

Open Session

MINUTES OF THE BMIS BOARD MEETING HELD IN THE LIBRARY ON THE 27TH SEPTEMBER 2011 AT 6.30 PM.

PRESENT

N. Airey	NA	Chair
V. Beza	VB	Board Member
J. Carstens	JC	Board Member
N. Bishop	NB	Director
H. Schievink	HS	PTA Representative
P. Harrison	PH	Secondary Head
J. Johnson	JJ	Primary Head
J. Kotze	JK	Primary Representative
W. Horea	WH	Business Manager

APOLOGIES

A. Dedekind	AD	Board Member
D. Pinto	DP	Board Member
E. Hausi	EH	Board Member
M. Burdett	MB	Board Member
H. Banda	HB	Board Member
S. O'loughlin	SO	Secondary Representative

The meeting was called to order at 6.39 pm. The Chair welcomed all present. A quorum of Board Members was not present but the meeting, having been duly convened, was ready to proceed with business.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Board approved the Agenda by unanimous consent.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Open Session of the BMIS Board Meeting held on 30th August, 2011 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1 Meeting with MRA

WH was asked to resend a copy of the letter appealing for a waiver of fringe benefit tax to MRA since they had not yet replied to the letter sent to them in July. **Action: WH**

3.2 Security Provision

NB reported that he was still in contact with embassies regarding the radio link. He explained that USI had been to the school and had made several recommendations. NB was of the opinion that USI was ready to take over from 1st October, 2011. **Action: NB**

3.3 Land Deeds

Regarding the issue of land ownership by BMIS, NB reported that he had received all the relevant information from Peter Killick. He however, felt that there was need for the school to find an ideal time to approach the Ministry in order not to jeopardize the school's chances. JC wanted to know if something could be done at Principal Secretary level. VB explained that it always goes back to politicians so it would be better to just lobby the politicians.

Action: NB

4. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Board noted and discussed the report presented by the Director.

4.1 Maintenance and Security

NB informed the meeting that USI was ready to take over from G4S from 1st October, 2011. He noted that G4S may have felt that the decision by BMIS to change was based on the theft of the monitor. He acknowledged the efforts by WH in coordinating with the police.

Regarding the building of the new storage, NB explained that the new quotations will be circulated to DP and MB but noted that prices had since gone up. He informed the Board that the contractor who had given the lowest quote did not require upfront payment. NB suggested that the final decision be left to MB and DP. JC advised that it was important to ensure that there was a 12 month retention period to avoid exposing ourselves in terms of defects.

Action: NB/MB/DP

The Board learnt that the borehole was now fully operational after extensive maintenance work was carried out. NA was hopeful that the surroundings would now start looking a lot greener and asked WH to check Amos' watering programme.

Action: WH

NB also explained that the gate security systems were improving.

4.2 Administration

4.2.1 Commercial Online Banking

NB reported that although the online banking system promised to reduce transaction fees and increase efficiency, it did not fully meet the school's requirements. NB explained that Nedbank had also been approached to see if their system could be adapted to be more suited to the needs of the school. He observed that the school needed a system that would take care of other things as well.

Action: NB/WH

4.2.2 Maintenance Requests

NB reported that a system for requesting and processing maintenance had been developed as a way of dealing with the perennial problems and frustrations caused by the current system. The system was currently on trial and once finalized, key personnel would be trained on how to use it.

Action: NB

4.3 Student Related Issues

4.3.1 Mission Statement

NB reported that he had held positive discussions with students and teachers who were all in favour of the new Mission Statement wording which reads:

"BMIS educates and inspires students to value integrity, cultural diversity, and the pursuit of well-being and excellence. Our school fosters an environment which empowers students to become creative, confident lifelong learners ready to take action in the local and global communities". A school motto with the following acronym was also developed:

"BMIS: Belief, Motivation, Inspiration, Success".

JC proposed that the whole BMIS community should be involved. NA asked that the new Mission Statement and Motto be circulated to Board members the following day.

Action: NB

4.4 Staffing and HR Issues

4.4.1 Secondary Staff

The Board learnt that David Turner, the new music teacher was settling well and was already having an impact on the school in terms of music.

4.4.2 Pool

NB reported that Benedicto, who has worked at St Andrews, had been offered the position of Life Guard. He would be taking over from Jimmy who has since formally retired.

4.5 Finance and Budgets

4.5.1 US Government Funding

NB informed the Board that the US Government was keen to give the school more funding as long as the school provided them with information. NB further explained that the funding would be available this year instead of next year and that it will be for specific purposes such as CCTV, refurbishing the PA and emergency communication system, and a security bollard at the front gate.

JC wanted to know if there is going to be control in terms of the CCTV. NB explained that the CCTV would mostly be for recording and not monitoring purposes.

Action: NB

4.5.2 Budget Projections

NB explained that the budget projections presented at the last Finance Committee meeting had improved. Current enrollment was at 733 against the budget figure of 739, bringing about a shortfall of K250,000. He noted that this figure was not bad although it was still below budget and there was need to plough in about K100,000. NB added that he had been looking at budget areas where the school could save money.

Action: NB

The meeting agreed that the issue of penalty for not giving notice is something that still needs to be addressed for next academic year.

Action: NB

5. PRIMARY HEAD'S REPORT

The Board noted and discussed the report presented by JJ.

5.1 Staffing

JJ reported that she had not yet received the letter from Debbie regarding her maternity leave. However, Shelley Pyman will be covering Debbie Mayer until a replacement teacher is hired. The Board learnt that Shelley had already started visiting the class and getting to know the children. Parents will be informed officially through a letter to be sent out after half term.

Regarding the Year 6 teaching post, JJ informed the Board that an advert had been put on SEARCH and that she now had one definite CV she was considering. She was hoping to conduct skype interviews within the following few weeks.

JJ further informed the Board that she had met with Teaching Assistants regarding training and that they were all willing to improve their skills.

Action: JJ

5.2 Maintenance

A recent survey on interactive whiteboard conducted by Andurette van Der Merwe found that the non-functioning of equipment was causing a lot of technical issues. Efforts were being

taken to solve this situation and soon all classes will have interactive whiteboards and fully functional projectors.

Action: JJ

5.3 Students

JJ reported that Year 6 had a successful trip to Sun and Sand and the Year 5 trips to Luwawa would be completed the following week. Regarding the elections for the Student Council, JJ reported that the newly elected members had been presented with certificates and badges at assembly the previous week and that they would be meeting later in the week to put together an action plan for the year.

Action: JJ

JJ also reported that four new houses had been chosen and house captains were presented with certificates at the last assembly. She explained that the first gathering event will take place the following Sunday and those who will take part could earn points for their houses. NA enquired if the housing system was only in Primary. JJ explained that the system was also in Secondary and that more information will be put in the next Tikambe. JC wanted to know if the new house system had affected the colours. JJ confirmed that the same colours had been retained.

Action: JJ

NB noted that some parents who have had their children in the school for a long time had been concerned about this change. JJ explained that the change was necessary as it was one of the PYP requirements since test results were no longer regarded as something to be rewarded hence the need to channel into sporting activities. NA advised that it was important that this information also be given to parents through Tikambe.

Action: JJ

5.4 PYP

The Board learnt that there would be a PYP Introductory Evening for new parents on Wednesday 28th September. JJ explained that various activities had been taking place and that Christelle, the PYP Coordinator, was up to date with what was happening in PYP.

5.5 School Events and Scheduled Meetings

JJ informed the Board that the ISA Testing for Years 4, 5, and 6 would take place on Tuesday October 4th. She also reported that Val Bloom, a visiting author will be at BMIS making presentations and holding a number of workshops from 10th to 12th October. JJ noted that people were excited with Val Bloom's visit. NA thanked JJ for organizing the visit.

Action: JJ

Regarding settling-in conferences, JJ reported that these had been scheduled to take place on the 12th and 13th October.

6. SECONDARY HEAD'S REPORT

6.1 Personnel

PH reported that the new Music Teacher for Secondary, David Turner commenced his duties on Thursday the previous week and that John Ross had finally returned to Lilongwe after recovering from his back injury.

Regarding the appraisal process, PH informed the Board that the first appraisal meeting would be starting soon.

Action: PH

6.2 ISA Standardized Testing

The ACER standardizing testing for Years 7, 8, and 9 will this year take place on Tuesday 4th and Thursday 6th October. Results are expected about two months later. PH explained that parents will receive their children's report while the school will receive data for each cohort.

PH further stated that the ACER results would help identify areas of strength as well as areas needing improvement. According to PH, the AISA test has now become an integral part of the school's assessment system in the Secondary School.

Action: PH

6.3 Middle Years Programme

The Board learnt that the application for candidacy as a MYP school is almost complete and will be submitted to the IBO before October 1st. PH explained that there had been a few technical hitches on the part of IBO themselves regarding the registering of BMIS on IB DOCS, a program in which everything is registered online. PH added that Sally, NB and himself have had discussions and a strategic plan for the development of the MYP at BMIS had been created to help the school meet the demands of the IBO standards and practices. Sally, might come in the next meeting to give a presentation.

Action: PH

6.4 College Counsellor

PH reported that Olatokunbo Fashoyin, the College Counselor had been working on academic guidance and university/career counseling. She is initially working with the Year 12's and 13's and later in the term will move down to the younger age groups. Personal and social counseling on an individual need basis as well as some learning support was being provided during Mr. Ross' absence.

Diane McKoy from Columbia University Admissions will be visiting BMIS as part of the Overseas Schools Project tour of the region delivering presentations aimed at students, parents and teachers. PH added that Diane will be available for individual consultations upon request. According to PH, efforts were being made to encourage as many students as possible to patronize her sessions. Day one would be mandatory. A programme had already been sent out and reminders would be sent out soon. Sessions had been planned for Years 10, 11, 12, and 13.

Action: PH

6.5 IB Diploma Programme

The Board heard that an analysis of the school's IB Diploma results using results data from 2006 to 2011 had been completed and an additional analysis will be developed as new questions arise from this information. PH explained that the outcome of the analysis where IGCSE and IB results were compared was as follows:

- *On average, a minimum IGCSE result that is likely to produce success in the IB Diploma (24 points or higher) at BMIS, is equivalent to 8 grade Cs or higher.*
- *Success in the IB Diploma is not always related to success at IGCSE.*
- *Success in the IB Diploma is related to motivation or effort.*
- *Since 2005, 82% of all BMIS Diploma candidates have obtained an IB Diploma*
- *Girls at BMIS have traditionally had a greater level of success in the IB Diploma, than boys, although this trend was reversed for the first in 2011.*
- *Boys from an Asian cultural background usually have a greater level of success in the IB Diploma, than girls from the same cultural background*

PH explained that the world Diploma IB results for 2011 were 77.8%, a little drop from 2010's 79%. He further added that BMIS was continually looking at comparing itself with other schools but because results of other individual schools are not published it was not possible to do a comparison with similar schools. Students were however being advised that they do not necessarily need an IB Diploma to go to university.

Action: PH

7.0 ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

7.1 Finance

WH reported that the issue regarding fringe benefit tax was still pending awaiting a response from MRA. He suggested that the Commissioner General's judgment might be influenced by the issue to do with his son's enrollment. JJ explained the background to the Commissioner General's enrolment issue. After much discussion, the meeting concluded that the school does not have the resources to provide for the child even on a social program and therefore not the right school for him. The meeting was hopeful that being a professional, the Commissioner General's decision would not in any way be influenced by the issue to do with his son's enrolment.

Action: WH

7.1.1 Invoicing and Debtors

WH informed the meeting that at a meeting with Counsel held on 12th September, 2011, the Counsel stated that he would be sending out demand letters before applying for summons. WH explained that two, out of the six cases, had given an indication that they would make new arrangements for settlement of their debts. NA suggested that WH emphasizes to Counsel on the fact that with good performance he would get a bonus.

Action: WH

7.1.2 Online Banking

It was noted that this had already been discussed in the Director's report.

7.1.3 Forex and Gratuities

The Board learnt that while it was easier to process foreign payments at the start of term because of the availability of forex reserves in the school's FDAs, the reserves were not enough to cater for other payments such as IBO, health insurance cover, school supplies and gratuities. The school therefore prioritized the payment of health insurance cover. It was expected that gratuities would be paid out by 10th October. WH added that the teachers affected had been individually being informed.

Action: WH

NB informed the meeting that the US Embassy had sent some money but Nedbank's corresponding foreign bank had sent it back. VB suggested that WH finds out why the money was sent back and ask them to rewire.

Action: WH

7.2 Human Resources

WH reported that a Driver, a Lifeguard and a Security Guard were due to start work on 1st October. During the month, temporary cleaners had been hired to cover those areas that were previously being handled by Teaching Assistants. Contracts for the cleaners would be converted to part-time from October.

Action: WH

On the Pensions Act, WH confirmed that teachers on overseas contracts were indeed exempt but those on local contracts were not.

7.3 Security

The Board noted that security had already been discussed in the Director's report.

7.4 Maintenance and Teacher Housing

7.4.1 Borehole

WH reported that the borehole was now fully functional having been fitted with a suitable control panel.

7.4.2 New Storage Room

WH presented a table summarizing the bids on the building of the new storage room submitted by various contractors. VB wanted to know which contractor had been selected to carry out the

work. WH explained that Tinthu, the contractor with the lowest bid, was being considered but this had not yet been communicated to the contractor. **Action: WH**

8.0 FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

On behalf of the Finance Committee, VB reported that there was still more action points to be done after which a report for the Board would be produced.

NB added that the PTA was keen to help improve things around the school including a new tuck shop facility. He noted that a high profile project for PTA would make it easier to do fundraising. The Board learnt that the PTA was preparing for its Annual General Meeting.

Action: HS

9.0 P & A SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

The Personnel and Administration sub-committee met the previous week and was working on upgrading the teachers' overseas contract. The committee was also planning on working on the local contract. It was expected that the committee will be meeting once every month. A report will be available at the next Board meeting.

Action: NA

10.0 POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT

JC reported that the Policy Committee met on Wednesday the previous week. It was agreed at the meeting that the committee would come up with a schedule of high priority policies to be finalized. It was the intention of the Policy Committee to make the Policy Manual more user friendly and interactive. The committee was due to meet again on 13th October. Meetings will take place monthly.

Action: JC

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

There being no other business, the meeting was closed at 1955 pm. The next Open Session of the BMIS Board Meeting will take place on Tuesday 25th October, 2011 at 6.30 pm.

Minutes approved and signed by the Chair:.....

Date: :.....