

OPEN SESSION

MINUTES OF THE BMIS BOARD MEETING HELD IN THE LIBRARY ON THE 29TH NOVEMBER 2011 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT

N. Airey	NA	Chair
J. Carstens	JC	Board Member
A. Dedekind	AD	Board Member
H. Banda	HB	Board Member
E. Hausi	EH	Board Member
D. Pinto	DP	Board Member
S. Donker	SD	Board Member
N. Bishop	NB	Director
H. Schievink	SH	PTA Representative
P. Harrison	PH	Secondary Head
J. Johnson	JJ	Primary Head
Y. Garside	YG	Primary Representative
S. O'loughlin	SO	Secondary Representative
W. Horea	WH	Business Manager

BY INVITATION

K. Pauw	KP
A. Castro-Smith	ACS

APOLOGIES

V. Beza	VB	Board Member
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ABSENT

J. Brown	JB	Board Member
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The meeting was called to order at 6.45 pm. The Chair welcomed all present and introduced SD who was taking over Mark Burdett's position. She said the Board was looking forward to a great year with him. The Chair also introduced JB in absentia and said he would be joining the Board taking over Karl Field's position. She noted that it was AD's last Board meeting before she goes back to South Africa. AD had co-opted KP and it was NA's hope that KP would accept to take over AD's position at the beginning of next term. NA introduced KP to the Board.

1. AGENDA

The Agenda was amended to include an additional item on next year's calendar.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of the Open Session of the BMIS Board meeting held on 25th October, 2011 were approved as a true and correct record.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1 Pool Attendant/Life Guard

NB said the second choice would be starting work on 1st December. There had been some delays because he had to give his former employers notice. **Action: WH**

4. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

4.1 Maintenance and Security

NB reported that the new storage building was on schedule for completion end of December. He noted that it will free up a lot of space around the school.

The Board learnt that it had been particularly trying for teachers when they had planned lessons but there was no water in the toilets. NB however noted that staff had coped well with the problems.

NB said intermittent power supply by Escom, scarcity of fuel, and internet supply outages have continued to be a challenge to the school. The battery for the primary generator was replaced and is now operational. He thanked DP for helping with the generators. NB explained that the school has been making efforts to secure petrol and diesel for the teachers. An agreement had been reached with MTL to prioritize bandwidth for the school when there are official examinations requiring internet.

Regarding maintenance NB reported that the training of administration personnel on the Maintenance Assistant would be fully implemented from January. Meanwhile there continued to be frustrations over the timescale, quality and efficiency of maintenance tasks as Amos often has to carry out property surveys and attend to other projects at the same time. He added that he was investigating current staffing with the aim of delegating responsibilities. **Action: NB**

4.2 Students and Learning

NB reported that he had taken individual portraits of all students in the school after efforts to secure a photographer to visit the school before Christmas failed. He explained that parents will be able to download these photographs through a secure password protected website for a small fee. The funds will go towards projects for beautifying areas of the school.

4.3 Staffing and HR Issues

NB reported that both PH and Sally Elliott travelled to Florence, Italy. PH attended the IB training as part of the planned commitment to IB while Sally was invited by IB to lead the MYP training session.

The Board was informed of the birth of a healthy baby boy, Cooper, on the 10th of November, 2011 to Debbie and Ben Mayer.

4.4 Events and Activities

NB reported that a representative of Monash University, Heather Bangwayo, had visited the school. He explained that the School Counsellor had been proactive in trying to encourage more visits from universities to the school.

4.5 Finance and Budgets

NB reported that he had completely remodeled the budget to reflect projections for the future. He said he had gone through it with William and Willy and also with Janette and Paul. The following highlights were projected:

4.5.1 Capital Expenditure Items

Next year's priorities:

- **Tuckshop area**

The Board learnt that Eliani had informed the school of her intentions to discontinue running the school's tuck shop as tax and VAT were pushing prices up. NB proposed that a large structure be built on the hard court area. This can be a covered area where children can sit, but can also be used for assemblies when the hall is being used for other things like exams or sports.

NB said Mark Burdett had suggested a total construction cost of about \$60,000 including construction of a new kitchen. He informed the Board that the PTA was keen to contribute around \$20,000 to \$30,000. NB suggested that the school will need to consider bringing forward the capital investment from next year for the construction to start in the New Year in order for the structure to be ready for August. NB sought the approval of the Board in order to move to the next stage.

- **Year 6 Classroom**

NB proposed that the Year 6 classroom be built adjacent to the other classrooms in order to give more space to the library. He noted that there is need to make an investment in the library extension.

- **Staff Accommodation**

NB suggested that owing to current trends regarding increases in rentals which range from 10 to 20% every year, it was necessary that the school comes up with a long term plan regarding staff accommodation. **Action: NB**

- **IT**

NB noted that investment in IT is a key thing. He said SO was looking at a 5 year IT plan which includes installing IT systems in the classrooms and how the school wants to integrate it. **Action: SO**

- **Uniform Shop**

NB proposed that the school uniform be supplied by the school. He suggested that stocks be ordered in the New Year in order for supplies to arrive in time for the new academic year. NB said that there was need to have an outlay first and this had already been provided for on next year's outline budget. He noted that this would need to be brought forward in order to get the stock to the school before the end of this academic year. He sought the Board's approval for this to move forward to the next stage. **Action: NB**

4.5.2 Academic Costs

- **School Fees**

NB reported that he had presented to the Finance Sub-committee a projected 3 year budget which allows for variables such as school fee increases and salaries to be changed. He explained that the budget models income and expenditure based on different percentage increases while taking into account inflation changes not only in Malawi but other countries such as UK and US because of costs pertaining to academic staff such as medical, and flights.

He explained that the Finance Sub Committee would be meeting the following Monday to work with the model and come up with recommendations for the Board. Staff will be asked to re-sign their contracts early January having been given information regarding the new package. **Action: Finance Committee/NB**

4.5.3 Summary

In his summary, NB explained that one third of generated revenue comes from non-tax payers. Based on this the school can begin to project sources of revenue. He said the general perception was that non-tax payers were paying double. He suggested that all of the school's costs should be comparable to other international schools that offer the same programs as BMIS. Over a period of time the school would have to bring the tax payers fees closer to the non-tax payer fees. NB proposed that the tax payer fees should be increased by 15% and non-tax payer fees by 3%; and 4.5% pay raise for the teachers.

After much deliberation, it was agreed that this issue be continued in the Executive Session.

4.6 Next Year's Calendar

NB noted that all examinations fall in May, therefore a longer Christmas holiday would mean that examination classes would not have enough time to cover the curriculum. He proposed the following calendar:

Term 1 (71 days)
Term 2 (55 days)
Term 3 (56 days)

He said under the new calendar, term 1 would be a week longer. The Board voted for the change of the school calendar.

5. PRIMARY HEAD'S REPORT

5.1 Enrolment

JJ reported that as of 29th November, primary enrolment was at 454. Although a few families were leaving Bishop Mackenzie at the end of the term, a number of new NTP families would be joining the school in January and it was therefore expected that enrolment will remain stable.

JJ said that a huge section of the curriculum planning had been completed and that it was now in one document. The Board thanked JJ for the excellent work done.

Action: JJ

5.2 Staffing

JJ reported that staffing in year 6 was now quite settled after Ms Nicole Leys took over 6M. Ms Leys was offered and has since accepted a two term contract to continue her work until the end of the academic year.

5.3 Maintenance

JJ reported that during the Christmas break some rooms would undergo routine maintenance works including installation of more display boards and a coat of paint for some smaller rooms. **Action: JJ**

5.4 Class Representatives

JJ reported that Mrs Hanna Choudhury had done a great job recruiting parent representatives for primary classes. Wednesday year group sales have been successfully reinstated and so far three bake sales had already taken place.

5.5 School Reports

The Board learnt that preliminary work on report writing was in the process and that the front cover of the primary report had been re-designed and layout revised. Reports will go out on the 30th January while the whole school parent conference day is on 1st February. **Action: JJ**

5.6 Universal Children's Day

This day was celebrated on the 21st November with all children participating in a project in which they produced a painted mural to be displayed in the swimming pool area. JJ thanked Ms de Waal, Ms Ely, and Mrs Mutasa for the success of the event.

5.7 School Events and Scheduled Meetings

The board learnt that an end of term variety assembly had been planned for Wednesday 7th December at 7.30 am while the school choir would be performing Carols and Christmas songs at Lilongwe Wildlife Centre on the same day at 6.00 pm.

6. SECONDARY HEAD'S REPORT

6.1 Enrolment

PH reported that as of 29th November, 2011, the secondary enrolment figure was at 277.

6.2 Top in the World

The Board was informed that a Year 12 student, Akiho Saito had been awarded the Cambridge *Top in the World award* for Mathematics. Akiho achieved the highest standard mark in the world for a single subject. The award ceremony took place at a special assembly on 10th November. Details were included in Tikambe and a press release was sent to the "Nation" Newspaper and appeared in the Wednesday 23rd November issue. PH was hopeful that this had provided good publicity for the school.

6.3 Middle Years Programme

PH informed the Board that a letter had been received from the IB confirming that BMIS was now an IBO candidate school for MYP as of 1 September 2011. Sally and PH

would be adjusting the school's action plans to align them with the outlined steps required to be taken by BMIS as a candidate school. **Action:PH/Sally Elliott**

The Board learnt that the first parent-oriented workshop dedicated to the IBO MYP was held on 10th November under the theme "assessment". During the workshop, the rationale behind the new Progress Reports used in October was explained. Parents were also briefly introduced to the new report format that will be used with Year 7 and 8 students in January. The next MYP workshop for parents under the theme "Areas of Interaction" will take place in Term 2. **Action: PH**

The requirements for the BMIS application for candidate status are now complete after PH attended the MYP workshop for Head Teachers and Coordinators in Florence, Italy.

6.4 ISA Testing

PH reported that bio data for students taking part in the ISA tests in October had been sent to ACER and that results would be downloaded from a link on their website from December 22 onwards. He explained that students who were leaving would have their results sent to them by email. **Action: PH**

6.5 Mock Examinations

PH reported that mock examinations were underway for Year 11 (IGCSE) and Year 13 (IB Diploma) students.

6.6 Reports and Parent Conferences

PH reported that progress reports were sent home on Friday October 14th and a follow-up parent conference on Thursday November 3rd.

6.6 Student Council

The Board was informed that Natasha Tanna (Year 12) had decided to step down as President of the Student Council in order to spend more time on her IB Diploma studies. The role of President was now taken over by Kabir Brown (formerly Vice President) while the role of Vice President was being shared by the Secretary and Treasurer.

6.7 Counselor News

The Board learnt that BMIS was now registered to offer the Preliminary SAT (PSAT) from the USA normally offered to students in Year 11 (Grade 10) or Year 12 (Grade 11). The US Embassy was only currently offering the SAT. He explained that BMIS students would continue to register for the SAT through the Embassy and information will be provided later in the year. **Action: PH**

6.8 ABC Visit

The Board learnt that the Headmaster of ABC Christian Academy had made an appointment to see PH. He said that ABC was beginning the inquiry phase for the IB Diploma. **Action: PH**

7. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

7.1 Finance

7.1.1 2010/2011 Audit

WH reported that the 2010/2011 audit had been planned to commence the week beginning 13th December, to be completed by 23rd December, 2011. **Action: WH**

7.1.2 Fringe Benefit Taxes on Staff Concessionary Fees

WH reported that at the Finance Committee meeting held on 22 November 2011 it was agreed that the school should go ahead to pay MRA the sum of K17,524,403.58 FBT due to the fact that other similar schools like St Andrews had already paid and therefore it was unlikely that MRA would consider giving BMIS preferential treatment. WH explained that he had received an email that afternoon from MRA which said the penalty charge of K3,504,880.71 would be waived only if the whole FBT amount was paid by close of day on Wednesday 30th November, 2012. The Board agreed that the FBT should be paid. **Action: NB/WH**

7.1.3 Taxation of Income for Schools Formerly under DSB

WH reported that MRA summoned all schools formerly under DSB and other private schools to a meeting in Blantyre on 27th October, 2011. The meeting was aimed at explaining MRA's intention to introduce taxes on income and the possibility of assessing such income over the past six years. WH explained that in the first schedule of the Taxation Act, trusts or schools such as Bishop Mackenzie that have a public character in nature are exempt from income tax and have therefore not been assessed on such taxes. WH added that MRA was now asking schools to prove their public status in order for them to continue to enjoy this exemption or pay taxes on their income over expenditure or turnover in the case of losses.

The Board learnt that schools formerly under DSB had taken a common front and came up with a paper in which they argued that the Taxation Act does not provide definitions of 'private' or 'public'. This paper was presented to MRA on 21 November, 2011. MRA asked for more time to relook at the presentation and consult widely before responding. **Action: WH**

7.1.4 Investment of Short-term Excess Funds

The Finance Committee agreed at its meeting held on 22 November, 2011 to find suitable ways of investing excess funds by looking at what the money market is offering as it was felt that not much had been done in this regard. He explained that in order to avoid delays considering the volatility of the money market, Board approvals could be done by email. **Action: WH/NB**

7.1.5 Invoicing and Debtors

WH reported that in order to ensure availability of forex in the school's FCD accounts for quick processing of foreign payments, cases that had been identified as being capable of paying in hard currency were contacted but the response was not encouraging. The school would be contacting them again to see if they would accept to pay in hard currency. **Action: WH**

Regarding debtors, WH reported that as of 25 November, 2011, the figure was K13,081,038.22. Exclusions had been planned for the 28th November 2011. He explained that cases referred to the legal counsel were yet to be heard as no dates for court hearing had been set. **Action: WH**

The Board learnt that as of the week before the Board meeting, the debtors figure was at K20m, and had since reduced to K10m. **Action: WH**

7.1.6 Payroll Loan Facility

WH reported that Standard Bank had come up with a loan facility that would not require collateral. The Bank made a presentation of their facility to staff, most of who are on the OIBM loan facility. He said there was a general feeling of satisfaction with the product. Standard Bank also indicated that they were prepared to buy-out outstanding OIBM loans. He explained that the bank would be the first to introduce this facility in Malawi. An agreement with the school would be required for this arrangement to take effect. **Action: WH**

7.1.7 Forex and Gratuities

WH reported that over 80% of the gratuities had been remitted to the respective teachers' bank accounts abroad following receipt of \$140,000 from the US Embassy being one year's school fees. He explained that the bank was now requiring additional documents such as copies of contracts, passport and TEP in order to process a remittance relating to teachers. **Action: WH**

7.2 Human Resources

7.2.1 Life Guard

WH reported that another Life Guard currently working at Acacias School had been identified and was expected to start work on the 1st December, 2011. **Action: WH**

7.2.2 Outcome of Mr. Moyo's Case

WH reported that Mr. Moyo, former Librarian for BMIS who had been asked to retire due to proven misconduct had filed a case with the Mzimba IRC. Mr. Moyo is claiming that he should be paid severance pay for the period he worked under DSB as well as Bishop Mackenzie without applying the provisions of the new Pensions Act. The court ruled in his favour only to the extent of the portion relating to his service under DSB which according to the courts should have been paid at the dissolution of DSB. This ruling has affected all employees who were under DSB but retained by BMIS. A ruling would be presented to the school before the end of the year. **Action: WH**

7.2.3 Grounds' Staff Appraisals

WH informed the Board that appraisals would be carried out soon after school closes and be completed before Christmas. **Action: WH**

7.3 Security

WH reported that two weeks earlier a computer was stolen from one of the classrooms. USI engaged the police immediately they were informed of the theft. He said police were still investigating and results yet to be presented to the school. Key buildings in the school were now armed with motion sensors. **Action: WH**

8. FINANCE REPORT

8.1 Accounts to date

Accounts were circulated.

8.2 Devaluation

According to the Finance Committee, any capital reserves the school has could be affected and there is need to find ways of mitigating any losses. NB suggested that the

school could accelerate the capital investments or buy items that can be kept such as toner cartridges. The Board agreed that it was better to spend now than just keep the money and then incur losses due to devaluation. **Action: Fin. Committee/NB**

8.3 Budget

NB said he had briefly looked at the budget proposals and was of the opinion that the difficult issue was about teachers' contracts which needed to be changed to be in line with the school year. He noted that there was an overlap between contracts whereby first contract ends August 14 and the new one starts August 1st. Staff therefore lose out some two weeks' salary when returning on a new contract. **Action: NB**

SO said the issue was that the teachers had been given assurances that they would not lose that upon signing of a new contract. NA enquired if these assurances had been put in writing. It was agreed that once verified it should be sorted out.

Action: NB

9. POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT

9.1 Policy Manual

JC told the meeting that he had sent out an email a few weeks earlier in which he had proposed to streamline the policy manual to make it something the board could use in its policy decisions. He proposed a shorter and crisper policy manual with no administrative procedures as these could be put in separate handbooks. He said the Board would maintain the responsibility of reviewing those policies regularly. He requested the Board to give a go ahead. After much discussion on the issue it was agreed that the Policy Committee meeting of Thursday the same week should come up with a roadmap. **Action: Policy Committee**

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no other business, the Chair gave her personal thanks to NB for taking on a mammoth task despite all the issues.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The meeting closed at 20.50pm. The next open session will be held on the 31st January 2012.

Signed:.....

Date:.....