



**Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Galway & Roscommon ETB Board held in  
GRETb FET Conference Room, An Coiléar Ban, Athenry on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at 2.30pm.**

**Members Present:**

Cllr Michael Maher - Chairperson	Ms Jean Beswick
Cllr Kathleen Shanagher	Cllr Peter Roche
Mr Tomás O Nidh	Cllr Mary Hoade
Ms Bernadette Costello	Ms Mary Mullarkey
Mr Daniel Cronin	Cllr Laurence Fallon
Cllr Noel Larkin	Cllr Terry O Flaherty
Ms Nora Fahy	Cllr Tom Welby

**Attended Remotely:** Dr Michael Hannon and Cllr Karey McHugh Farag

**In Attendance:** Mr David Leahy, C.E., Ms Brenda Gaughan, Mr Tomás Mac Pháidín and Ms Claire Forde.

**Welcome:**

Cllr Michael Maher - Cathaoirleach opened the meeting and welcomed all members to GRETb Board Meeting.

**1. Leithscéalta/Apologies**

Cllr John Cummins, Cllr Shane Curley and Ms Sinéad Morgan.

**2. Dearbhú Leasa Comhaltaí : Declaration of Members Interests**

De réir fhorálacha Imlitir 02/2019 - Cód Cleachtais um Rialachas Boird Oideachais agus Oiliúna agus Bhuanoarduithe, le do thoil, cuir in iúl do Chathaoirleach BOOGRC nó don Phríomhfheidhmeannach aon choinbhleacht leasa i leith aon cheann de na míreanna atá liostaithe le haghaidh breithniú, roimh thús gach cruinnithe de Bhord Oideachais agus Oiliúna na Gaillimhe agus Ros Comáin.

In accordance with the provisions of CL 02/2019 Code of Practice for the Governance of Education and Training Boards, please declare any conflict of interest in respect of any of the matters listed for consideration suitably in advance of meetings of Galway & Roscommon ETB to the Chairperson of GRETb Board or Chief Executive.

There were no conflicts of interest declared by the members present.

### **3. Miontuairiscí: Minutes**

Prior to the meeting a draft copy of the minutes for GRETB Board meeting held 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023 were uploaded to GRETB Board members SharePoint. These were agreed, adopted, and signed on the proposal of Cllr Kathleen Shanagher and seconded by Ms Mary Mullarkey.

### **4. Nithe ag éirí: Matters arising.**

A Board Member raised a query concerning DEIS School Meals Funding. It was confirmed that the report from Department of Social Protection has still not been released. Following a discussion, it was agreed on the proposal of Ms Jean Beswick and seconded by Cllr Kathleen Shanagher that the Chairperson would issue correspondence to Department of Social Protection seeking an update.

### **5. Áiteas Airgeadais 2022: Financial Statement 2022**

A draft copy of GRETB Financial Statement for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022, the letter of Representation, Annual Review of Internal Controls 2022, working papers dated 24<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and reports from both the Chair of Audit and Risk Committee and the Finance Committees were circulated in advance of the meeting.

Chairperson of the Audit & Risk Committee attended the meeting remotely and provided a comprehensive update on the work of the Audit & Risk Committee. She confirmed that the Audit & Risk Committee met four times in 2022 and met on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023 wherein they carried out an extensive review of the system of internal control. She noted that as part of the process, they reviewed audit reports from both the Internal Audit Unit (IAU) and C&AG Auditors. She also confirmed that two representatives of C&AG attended the meeting remotely on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023 where they provided updates on Audit.

The ARC reviewed the final management letter from C&AG for 2021 with C&AG representative and concluded that the statements are in accordance with the relevant Ministerial accounting policies. The ARC reviewed the Audit report. It contained two high-level findings, two medium level and two low level findings. The ARC noted that the high-level items arose at a point in time due to the deficiencies of the old financial management and payroll systems, and the transition to the new systems and should not recur.

The Chair of the ARC stated that the ARC Committee were very appreciative of the work undertaken by the IAU on the two payroll issues in advance of finalisation of the Statement of Internal Controls. The Internal Auditors presented their internal audit reports to the ARC meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023 and acknowledged the cooperation received from the staff of GRETB in their work.

The Chair of the ARC advised that the Committee reviewed the minutes of the Board and the Finance Committee and seek confirmation from Chief Executive annually re the internal controls in place in the organisation. She complimented GRETB staff and noted that staff are doing their best with the IT systems presently in place and complimented them on the implementation of the Shared Services projects. She highlighted that GRETB had experienced a number of issues since implementation but are working closely with ESBS. She also noted the resourcing issues in Finance in terms of the need to have an adequate number of qualified accountants for an organisation of this size. She advised that the Audit & Risk Committee is appreciative of the cooperation of the Executive in supporting their work throughout 2022 and acknowledged the commitment of the staff to the efficient and effective delivery of the organisation's

strategic plan and continuous improvement of the governance, risk management and control environment.

In conclusion, Chairperson confirmed that the Audit & Risk Committee are satisfied where weaknesses are identified that management are making every effort to rectify them.

Chairperson of the Finance Committee provided an update on the review of the Financial Statements, carried out by the Finance Committee at their meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023. She confirmed that it had been a very comprehensive meeting wherein they had robustly reviewed the draft financial statement and associated working papers for 2022. She highlighted the key issues discussed and informed the Board that the Finance Committee was satisfied with the Financial Statements for 2022 and recommended their approval to the Board. On behalf of the Finance Committee, she paid tribute to GRETB's finance team on compiling the accounts, especially given the issues which they had experienced in 2022.

The Chair of GRETB Board thanked both the ARC and the Finance Committee members for the exceptional work and the comprehensive reports they provide to the Board. Following the update from both the Finance Committee and the Audit & Risk Committee, and the overview of the financial statement provided by the Finance Officer, it was agreed on the proposal of Ms Bernadette Costello and seconded by Mr Tomás O Nídh, to approve the draft Financial Statement for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

## **6. Coistí : Committees**

Prior to the meeting each GRETB Board Member was circulated with copies of the following school BOM minutes and policies, which were presented for executive accountability.

- 5.1 Lecarrow CNS BOM Minutes of 04.05.2022
- 5.2 Lecarrow CNS BOM Minutes of 20.10.2022
- 5.3 Lecarrow CNS BOM Minutes of 21.11.2022
- 5.4 St Brigid's College BOM Minutes of 08.11.2022
- 5.5 St Brigid's College Substitution & Supervision Policy 2022/2023
- 5.6 Abbey Community College BOM Minutes of 08.12.2022
- 5.7 Abbey Community College Critical Incident Management Policy
- 5.8 Coláiste Naomh Feichín Miontuairiscí de 08.12.2022
- 5.9 Coláiste Naomh Feichín Miontuairiscí de 30.01.2023
- 5.10 GTI BOM Minutes of 31.01.2023

**The following GRETB Committee minutes were previously circulated.**

These were adopted on the proposal of Cllr Terry O Flaherty and seconded by Cllr Peter Roche.

- 5.11 Grievance Procedure for staff employed by Education & Training Boards (ETBs)
- 5.12 Procedure to Resolve Peer to Peer Employee Relations Issues for staff employed by Education & Training Boards (ETBs)
- 5.13 Memorandum of Understanding to Support the Operation of the Nationally agreed Grievance Procedure for Staff employed by Education & Training Boards (ETBs)
- 5.14 GRETB Assessments in Early Learning and Care Programmes
- 5.15 GRETB Professional Practice Placements in the Early Learning and Care Programme
- 5.16 GRETB Revised Framework for Developing Policies

- 5.17 GRETB Quality Assurance Policy Statement
- 5.18 GRETB Pilot Blended Working Policy
- 5.19 GRETB Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report 2022
- 5.20 GRETB Audit & Risk Committee Meeting Minutes of 09.03.2023
- 5.21 GRETB ARC Annual Review of Internal Controls 2022
- 5.22 GRETB Finance Committee Meeting Minutes of 16.02.2023
- 5.23 GRETB Finance Committee Report to GRETB Board from Meeting of 21.03.2023
- 5.24 GRETB Youthreach Committee Meeting Minutes of 15.09.2022

## **7. Comhfhreagras/Correspondence**

The following correspondence was previously circulated and noted.

### **Department Correspondence**

- 6.1 DoE Circulars: January –March 2023.
- 6.2 Signed copies of Oversight Agreement and Performance Delivery Agreement between GRETB & Department of Education dated 22.03.2023
- 6.3 Circular 05/2023: Initiatives to assist SME's in Public Procurement dated 28.03.2023

### **Correspondence**

- 6.4 Correspondence to Galway City Council seeking nomination as a successor to Cllr Michael Crowe dated 10.03.2023
- 6.5 Correspondence from Galway City Council acknowledging receipt of correspondence dated 15.03.2023.
- 6.6 Email from Corporate Services Manager to DoE providing update on Parent Nominee vacancies on GRETB Board dated 15.03.2023.
- 6.7 Correspondence from C&AG RE GRETB Annual Financial Statement 31.12.2023 with management responses dated 15.02.2023

### **ETBI Correspondence**

- 6.8 ETBI Brief 02/2023: Updating the Patrons' Register to reflect the fact that Designated Community Colleges are 'multi-denominational'.

Chairperson noted correspondence from Cllr Michael Crowe advising of his resignation from the GRETB Board. He advised that GRETB Executive had written to Galway City Council advising of this and seeking a replacement nominee.

Director of OSD advised that Circular 05:2023: *Initiatives to Assist SME's in Public Procurement* was released. She noted that this extended the threshold for both goods, services and works. She also provided an update in relation to EU Procurement Directive Article 5.2 and the legal advice sought by DoE from CSSO re same. She thanked all involved in raising awareness around the issues with procurement.

## **8. Tuairisc an Phríomhfheidhmeannaigh: Chief Executive Report.**

The CE briefly went through the results from the survey of members around the effectiveness of the Board. Based on these results, it was agreed that the Board would be provided with brief presentations from different sections/services in GRETB to assist members in their understanding of the diverse range of work and services provided by GRETB.

A report from each Director was previously uploaded to GRETB Board SharePoint, the following points were highlighted – See Appendix 1.

### **OSD Report**

- GRETB Board “approval in principle” based on the terms circulated was sought for 10-year lease for Unit 1, an Furaran, Moycullen, Co. Galway effective from 01.07.2023 for provision of FET programmes. GRETB is already leasing a unit in this premises on an ongoing basis since 2003. This was agreed on the proposal of Cllr Noel Larkin and seconded by Cllr Mary Hoade.
- Comprehensive update on procurement projects in progress was provided
- Field work completed on IAU IT Audit, awaiting report.
- Staff phishing campaign rolled out again in March 2023. Results are being analysed.
- Very successful staff induction day was held on 10.03.2023 in Raheen Woods Hotel, Athenry,
- Recruitment update provided. She noted that GRETB had held three days of interviews for permanent Grade III post, it was highlighted that proving very difficult to fill short term temporary Grade III vacancies due to present labour market.
- GRETB in partnership with MSLETB and DETB are recruiting for the post of APO. Recruitment process is completed, and an appointment is in progress. This appointee will work on the Tertiary Programme with ATU.
- Online travel system with ESBS is now live. Final payment on the old system will be processed in April 2023.
- Working with ESBS to automate school budget reports
- No significant changes on capital projects since the last meeting. The media reports around Department of Education issues with capital funding for some school projects were discussed. However, members were advised that GRETB had not been advised of any delays or amendments to approvals to date.
- A Board Member raised a concern on the lack of facilities for sports and dining in Roscommon Community College. Following a comprehensive discussion, it was agreed that the Chief Executive would meet with the Board of Management of Roscommon Community School at a future date to discuss.

### **Schools Report**

- Department of Education completed its consideration of NCCA Leaving Certificate Irish Consultation report (T1 & T2) including proposed next steps. This report was compiled after a 7-month public consultation process in 2020 & 2021. Having regard to the proposed research and additional engagement with stakeholders, it is expected that it will take considerable time before any new specifications are implemented within schools.
- A new REALT Co-ordinator has been appointed, commencing on 27.03.2023.
- Meeting discussed “Grants payable to Non-Fee Paying Voluntary Secondary Schools” - specifically the Irish and Bilingual Grant @ €110.50/pupil, which DoE approves for post-primary schools teaching through Irish, but which has been consistently refused to all ETB multi-denominational Irish-medium schools for the past 30 years. It was agreed that the Chairperson of GRETB Board would issue correspondence to Department of Education seeking a resolution and an update on this matter.
- Director of Schools extended his congratulations to all GRETB schools who hosted events and competitions in their schools as part of ETB Week.

- 286 students have engaged with securing places on the DEIS Scholarships. GRETB have secured agreement with Roinn na Gaeltacht that this programme will roll out earlier next year. It is expected that 2024 launch will commence in September 2023.
- Update provided on Teacher Allocations 2023-2024. It was confirmed that each GRETB school have received its initial allocation 2023-2024.

### **FET Report**

CE noted apologies from Director of FET and highlighted the following items from FET

- SOLAS requested a reduction (€1.7 million) in GRETB's funding bid. A revised reduced bid has been submitted and awaiting confirmation from SOLAS of 2023 budget.
- GRETB FET are continuing to work with ATU with the development of four tertiary degrees, GRETB FET locations to be decided by April 2023. Further update for next GRETB Board meeting.
- Online Employer Services briefing took place in early March, this event was well attended. In person events scheduled for April in both Galway & Roscommon locations.
- REACH fund – it is expected that GRETB will advertise REACH 2023 in April, this is open to all community education groups.
- SOLAS have begun workshops to support next stage in FET College funding process. Working group is being established to support the development of the business plan to reflect the broad range of FET provisions and supports that will be enabled through the provisions of the new College of the Future.
- Local Youth Club Grants Scheme to be advertised in March, slight increase in funding available for 2023.
- Street Art training for Youth Workers delivered in March 2023.

### **9. Bainistíocht Riosca : Risk Management**

Cyber security is still a high-risk item for GRETB. GRETB IT Department are running phishing campaigns and continue to roll out security measures. GRETB Audit Committee highlighted this risk in the discussion on Internal Control. It was agreed that IT Department will provide a presentation to GRETB Board at a future meeting.

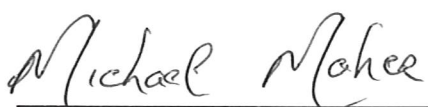
Director of OSD outlined the challenges GRETB are experiencing in recruiting specialist posts in the current environment, both in FET and OSD. She noted that GRETB had staffing issues in the finance department in 2022, however, are working on resourcing of this area. A Finance Committee member advised that the committee had discussed this risk at length at their meetings. The CE noted that ETBs have all the responsibility but no autonomy. He updated on CE's work on ODII. A discussion took place on the need to be able to award incremental credit to private sector employees for relevant experience, in order to attract suitable staff.

## 10. Gnó an Chathaoirligh : Chairperson Report

Chairperson briefed the meeting on an initiative between Alison (an Irish online education platform) and GRETB & CETB.


Next GRETB Board Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023 in GRETB Sub Office in Lanesboro Street, Roscommon Town. An official opening of the office will be held in advance of the meeting.

The Chairperson thanked GRETB Board Members for their attendance. As there was no further business, the meeting concluded.



Clr Michael Maher

Chairperson – GRETB Board



Date