

Swift Academies

Success will inspire future triumphs

The Rydal Academy
Local Governing Body
1pm, Monday 14 March 2022

a meeting held at The Rydal Academy

MINUTES

Present (Governors)	John Armitage (Head Teacher), Mark Gray (Chair), Mark Emerson, Kelly-Ann Lyle, Sarah Clough, Troy Turner (Vice Chair), Sarah Newrick, Gaurav Bhatia, Katie Turnbull, Melanie Chapman, Ewa Kaszuba, Dean Judson (Chief Executive Officer)
in attendance	Sarah Jones (Trust Business Manager, Swift Academies) Glen Hart (Chief Finance Officer, Swift Academies) Chris Carr (IT Manager, Swift Academies) Beth Wright (Swift Academies)

Item	Description of discussion	Action by
	PART A: Procedural items	
1	<p>Welcome, introductions and confirmation quorum present</p> <p>a) Membership and Terms of Office update</p> <p>It was confirmed that a quorum was present. The Scheme of Delegation for Swift Academies stated that <i>the quorum for meetings of the Governors will be three voting Governors</i>. 10 (ten) Governors were present.</p>	

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The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. A round of introductions took place for the benefit of all those present and the newly appointed Parent Governor Sarah Newrick and newly appointed Community Governor Gaurav Bhatia.

The Chair and Head Teacher drew Governors attention to the Membership document circulated prior to the meeting. A copy would be retained on file. The Head Teacher noted that Gaurav Bhatia and Sarah Newrick had been added to the Membership document following their appointments. The Head Teacher also drew Governors attention to the updated Terms of Office for Mark Gray, Kelly- Ann Lyle and Mark Emerson and noted the resignation of Michael Jeffries.

Special interest Governor roles were reviewed due to membership with the following changes resolved:

- Sarah Newrick to replace Sarah Clough as Safeguarding & Welfare, looked after children (LAC), e-safety governor.
- Sarah Clough to fill the vacancy of Finance governor.
- Gaurav Bhatia to fill the vacancy of Values, Community & Equality governor

Headteacher to update Governor Monitoring Schedule and circulate.

Headteacher

Governors RESOLVED that the information was presented in the Membership Document was noted.

2 Apologies for absence and their acceptance

No apologies for absence had been received: all Governors were present.

3 Notification of items of urgent other business

Governors RESOLVED that there were no items of other business regarded as sufficient to warrant urgent consideration

4 Declaration of personal and pecuniary interests

- a) Governors and those present were reminded that they should complete the Register of Interest annually to declare any relevant business or pecuniary interest and close family relationship between members and / or other trustees and / or employees. Registers should be updated during the academic year should circumstances change.

All Governors present submitted a completed Register of Interest.

- b) to declare any personal or pecuniary interest in any matters arising from the agenda of the current meeting

Governors and those present were reminded that they should declare any personal or pecuniary interest in any matters arising from the agenda of the current meeting.

No declarations of interest were received.

c) Code of Conduct

Governors were reminded they had signed the Governors Code of Conduct, upon appointment to The Rydal Academy Local Governing Body. It was confirmed that signed Governors Code of Conduct were held on file for all Governors of the Local Governing Body of The Rydal Academy.

5 Approval of minutes / review of actions / matters arising

Draft minutes of the Local Governing Body meeting of The Rydal Academy held on Monday 4 October 2021 had been shared with Governors prior to this meeting. A copy would be retained on file.

The Head Teacher confirmed that all actions from the minutes circulated had been actioned.

Governors RESOLVED that the minutes of the Local Governing Body meeting of The Rydal Academy held on Monday 4 October 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting and should be signed by the Chair. The Governance Clerk would liaise with the Chair to arrange a signed copy of the approved minutes are retained on file.

PART B: Business items for discussion

6 Chairs Report

The Chair reported that regular meetings were being held with the Head Teacher and Chief Executive Officer

Governors RESOLVED that the information was noted.

7 Head Teacher's Report including Chief Finance Officer, Trust Business Manager and Trust ICT Manager update including ICT Development Plan.

The Head Teacher's Report, SEF / Action Plan, Education Development Partner Report (Summer Term 2021) and Risk Register had been shared with Governors prior to the meeting. Copies would be retained on file.

The Chair highlighted the importance of asking questions and professional challenge throughout the Head Teacher report.

For the benefit of the newly elected Governors the Head Teacher explained that any changes to the Head Teacher's Report had been highlighted in yellow.

The Head Teacher, Chief Finance Officer, Trust Business Manager and ICT Manager presented to Governors the content of the circulated Head Teacher's Report, drawing Governors' attention to the summary of change within each section as follows:

Pupil numbers / attendance and exclusions

The Head Teacher drew Governors attention to section 1 of the Head Teacher's Report. The Head Teacher reported to Governors that pupil numbers on roll are projected to fall moving forward with 544 pupils on roll at the start of 2021/22 and projected to fall to 517 in 2022/23 and falling further in 2023/24 with 481 projected pupils on roll.

The Chair sought clarification regarding the projection of falling pupil numbers and as to whether it was reflective of the national picture. The Head Teacher confirmed that this was a nationwide issue due to the declining birth rate. As Darlington is only a small area with many Primary Schools this means many are getting their first choice School. The Chief Finance Officer reported that due to in-year admissions being high that the net affect in the reduction of pupil numbers is only 10 pupils less than the current years census and this would only have minimal effect on funding.

The Head Teacher informed Governors that 4 children have indicated a move to Elective Home Education rather than transition to Secondary school for September 22 and 4 had not made an application.

The Chair queried what would happen if no application had been made by the end of the academic year. The Head Teacher clarified that if no applications had been made then the School would continue to liaise with the families to encourage them to complete an application. The families can contact admissions to check where there are still School places within the local area.

The Head Teacher reported to Governors that in-year mobility had been significantly high compared to previous years, receiving many children through the women's refuge. The Head Teacher reported to Governors that 2 Gypsy, Roma Traveller pupils have moved to Elective Home Education since September citing cultural reasons. The Head Teacher advised Governors that meetings were held with the family to try and encourage the family to keep the pupils in education.

The Head Teacher informed Governors that Rydal has tracked above the National average against the fortnightly National attendance figures.

The Head Teacher reported to Governors that there had been no permanent exclusions during the reporting period. Of the 4 pupils with suspensions during the Autumn term 2021 only 1 pupil had repeated suspensions, of the 4

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pupils 1 child is LAC and SEN Support, 1 child has an EHCP, 1 child has a One Plan and 1 child has no SEN.

The Head Teacher informed Governors that there has been an increase in disruptive behavior, online incidents, racist and homophobic incidents. The Head Teacher reported that increased levels of whole School supervision by the Leadership Team would be implemented in the Spring Term. A Teaching Assistant to receive training to become an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA). The Pastoral Lead will undertake training to become a Senior Mental Health Lead and is attending grief training from St. Theresa's Hospice. The school behavior plan format will be redesigned specifically for pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs and to work alongside Darlington's One Plan and Ranges document.

A Governor sought clarification regarding a One Plan and how it differs from an EHCP. The Head Teacher clarified that a One Plan is a more detailed SEN support plan, and a Darlington format that is used as a preparation document when applying for an EHCP.

The Chair commented that under 'All recorded behavior incidents' 65 incidents had been classified under 'other', the Chair sought clarification as to what classified an incident as 'other'.

The Head Teacher suggested that next time the report would include a breakdown of the different incidents classified under 'other'.

Headteacher

Attainment and progress

The Head Teacher drew Governors attention to Section 2 of the Head Teacher's Report.

The Head Teacher reported to Governors that for Early Years Foundation Stage the Reception Baseline was 11% of pupils working at ARE. The Good Level of Development (GLD) projection is broadly in line with 2016 and 2017. Growth is more than double the national average and has reduced the attainment gap by x2 (24%) from the reception baseline. Growth for Disadvantage pupils is significantly closing the attainment gap.

The Head Teacher reported that Yr1 Phonics projections track in line with national average. YR2 Phonics cumulative projections also track in line with national averages.

The Head Teacher reported that Key Stage 1 projections track below national average attainment. Stability pupils slightly outperform mobility pupils. Disadvantaged pupils don't perform as well as all pupils (at expected or greater depth level) but showed greater growth from baseline. Projections in maths at greater depth level are lower than reading and writing.

The Head Teacher informed Governors that Key Stage 2 projected attainment is below national averages in all 3 areas. The largest gap exists in maths which impacts at combined. Stability pupils outperform mobility pupils in all areas and combined. Projections in maths at both expected and greater depth level are lower than reading and writing. The Head Teacher reported to Governors that the Covid Pandemic has put more children behind in maths than in English and this is the picture being seen nationally.

Curriculum Planning

The Head Teacher drew Governors attention to Section 3 of the Head Teachers Report. The Head Teacher reported to Governors that new information regarding class sizes and pupil ratios had been added to Section 3 of the Head Teachers report. The Head Teacher informed Governors that the ratio of pupil to Teachers is 1:27.

The Chair sought clarification regarding the ratio of pupils to Teachers and whether the ratio at Rydal was reflected nationally. The Head Teacher confirmed that The Rydal Academy figures were in-line similar schools.

The Head Teacher drew Governors attention to the updated information for the ELMS class (Enhanced Learning and Mentoring Support). The ELMS class is a school provision to support children with Education Health Care Plans (EHCP) or on the EHCP pathway who are working below their Key Stage curriculum and require an increased level of adult support to access an appropriate curriculum.

The Chair commented positively on the information provided regarding the ELMS class, commenting that the information was very helpful for Governors to help to understand the importance of the ELMS Class.

The Head Teacher informed Governors that the Subject Area Verification Exercises (SAVE) were completed during the Autumn Term in Art, English and Maths with Art rated a Green and English and Maths moving to Green from Amber.

SEND

The Head Teacher drew Governors attention to the SEND information within the Head Teacher's report. The Head Teacher reported to Governors that The Rydal Academy was allocated £301,091 worth of Notional SEND funding and £100,433n worth of Top-up SEND funding for 2021/22. Top-up SEND funding is individually costed against each pupil's Education Health Care Plan. Planned expenditure focusses on SEND across the School are SEND resources; Speech and language resources; Screening programmes; Licenses for intervention programmes; SENCO release; Cohort Teaching Assistants; Provision map; Educational Psychologist time; Pastoral Lead release; CPD; ELMS staffing (0.8 x Shadow SENCO & 3 x Teaching Assistant)

The Chair queried if Top-up funding can be used for children with a one-plan. The Head Teacher clarified that Top-up funding is only allocated to children with an EHCP.

The Chair commented positively on the plan to introduce more SENCO release time, highlighting the importance of having time outside of teaching for the SENCO. A Governor seconded this, commenting that the support plans offered to pupils at Rydal are a credit to the School.

Progress against the school's accessibility plan was also shared.

Financial Management and Governance

The Chief Finance Officer referred to Section 4 of the Head Teacher's report and informed Governors that the outturn report was prepared at a time when we were gradually returning to normality and hopefully no further lockdowns were enforced, thus meaning any additional costs in relation to Covid were minimal.

Monthly management accounts are shared each month with the Board of Directors. The CFO & CEO liaise with the Chair of the Trust on any urgent matters. The school are predicting a £160k surplus at the 31st August 2022. We have recently invested circa £60k in ICT equipment and further premises improvements and repairs.

Confirmation of the funding allocation for the next academic year has been received. This shows an overall increase of £60k despite pupil number reducing by 10 for September 2022, the increase will help counteract rising inflation costs.

Governors asked for the current picture in terms of Reception admissions for September. The Head Teacher explained that the projections were currently for just over 60 pupils against a PAN of 90, which was better than budgeted for. The Head Teacher explained that this could have a negative impact on the budget due to the requirement to staff a third class depending on the final number of pupils that arrive in September.

The CFO stated that all contracts continue to be reviewed on a regular basis although it is becoming increasingly more difficult to find savings due to rising costs.

The Chief Finance Officer reported to Governors the findings of the Gender Pay Gap report from 31st March 2021.

	Female	Male
Lower Quartile Band	92.42%	7.58%
Lower Middle Quartile Band	75.76%	24.24%
Upper Middle Quartile Band	63.64%	36.36%

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Upper Quartile Band

64.62%

35.38%

The table shows that within Swift Academies there is a higher proportion of women in all quartiles, but especially in the lower and lower middle quartiles.

The majority of staff are in the lower pay quartiles, which have traditionally been represented by females in occupations including catering, lunchtime supervision, administration and education support staff.

The CFO provided an update to Governors regarding the NJC pay award which has been pending since April 2021. They confirmed that this has now been agreed and all NJC (support) staff will receive an uplift in salary equating to 1.75%, this will be backdated to April 2021. As this rise was expected the costs have been budgeted for.

Trust IT Update

The Trust ICT Manager reported to Governors that during the February Half Term 2022 the majority of classroom teacher computers and interactive screens were upgraded with top of the range equipment. This involved removing the old teacher computers and replacing them with brand new computers to assist with teaching and learning. An additional 68 laptops have been acquired from the DfE. As Rydal already has a bank of laptops for remote learning the new laptops will be used to replace any faulty or ageing pupil laptops in classrooms.

A Governor commented that the impact on teaching since the installation of the new equipment has been tremendous, with each lesson flowing much better than before and the pupils engaging in lessons.

The Head Teacher informed Governors that staff training will be organised to help staff utilize the new IT equipment.

Schedule of Contracts

The Trust Business Manager advised Governors that all contracts and service level agreements are reviewed on a monthly basis. The Rydal Academy has recently changed supplier for Sanitary waste which has saved circa £1000 per annum. Gas contracts were renewed in November 2021.

Estates Management/ Health and Safety

The Trust Business Manager referred to the Estates Management and Health and Safety sections of the Headteachers' report.

The Trust Business Manager updated Governors regarding the Capital Improvement Fund (CIF). They advised successful funding from the 2021 round to replace fire doors and improve fire compartments would shortly be advertised for Tender for the Contractor to be appointed and works completed

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over summer holidays. Fire Safety Surveys were conducted during February half term in preparation of this.

Applications for the 2022/2023 fund were submitted to the DfE via the online portal in December 2021 and results are expected in April 2022. This year applications were submitted to:

1. Upgrade the heating distribution and pipework throughout school to compliment the new boiler system
2. Replace the last remaining flat roofs on site

The Trust Business Manager also advised Governors that an estates strategy and maintenance list was regularly monitored and updated in conjunction with a member of the Leadership Team, Site Staff and the H&S Link Governor. Prior to each period of school closure priorities are agreed to ensure the school premises is effectively managed.

Premises and H&S Audits are due to take place in April 2022, feedback will be provided to Governors regarding these reports at the Summer LGB.

The Trust Business Manager also informed Governors that the second phase of Condition Data Collection Surveys (CDC) was underway and The Rydal Academy had been given a provisional date of 15 March 2022 – Unfortunately this was cancelled by the Surveyor. A new date is expected to take place before Summer break.

Governors RESOLVED that this update was noted.

Quality Assurance

The Head Teacher drew Governors attention to Section 5 of the Head Teachers report.

The Head Teacher informed Governors that the SEF audit ratings found the overall effectiveness to be judged as Good.

No Education Development Partner visit was completed during Autumn term due to Covid absence.

Internal reviews took place through an audit of wraparound provision, an audit of personal development. Outcome and actions were shared.

Equality Data

Current equality data for pupils and staff was shared alongside an update on progress against equality objectives. Governor / Director equality data is yet to be collected.

Safeguarding and well-being

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The Head Teacher drew Governors attention to Section 6 of the Head Teachers Report.

The Head Teacher reported that the number of families accessing Early Help continues to rise while the number of child protection plans has decreased dramatically. This is a pattern mirrored within the Local Authority. The Rydal Academy has 13% of Darlington's Child Protection Plans and 14% of Darlington's Children in Need cases, this is a considerable need for just one School.

The number of Looked after children has almost halved with many children supported through Special Guardianship Orders (SGO's) currently. Unfortunately, there is very little support, either financially or otherwise, available for these families.

The number of harmful sexual behaviour incidents are increasing. This could be in part due to the school's zero tolerance of this kind of behaviour and a refusal to accept this kind of culture. The DSL has attended training courses focussing on recording and support.

Similarly, the number of domestic abuse incidents is also increasing. Darlington's children's services are reviewing the support currently available for domestic abuse. In school, we continue to deliver The Freedom programme which is well attended.

The School Community

The Head Teacher drew Governors attention to Section 7 of the Head Teachers report.

The Head Teacher informed Governors that Staff views are recorded termly in the staff questionnaire. The Spring Term questionnaire responses were received from 35 staff which is a 46% return. Staff comments by more than 5% of respondents related to behaviour management through the increasing needs of a small group for children during Spring 1 and the implementation of the behaviour and self-regulation policy, mainly in Key Stage 2.

Staffing Structure

The Head Teacher updated governors as to recruitment and vacancies.

HR

The Head Teacher informed Governors that Teacher absence at Rydal is high against the national average. Sickness absence for Leadership and Teaching Staff for 2021/22 is high when compared with previous years. Support Staff absence and Leadership absence is high against Teaching Staff absence.

Covid related absence is running high against the previous year for Leadership and Teaching staff but low for Support staff. Support staff Covid related absence remains high against Leadership and Teaching staff.

Pupil Views

The Head Teacher reported to Governors that Pupil views are recorded termly in the Pupil questionnaire and through the School Council. Spring term questionnaire responses were received from 118 pupils in Years 3-6 which is a 34% return, pupil views will be compared term on term to monitor changing perspectives over time.

Suggestions to make the School better raised by more than 5% of respondents: more/better playground equipment (27%); improve cloakrooms (19%); stop bullying / improve behaviour (13%); more reading books (12%); more school trips (11%); Improve toilets (11%); better/more laptops (8%); bigger football goals on playground and not a sponge ball (7%); playtime after lunch (7%); develop a refocus room (5%).

The Head Teacher informed Governors although it is impossible to accommodate every request, many of the improvements raised by the pupils, staff were already aware of and plans to address these improvements are being formulated.

Parent/Carer Questionnaire

The Head Teacher informed Governors that the Parent/Carers views compare well to national averages. Parent/carers views will be compared term on term to monitor changing perspectives over time. No areas for improvement were raised in comments by more than 5% of respondents.

Complaints

The Head Teacher Reported to Governors that there are no ongoing complaints at this time.

SEF/Action Plan

The school Self-Evaluation Form and Action Plan was shared for information

EDP

The Headteacher explained that the focus of this terms visit was for an update on the current context of the school, a review of the schools Subject Area Verification Exercise process and a subject review of History. The recommended actions within the report were shared with governors.

Risk Register

The updated risk register was shared with governors.

Governors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated Head Teacher's Report, SEF/Action Plan, Education Development Partner Report (Spring Term 2022) and Risk Register, and information reported, were noted.

8 Chief Executive Officer's report

The Chief Executive Officer's Report, Scheme of Delegation and Trust Development Plan had been shared with Governors prior to the meeting. Copies would be retained on file.

The Chief Executive Officer provided an update on Head of School recruitment at both Hurworth and Longfield; in terms of Hurworth, they advised a candidate was successful at interview on the 10th February and will join the Trust on the 1st September 2022.

In terms of Longfield, the advertisement has now closed and shortlisting and interviews are due to take place over the next few weeks, the current head of School has tendered their resignation with effect from the 31st August 2022.

Chairs / Vice Chairs of Local Governing Body

An invitation would be shared with respective Chairs and Vice Chairs shortly, in preparation for the termly meeting with the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Finance Officer, Trust ICT Manager and Trust Business Manager. The meeting was planned to take place virtually from 1:30pm on Friday 18th March 2022

Scheme of Delegation

It was reported that there were no changes to the circulated Scheme of Delegation.

Trust Development Plan 2021-2022

The Chief Executive Officer reported that the Trust Development Plan had been reviewed and updated by the Executive Leadership Team and is included on the agenda for Local Governing Body meetings for review. The Plan would be presented to the Board of Directors on Friday 1 April 2022 for review and approval.

Governors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated Chief Executive Officer's Report, Scheme of Delegation, Trust Development Plan and information reported, was noted.

9	<p>Single Central Record: Signature by Head of School and Chair The Trust Business Manager agreed to meet the Head Teacher and Chair of the Local Governing Body (The Rydal Academy) in order to review the Single Central Record, immediately after this meeting of the Local Governing Body.</p>	Trust Business Manager
<p>Governors RESOLVED that the information was noted.</p>		
10	<p>Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR) The updated format of the IDSR was shared with governors.</p>	
11	<p>School Uniform Review – September 2022 Statutory guidance Governors were informed by the Head Teacher that the schools current uniform policy meets the statutory requirement coming into place in September 2022. But the school had commissioned a questionnaire to explore reducing cost for parent/carers by moving to an active uniform. Parents responses were very even across the four options and data was shared with governors. Governors resolved that the current uniform should be extended to include the items in the active uniform from September 2022. Iron on school badges will also be made available to parents. Uniform policy to be updated for September 2022 and changes in uniform to be promoted to parent/carers over summer term.</p>	Headteacher
12	<p>Policies for approval / review / information The Head Teacher drew Governors attention to the policies for information.</p> <p>a) For information – Swift approved policies: Appraisal Policy; Pay Policy for Teacher and Support Staff; Complaints Procedure; Health and Safety Policy; Asbestos Trust Statement of Intent; Equality Objectives; Code of Conduct (Employees); Biometric Data Policy; Finance Policy; Online Safety Policy; Data Retention and Destruction Policy; Business Continuity Strategy; CCTV Policy; Substance Misuse Policy; Risk Management Policy and Procedure</p> <p>b) For information - School reviewed policies: Behaviour and Self-regulation Policy; Special Education Needs and Disability Policy; SEND Information Report; SEND Information Report Pupil Guide; Winter Gritting Risk Assessment and Policy; Lone Working Policy; First Aid and Accident Policy; Visitors Health and Safety Policy; Home-school agreement; Child Protection Policy; Looked After Children (Previously Looked After) Policy;</p>	

Early Years Guidance; Reporting to Parents Annual Cycle; Anti-Bullying Policy; Pupil Transition Policy; Attendance Policy; Young Carers Policy; Initial Teacher Education Policy; Remote Education Policy;

c) For approval – Early Career Teacher (ECT) Policy – changes to responsibilities from NQT Policy; Child Missing in Education Policy – new policy; Elective Home Education Policy – new policy; Home Visits Policy – new policy; Allergens Policy – changes due to Natasha’s law and inclusion on anaphylaxis.

Governors RESOLVED that the circulated policies, including any changes, were noted and agreed to adopt and approve.

13 Special interest governors- allocation of roles for 2021-22 and verification process:

The Governor Visit records had been shared with Governors prior to the meeting. Copies would be retained on file.

- a) Premises / Health & Safety: Mark Emerson
- b) Safeguarding & Welfare, looked after children (LAC), e-safety: Sarah Clough.
- c) Special Educational Needs (SEN), including SEMH: Kelly-Ann Lyle
- d) Finance: vacancy
- e) Values, Community & Equality: vacancy
- f) Careers & Transition: Troy Turner.
- g) Standards (Teaching, Learning, Curriculum & Progress): Mark Gray.
- h) Early Career Framework (ECF) (formerly Newly Qualified Teacher NQT): Mark Gray

Governors RESOLVED that the verbal updates were noted.

Standing Items

14 Feedback from MAT Development Session held on Thursday 10 February 2022

Did not go ahead due to lack of Governor attendance. New MAT Development Session date scheduled for Thursday 7 July 2022.

Concluding Items

15 Any urgent other business raised under Item 5

No urgent items of other business were identified under Item 5.

16 Approval of documents for inspection

17

Governors RESOLVED that the agenda, approved minutes and supporting documents be made available for public inspection with the exception of information concerning identifiable pupils and/or teachers.

Date and time of future meetings (all from 1pm): Local Governing Body

- Monday 20 June 2022

MAT Development Sessions (all from 5pm)

- Thursday 7 July 2022

Chairs / Vice Chairs of LGB and Executive Leadership Team (all from 1:30pm)

- Friday 18 March 2022, Friday 24 June 2022

These minutes were approved by the Local Governing Body of The Rydal Academy as follows:

on: 20/6/22 date

signed by: (Chair)

Mark Gray

printed name:

MARK GRAY

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