

## **Open Session**

### **MINUTES OF THE BMIS BOARD MEETING HELD IN THE LIBRARY ON THE 25<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2011 AT 6.30 PM**

#### **PRESENT**

N. Airey	NA	Chair
V. Beza	VB	Board Member
M. Burdett	MB	Board Member
A. Dedekind	AD	Board Member
N. Bishop	NB	Director
H. Schievink	HS	PTA Representative
P. Harrison	PH	Secondary Head
J. Johnson	JJ	Primary Head
S. O'loughlin	OS	Secondary Representative
B. Mutasa	BM	Primary Representative

#### **BY INVITATION**

S. Elliott	SE	MYP Coordinator
J. Brown	JB	US Embassy

#### **APOLOGIES**

J. Carstens	JC	Board Member
D. Pinto	DP	Board Member
E. Hausi	EH	Board Member
H. Banda	HB	Board Member

The meeting was called to order at 6.41 pm. The Chair welcomed all present and 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**

Minutes of the Open Session of the BMIS Board meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2011 were approved with the following correction:

Line two of Point 5.1 of the Primary Head's report to read "However, Shelley Pyman will be covering Debbie Mayer".

#### **3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

##### **3.1 Pool Attendant/Life Guard**

NB reported that both the first and second choices did not find the salary acceptable and therefore the position would have to be re-advertised. NA wanted to know how long Jimmy can be kept on the job pending a suitable replacement. WH explained that according to the labour laws of Malawi, he cannot be kept indefinitely. **Action: WH**

#### **4. MYP COORDINATOR'S PRESENTATION**

Sally Elliott, the MYP Coordinator, made a brief presentation on the role of the Board and what part it would play in the program implementation process. NB acknowledged SE's contribution and thanked her for the presentation.

## **5. DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### **5.1 Maintenance and Security**

#### **5.1.1 Security**

NB reported that he was pleased with USI's performance so far. Other things needed to be ironed out thoroughly. **Action: NB/WH**

#### **5.1.2 Building of New Storage**

NB thanked DP, MB and JC for responding and for reviewing the quotations when they were circulated. Progress was now being made and updates will be provided at the next Board meeting. **Action: NB/DP/MB/JC**

#### **5.1.3 Theft**

NB informed the Board that electrical fencing was being considered as an alternative for houses where there has been several issues of razor wire theft. AD suggested that the landlords be asked to replace the razor wire. NB noted that the long term strategy was for the school to secure its own accommodation. **Action: NB**

### **5.2 Administration**

#### **5.2.1 Maintenance Requests**

NB reported that the Maintenance Assistant system was aimed at better tracking the maintenance requests. The next step was to train relevant personnel on how use it. **Action: NB**

#### **5.2.2 Website**

The Board learnt that the new website had been activated and that after having dealt with the initial teething problems, it was now running smoothly. Training for staff on how to use it would take place the following Monday. **Action: NB**

#### **5.2.3 Administrator Plus**

NB reported that the software put in place last year was not able to handle everything at the moment. Attempts had been made at trying to do it ourselves but it was not easy. Because a significant investment had already been made, there was need to review its value. **Action: NB/PH**

### **5.3 Staffing and HR Issues**

#### **5.3.1 AISA**

NB reported that the AISA forums attended by NB, Christelle Thompson and SE provided a good opportunity to network and share ideas with other schools. It also provided useful information to feedback to the school.

#### **5.3.2 Erin Macdonald**

NB reported that after much discussion individually and with Personnel Committee, Erin Macdonald's request to be released early from her contract had been accepted and her last pay day would be November 4th. He explained that JJ had secured a potentially very good temporary replacement and had been interviewing for a permanent replacement. JJ was commended for doing a good job.

#### **5.3.3 Sick leave**

The Board was informed that Willem Snieder had been off school for two weeks on stress-related sick leave and would be returning to work after half-term break.

#### **5.3.4 Educational Support**

NB informed the Board that Ester Dekker had stepped down from her position as Coordinator of Educational Support in the Primary and that this function was now falling under JJ and Christelle Thompson.

#### **5.3.5 Lifeguard**

The Board learnt that the search for a Lifeguard was still continuing after the contact fell through based on salary expectations. **Action: NB/WH**

### **5.4 Events and Activities**

#### **5.4.1 French Trip**

NB reported that the French Trip led by Willem Snieder was very successful and he was thankful to all staff involved.

### **5.5 Finance and Budgets**

#### **5.5.1 US Government Funding**

The Board was informed that US Embassy had been provided with cost projections for some security enhancements and the Embassy was yet to provide information on whether funding would be available. JB wanted to know what areas the school was looking at. NB explained that it was mainly on security (CCTV). JB informed the Board that he had worked with WH on the matter and payment should be processed the following week. He promised to follow up and added that the Embassy does not only look at areas that are deprived but at excellence as well. **Action: JB/WH**

#### **5.5.2 Beit Trust**

NB informed the Board that he had met with the Trustees of Beit Trust when they visited the school during their follow-up visits to projects for which they had provided support. He explained that this had been an opportunity to look at for future funding opportunities.

## **6. PRIMARY HEAD'S REPORT**

### **6.1 Staffing**

JJ informed the Board that a letter would be going out to parents the same week informing them that Shelley Pyman would be covering for Debbie Mayer from the 18<sup>th</sup> November.

The Board learnt that the two candidates who had been interviewed for the position of year 6 class teacher had both been unsuccessful. She had also interviewed two Supply teachers to cover the year 6 class for the remainder of Term 1 and was hopeful that one of them would be in place within the following couple of weeks. **Action: JJ**

### **6.2 Maintenance**

JJ reported that during the half term break the ICT room had been re-organized and students were now accommodated in a better learning environment. She said the maintenance of interactive whiteboards in classrooms was still going on and that more classrooms had been fitted with fully functioning boards.

### **6.3 ISA Testing**

JJ reported that the Acer standardized tests for Years 4, 5 and 6 took place on Tuesday October 4<sup>th</sup> and Thursday October 6<sup>th</sup>. Results are expected in about two months.

### **6.4 Visiting Author**

JJ reported that children had enjoyed Val Bloom's presentations and workshops. They learnt some techniques of poetry writing and were inspired by her performance and poetry presentations. She said that many families purchased Val's books and that Val was available

for book signing. She thanked all staff involved for their enthusiasm, particularly Mrs Veronica Mahari, Mrs Gail de Oliveira and Mrs Yvonne Garside for being great hosts.

### **6.5 Settling-in Conferences**

The Board learnt that most parents attended the settling in conferences which took place on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> October and that the feedback from the parents and teachers was positive.

### **6.6 Student Council**

JJ informed the Board that the newly elected Student Council had their first charity fundraising dress-up day on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> October. A list of dates for fund raising dress-up events throughout the year as well as the details of the charity being supported this year will be posted on the website and in Tikambe. **Action: JJ**

### **6.7 School Events and Scheduled Meetings**

The Board heard that an in-service training workshop with Occupational Therapists from Sandi Centre, Titus Mwanjabe and Alice Shepard, would be held on Monday the 31<sup>st</sup> October from 13.45 to 16.00 hrs. The workshop would be attended by Reception and Years 1 to 3 teachers, class assistants and support staff. JJ explained that the workshop would be focusing on visual perceptual difficulties, auditory skills, fine motor skills and energizers for children. Parents' information evening to brief them about Sandi Centre would be held on 8<sup>th</sup> November from 19.00 till 20.00 hrs. **Action: JJ**

## **7. SECONDARY HEAD'S REPORT**

### **7.1 ISA Testing**

PH reported that ISA testing in Mathematical Literacy, Reading and Writing for Years 7, 8 and 9 took place on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> October as planned. He explained that test scripts had been sent for marking during the holiday and was now awaiting the feedback from ACER. He was hopeful that the information obtained from these tests would help identify areas requiring adjustment to better cater for the learning needs of the students.

### **7.2 Reports and Parent Conferences**

The Board learnt that progress reports had been sent out the previous Friday and that follow-up parent conference was planned for Thursday November 3<sup>rd</sup>. **Action: PH**

### **7.3 Middle Years Programme**

PH reported that the application for the candidacy as a MYP school had finally been submitted to the IBO online on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> October. The outcome of the application process was now being awaited. It was expected that BMIS will be recognized as a "Candidate School", which is the second stage of the process that leads to authorization.

### **7.4 Timetable 2012-2013**

Regarding the timetable for 2012-2013, PH explained that a preliminary draft of next year's Secondary curriculum structure was being developed and would be given to Heads of Department soon. This, added PH, would be part of an on-going consultation process that would continue throughout the rest of the academic year. This was aimed at helping inform the school about the construction of a balanced programme across the Secondary school, teacher recruiting needs, and eventually the construction of the school timetable for 2012-2013. **Action: NB/PH/JJ**

### **7.5 IGCSE and IB Diploma Examinations**

PH reported that the re-take examinations for IGCSE and IB Diploma would take place the following day and on 18<sup>th</sup> November respectively. Mock examinations for students hoping to complete IGCSE and IB examinations would take place between 21<sup>st</sup> November and 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2011 while the Art & Design will take place on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> November.

## **7.6 Student Council**

PH reported that class representatives were now fully engaged and that the council had planned for three events this term: Halloween Disco on 28<sup>th</sup> October, Holiday Disco on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, and Teacher Appreciation Day on 6<sup>th</sup> December.

## **7.7 Overseas Schools Project**

PH reported that the visit of Diane McKoy from Columbia University Admissions had been very successful and was hopeful that more similar visits can be organized on a regular basis.

## **7.8 House Competitions**

PH reported that the first house competitions of the year were underway that week. During the following week, Years 7-9 and 10-13 students would be taking part in Volleyball and Soccer. He explained that this year each age group will have its own trophy to run for and there would also be one overall combined BMIS trophy for both Primary and Secondary. NA noted that 12pm in October was too hot for students to be doing sports and suggested that first thing in the morning be considered. She thanked PH for his report. **Action: PH**

# **8. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

## **8.1 Fringe Benefit Taxes on Staff Concessionary Fees**

WH reported that MRA had finally responded to BMIS' letter regarding fringe benefit tax. He explained that in their response, MRA had backtracked on its earlier indication that penalties would be waived but did not give a reason. The author of the letter, Mr. Vokhiwa, Head of Large Taxpayer Officer, was out of the country at the time the response was received.

## **8.2 Invoicing and Debtors**

The Board heard that the legal Counsel had only managed to collect K880,330.00 out of the K5,921,249.40 total debtors from the previous year. Current term's debtors who did not make any payment arrangements with the school had been issued with letters indicating that their wards would not be allowed to attend classes as from 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2011 should they not settle the whole outstanding amount by the 28<sup>th</sup> October.

Regarding invoicing in hard currency, WH said that Nedbank had not yet had feedback from the Central Bank on a follow-up proposal.

## **8.3 Opportunity International Bank of Malawi (OIBM) Payroll Loan Facility**

WH reported that following the implementation of the new Pension Act OIBM had indicated that they would no longer be making loans accessible to employees without collateral unless the loans were guaranteed by the School. This followed the implementation of the new Pension Act. WH said the School stopped giving out loans, and if this were to be resumed, the difference in interest rate between the school and the bank would have to be taxable.

WH said that Standard Bank had come up with a proposal for the School to establish a tailor made loan facility on a special agreement. The bank will present more detailed information to the school at a later date. **Action: WH**

## **8.4 Forex and Gratuities**

Regarding instruction to have 25% remnant of gratuities remitted to respective beneficiaries, WH explained that this had already been sent out to Nedbank on 12/10/11 following the payment of US\$140,000 into BMIS' FCDA by the US Embassy. The School was expecting a further US\$38,640 as grant claims filed with the Embassy for the 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 academic years. AD enquired why others could not pay in US\$ if the US Embassy could. VB explained that the RBM were quite happy to get the rate ruling on a particular day. What they have a problem with is the rate. NB suggested that the School should have a conversation with

a selected number of top organizations on the possibility of them paying in US\$.  
**Action: NB/WH**

### **8.5 Human Resources**

The Board learnt that a Security Guard and a Driver had been employed and both commenced their duties on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2010. However, the candidate who was offered the Life Guard position had turned down the offer due to low pay. The position had since been re-advertised and shortlisting of the candidates was being carried out by Mr. Dave Sargent.

In terms of contracts for temporary cleaners, WH reported that these had been put on hold until just before when they would have worked for a year at which time they will then be employed on a permanent basis. Legally one could not be on temporary employment for more than a year.  
**Action: WH**

### **8.6 Security**

It was noted that the issue of security had already been discussed in the Director's report.

### **8.7 Maintenance and Teacher Housing**

#### **8.7.1 New Storage Room**

WH reported that the contract for building the new storage room had been awarded to Tintu Investments whose bid had been pegged at K10,097,680 up from the original figure of K8,951,400.00. The original budget figure was K9,900,000.

#### **8.7.2 Improvement of Secondary School Driveway**

The Board heard that costing for the improvement of the Secondary School driveway had been done. The crusher-run and road-chip options were expected to cost K1,302,205 and K1,670,035 respectively. NA suggested that the PTA be involved in getting a few companies to help.  
**Action: NB/WH/HH**

## **9. FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

VB reported that the first meeting of the Finance Committee had noted that Financial Statements for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2011 may have had a problem with technical insolvency, however, it was expected that this would be taken care of by the school fees. He explained that the Committee was still working on the Policy of school fees to generate more income and would therefore bring in a couple of scenarios to the next meeting for the Board to decide. NB added that there was indeed need to look at a couple of scenarios and establish what the implication on the budget would be if the school was looking to close the gap between tax payers and non-tax payers

**Action: Fin. Comm**

SO noted that if salaries for the following contractual period were known in good time, more teachers would decide to renew their contracts. NA explained that it was a learning process and that this year discussions were going to start early.  
**Action: NB/NA/Fin. Committee**

## **10. P & A SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT**

NA reported that all documents would be computerized and accessible and that they would tie-in with the Policy Sub Committee.

## **11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

HH reported that the PTA was planning for a big event in November dubbed "Summer under the Stars". PTA was also working on procedures and finance. She said that generally people were happy and ready.  
**Action: HH**

**12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The meeting closed at 20.00hrs. The next Open Session would be held on 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2011 at 6.30pm.

Signed:.....

Date:.....