required to DoES correspondence.

Ms. Greer noted that the DoES correspondence refers to “not officially rescinding the staffing sanction thereby implying that sanction has already been granted for posts. Ms. Greer urged LMETB to proceed with the centre and to seek support for it at the highest level. The Chief Executive confirmed that LMETB prior to receiving this email had agreed to put a stay on advertising the 9 posts sanctioned pending sanction for the Director post.

Cllr. Tolan expressed her shock that an issue regarding staffing approval had been raised at this late stage. Cllr. Tolan expressed her support for the project and the importance of seeking support for it at a high level.

Cllr. Murphy noted that the north/south aspect of the project is critical, expressed her support for the project and the importance of seeking support for it at a high level.

Mr. Sweeney expressed his support for the project.

The Chairperson noted that the AMTCE is in line with the five-year Further Education Strategy recently launched by the government. He noted that the DoES correspondence effectively puts a stop to the successful continuation of the project.



At the request of the Chair the DOSD displayed the job specification for the role of Director of the AMTCE so that members could see the caliber of individual required to lead AMTCE.

DOSD highlighted key sections of the description noting that the recruitment consultants had agreed that a person at Director level is needed for the role.

In response to queries from the Board the CE explained that Enterprise Ireland had approved the project budget based on the staffing structure and salary scales presented in the application and during LMETB's interview with the six person independent panel appointed by Enterprise Ireland. He noted that to make significant changes to the structure or pay scales could create a risk as these scales are used by Enterprise Ireland in calculating the funding allocated. The CE cautioned that at this early stage and without discussing the matter with Enterprise Ireland the potential impact on the project was unknown and prior to LMETB taking any course of action this would need to be fully established.

There was a lengthy debate between those in attendance pertaining to next steps with several members calling for a letter to be sent requesting a meeting with the Taoiseach and the Minister. The CE interjected and advised the Board against this course of action and suggested that the first course of action in his view would be to agree a record of the meeting and submit this to DoES and await their response. The CE stated this will allow the Department time to consider the Board's concerns with a view to developing an alternate solution. The Chairperson requested the draft minute be circulated to Board Members this evening.

As there was no other business the Chairperson extended his gratitude and best wishes to all and brought the meeting to a conclusion.

SIGNED:	 _____ CHIEF EXECUTIVE	 _____ CHAIRPERSON
DATE:	<u>3-12-20</u>	<u>03-12-20</u>

