

MINUTES OF THE OPEN SESSION OF THE BMIS BOARD MEETING HELD ON 27TH AUGUST 2013

PRESENT:

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|-------------|----|-------------------------------|
| D. Pinto | DP | Chair |
| S. Donker | SD | Vice-Chair |
| V. Beza | VB | (Outgoing) Treasurer |
| M. Malonje | MM | (Incoming) Treasurer |
| M. Cameron | MC | Board Member |
| G. Bizzaro | GB | Board Member |
| V. Wium | VM | Board Member |
| S. Oddo | SO | Board Member |
| M. Durand | MD | PTA Representative |
| N. Bishop | NB | Director |
| P. Harrison | PH | Secondary School Head-teacher |
| J. Johnson | JJ | Primary School Head-teacher |
| P. Johnson | PJ | DP Coordinator |
| C. Thompson | CT | PYP Coordinator |
| J. Runge | JR | Pastoral Coordinator |
| C. Mead | CM | Teacher Representative |
| W. Horea | WH | Business Manager |

Absent;

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| G. Hiwa | GH | Board Member |
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(Minutes taken by WH)

The meeting commenced at 18.08hrs and DP called it to order as Chairman, welcoming all the members.

1. INTRODUCTIONS

Individual introductions of members present were done for the benefit of those who had just joined the Board. The coordinating teachers also made brief presentations of their duties and tasks ahead at BMIS.

MM was introduced to the gathering as the new Board Treasurer in place of VB who no longer has a child attending school at BMIS. The Board acknowledged VB's enormous contribution to its functions during the time he was serving. VB appreciated such acknowledgement and also for having had the opportunity to serve the school. In response to DP's request for VB to hang on for a while, he indicated that he may still be available if the Board needed to consult him on issues that might still be hanging after his tenure.

VB and Coordinating teachers were then allowed to leave the meeting.

2. AGENDA

The agenda for the meeting was approved by unanimous consent.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the extraordinary session of the BMIS Board meeting held on 11th June 2013 were approved by the gathering and subsequently signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising there from.

4. DIRECTORS REPORT

4.1 Buildings, Maintenance and Security

4.1.1 CIS priorities

NB reported on the progress of 4 priority issues namely; -Bandwidth, -Library extension, - Recruitment & retention and -Health & safety. He highlighted that there is need to submit a progress report in these areas to the accrediting bodies by October 2013. In addition governance issues will also have to be considered and that the Board needs to re-develop a long term strategic vision for the school that would ensure continuity of the projects regardless of the Board turn-overs.

4.1.2 Holiday maintenance works

These covered the areas of:

- *Library*; the internal of the building was renovated with walls removed, carpets fitted and custom shelving and furniture about to be put in place,
- *Art/Music building roof*; repairing the roof's structural deficiencies that had been revealed during the holiday. This work had not been planned for,
- *Cables*; previously hanging fibre-optic and telephone cabling laid underground around campus,
- *Drains and walkways*; additional walkways constructed across the field leading to the primary school dismissal area. Open rainwater drains covered since they also act as walkways,
- *Reception garden wall*; replaced an old fence which was falling,
- *Swimming pool*; surrounding walls lifted, leveled and re-laid. Pools repainted and handrails to be delivered soon,
- *Store room*; vacated and renovated to create additional office space,
- *Classroom shuffle*; reading room merged with computer room and additional shelves fitted,
- *All Classroom accommodation*; renovated and painted.

4.2 Staff and HR

NB reported that all new teachers arrived safely in Malawi at the beginning of August and enjoyed a full induction program with Janine Grassby doing much on the social side of events.

NB had to recruit Joseph Beamer who was recently teaching in Moscow as a replacement for Dr Peter Harding-Jones who resigned unceremoniously.

4.3 Budgets and Finance

4.3.1 Monthly billing

Reported that this seems to be a welcome development by most parents that has led to a big reduction in discussions for payment plans and that there was also an increase in hard currency payments as per the requirement for advance payments.

4.3.2 Student numbers

NB felt that current enrolment levels look promising if compared to what was previously anticipated will be a big drop. They are at 695 against a budgeted figure of 706.

4.3.3 Staff salaries

NB made a graphical presentation on staff income levels based on BMIS's Dollar based salary increments and what the situation would have been like if the school was to continue with the use of National Statistical office's inflation indices. The background to this was that as a result of the Malawi Kwacha gaining value against the Dollar in the months of June to August 2013, staff salaries whose increments were based on the percentage change of the value of the Dollar had to be reduced by 21% in August. Such was received with anger by local staff because they had overcommitted their income on the basis of the previous increments when the Kwacha was losing value. NB therefore sought views from the entire Board on how the matter should be handled.

After lengthy deliberations the Board resolved to refer the matter to its finance committee which had to review the position in light of both financial and legal implications. It was noted that Getrude Hiwa (GB) had to be consulted since she would be in a position to give a legal perspective to this. The workers themselves also need to be encouraged to give their input through the committee that they reportedly formed. Board emphasized that from whatever the outcome would be, each employee will need to sign an agreement with the school on how their salary increments will be determined in the future.

4.4 Library Phase 2

NB proposed that Phase 2 building of the library should commence as an in house construction project.

GB brought in a proposed structure and felt that the original design needed to be changed. He volunteered to work directly with the school to determine the status of the initial drawings and implement any necessary changes before the issue is presented to the buildings sub-committee of the Board. After that, construction can then be put out to tender. WH asked to check with the architect of the original design on whether the City Assembly had already approved the building plans or not.

4.5 Staff accommodation

NB proposed that an ad-hoc working party to explore properties and financing options with a goal to report back to the Board by December 2013. Similarly, a plan that was formulated in June 2005 to built flats within the campus (at the bottom of the football pitch) can also be revived.

NB assigned to set-up such a working committee within the next few weeks. Such may have to involve members of the PTA. SD, GB, MM and CM expressed an interest to join the working committee.

5. PRIMARY SCHOOL REPORT

5.1 Enrolment

JJ indicated that some students are yet to report back at school since they still at their holiday destinations. There will not be a January enrolment since all the classes were now full and that there was also a waiting list.

5.2 The first week and Induction

JJ reported that induction given to new teachers was successful and that they were still settling into their new surroundings. Ms Thompson, Mr Castle, Ms Penton and Ms Bach were key in the induction process.

5.3. Buildings & Maintenance

JJ reported that the Library works during the holiday required the relocation of Yr 6 classroom into the former Reading resource room. The latter will now be housed in the former Primary ICT lab. Use of ICT facilities will now be shifting towards tablets within classrooms and some more will be distributed soon. Such facilities within the Library backroom are still available to students handling longer assignments.

Renovated Library now has 2 new experts i.e. Kathryn Lewis (Teacher/Librarian) and Martha Jailosi (Assistant Librarian).

New picnic tables have also provide valuable extra space for students and JJ thanked the PTA for their provision of these.

A teacher's only library needs to be considered.

5.4 New staff

JJ reported that all that have just joined (10) seem happy with their new environments including residences

5.6 PYP evening

Reported to be a success though the Primary school had hoped for many more parents to attend it.

MC congratulated JJ and her team for a job well done as evidenced by the enthusiasm to attend school that is now present in most kids under the South African Embassy. Other positive feedback from a member of a top rated school outside Malawi, pointed towards the same.

6. SECONDARY SCHOOL REPORT

6.1 External examinations 2013

PH presented how secondary students had performed in the 2012/13 academic year with regard to Cambridge examinations and the IB Diploma program.

There is a slight improvement in the year by year comparative chart for IGCSE in 2013 as compared to 2012. Similarly, there is also an improvement in the IB Diploma with school's average for a grade 4 or higher at 93% while the world average is at 78.5%.

IB Diploma Extended Essay (EE) scores have gone down from 71% to 65% while scores for Theory of Knowledge (TOK) have remarkably gone up from 76% to 90%.

6.2 MYP

PH confirmed the anticipated the IBO's visit for authorization between the 4th and 5th of November. Most of the groundwork has already been done and an MYP workshop is slated for the 28th of September.

6.3. Administration

There was not much work done in preparation for the start of the new academic because of the unceremonious resignation of Kumbukeni Mjuweni from the Secondary Administration office. Though the office might be catching up, PH asked for recruitment of an additional staff member to work with Wanangwa. A delay in the rollover of Scholar-pack was also a significant hindrance in these initial preparations.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

7.1 Finance

7.1.1 Taxation of schools formerly under DSB

WH reported that there was still no official communication from the MRA on the final verdict and the case can as well be considered closed on that front. Smaller schools want to pay a smaller share on the basis of enrolment numbers, towards K 420 000 paid to the consultant hired by SAINTS on behalf of all the 5 schools. No formal request made yet.

7.1.2 Invoicing and Debtors

WH asked to press on parents for them to pay within the school's stipulated time for August 2013 invoices and that strict guidelines be followed in terms of exclusions slated for the 4th of September 2013. WH also to include debtors that were previously recommended for write-off by the school's auditors but now referred to the school's Legal Counsel, in all the subsequent debtors' reports.

7.1.3 Liquidity

WH reported that there is no anticipated pressure on cash reserves in the short term since the school had recently been given an overdraft facility by Standard Bank and that the recent switch in the medical insurance cover provider, eased forex requirements because of its lower pricing.

7.1.4 Credit cards

WH to remind both Standard bank and National Bank on the applications made for such cards earlier on.

7.1.5 Tuck-shop / Cafeteria operations

Gathering felt that net profit margins (of about 15%) being realized are within the norm and not some kind of overpricing as expressed by certain quarters of the school.

7.2 Human Resources

WH reported on 3 new recruits (i.e. K. Chipungu, M. Jailosi and B. Mwale) and also the confirmation of U. Ngwira to a permanent position.

On the other hand, also reported that K. Mjuweni owed the school K 908 000 when she unceremoniously left employment with the school and that such has been reported to the Legal Counsel since she has never bothered to give any response herself.

7.3 Security

No major incidents reported.

8. PTA

The PTA was asked to write to the school on who will be their permanent representative on the Board. NB expressed gratitude to the PTA on the provision of picnic benches.

9. OB

There was no other business and the open session closed at 20.53 hrs.

Signed:.....

Date:.....