Proprietors Meeting Minutes
Monday 19 August 2024 from 8.55 pm to 10 pm

Present: Byron Lynds (Presiding Member), Stacey Newlands (Deputy Presiding Member), Ava Szabo (Principal), Rod Webster (via Zoom), Anahera Brown, Jenny Jellicoe, Juliette George (staff representative), Anna McLean (staff representative), Hayley Luan (minutes)

Apologies: Toby Champion (student representative), Lillian Pak, Kirsti Whalen-Stickley

Declaration of Interests

Byron is a member of the Trust.

Acceptance of Previous Minutes

Motion: The minutes of the last Proprietors' meeting held on Monday 17th June 2024 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

Moved by Ava; Seconded by Juliette; All in favour motion carried

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

Property Committee Updates

The property committee met last Wednesday. It was agreed the Primary playground fencing will go ahead with the project completed over the summer holidays at the end of 2024. The decking and veranda outside the 6-9 classes will also be completed during this time. The wider project for the Primary playground is still being finalised. Byron has reached out to an architect to design the veranda and decking for the 6-9 classrooms. Ava will double check if ramp access is required to access the deck.

There is slow progress on the 6-9 toilet refurbishment. The final plan will be received on Friday 23rd August according to the architect. Juliette thanked the Council for refurbishing her office - she now has a flat floor and newly painted walls. Ceiling netting will be installed about 50cm below the ceiling in T2 during the October school holidays to prevent balls hitting the ceiling panels. The fire alarm system will be upgraded and reconfigured for the 6-9 and 9-12 classrooms. Building consent will be submitted to Hutt City Council along with the building consent application for the 6-9 toilets. At present, the fire alarm system for the 6-9 and 9-12 classrooms is security based so will be upgraded to a voice and sounder alarm system.

Anahera questioned if the insurance premium will be lowered for 2025 due to all the refurbishments and upgrades happening. Byron noted he has talked with a different insurance broker at HIBS and they felt confident that premiums could be reduce there, so Byron was wondering if it would be worthwhile for Wā Ora to have a talk with this insurance broker. Ava noted it would be worth it to explore. Hayley will get in touch with the insurance broker for further information.

Property Committee New Member for Approval

Ava noted a new parent, Phil Henderson, has expressed his interest to join the Property Committee. He is a quantity surveyor and is keen to join the committee due to his knowledge and experience. Byron noted that the Property Committee advises the Board/Council regarding property projects and it is good to have new people on the committee. It was noted that Shane Harrison, a long standing Board/property committee member, may leave when his youngest daughter leaves the school at the end of 2025. The Council is happy to have Phil join the Property Committee.

Hayley will get in touch with Jo to add Phil to the Property Committee email list.

Preschool Collective Agreement Negotiation

Byron noted that with Drew resigning from the Council, a 3rd person is required for the Preschool Negotiation sub-committee. Now is the time to renew the Preschool Collective Agreement for the next 3 years. Byron is intending to lead the conversation and there are 10 NZEI union members at the Preschool. The Council have delegated the sub-committee to negotiate with the union and the sub-committee then reports back to the Council with any updates.

Jenny Jellicoe noted that she would like to join the sub-committee. A new union rep will be involved in the upcoming negotiation.

Anna Sabbatical Leave Report

Anna noted that she had a wonderful experience on her sabbatical leave. She will present a slide show at the Preschool sector meeting this Wednesday about the Montessori environment she visited in the UK.

Whilst Anna was on sabbatical leave, she talked with her AMI trainer in Maria Montessori's old bedroom for around 1.5 hours regarding a variety of topics, including Montessori training, how student teachers can be better supported to reflect on their practice and how to change the environment to help children with special needs etc. She also talked with a SENCO from another Montessori school in London. The SENCO noted that their school has a safe guarding sister who is responsible for dealing with behavioural issues. What surprised Anna during her visit was the small student numbers in some Montessori schools. At one of the Montessori schools, there were 3 Montessori trained adults, one was the head teacher and the other was in charge of looking after 2 student teachers who were visiting. Including Anna, there were 6 adults with 30 children in that environment. At another Montessori school, there were 3 adults and 14 children.

Anna also visited a particular Montessori school with a boarding adolescent programme. The environment was calm and students were purposely engaged in learning. The sense of working at the students pace was palpable. This is what Maria Montessori talked about i.e. 12-15yr old students go through many changes with their brains. They are not set up for the pressures of testing and being forced to do different things. The Boarding school creates a different dynamic for students because they spend days and nights with each other and know each other really well. It was good to see how practical life comes alive from a Preschool point of view. The students live on the premises and are responsible for washing their dishes and cleaning etc. Anna had a beautiful interaction with a girl who had special needs and the girl noted she had a very good morning on that day. Observing the different age groups at that boarding school made Anna feel like watching a butterfly emerging from chrysalis. It was amazing to see the students share their talent and the love of life there.

The students at the boarding school are required to take national assessments similar to our students at Wā Ora. The 12-15 year olds see what the older groups are doing and they know when the time is to focus on their study. A girl from the 12-15 age group showed Anna her portfolio including her work on Art, Maths, Spanish words etc. She was nearly at the end of the book which was a true representation of her learning over the past 3 years. Students can choose to start creating their portfolio about their learnings from the last term in the 6-12 class. It is not compulsory for everyone and does not have to be in a particular format. Everyone is expected to be able to talk about what they have learned at school and the teacher knew where every student was at.

Another girl Anna spoke with had spent time in the outdoor area the previous week as the weather was good. She knew this week she needed to finish her English work and knew it was important that the work was done. It was amazing to see the whole self-knowledge, self-responsibility from a young girl who knew herself very well. Juliette noted the photos of a book corner and plants that Anna took are amazing.

Anna noted that it was good to return to the new Montessori training centre and spoke with the trainers about how to support Preschool children for writing. She thanked the Board for approving and supporting her sabbatical leave.

Juliette questioned if only the older children attend the boarding school? Anna noted that there are only 5 students who do not board and they all speak with the house mother if needed. Both older boys and younger boys live separately at one end of the housing facilities and the girls live at the other end of the facilities. There are 52 students for the adolescent programme and the school is in Uckfield which is 40 minutes from Brighton. Anahera questioned if there is an opportunity for Anna to share some bicultural ideas that she has learned on her sabbatical leave with whānau hui? Anna noted she is happy to present to the whānau hui. She will also share what she has observed in the UK with the staff at the next full staff meeting in early September.

Council Financials

Hayley presented the financials. $700k from the P1 account has been put into a 3 months' term deposit and the interest will be deposited to the Council account on maturity day. There are a couple of relatively large projects coming up using the P1 money including the 6-9 toilet refurbishment, Primary fencing, the 6-9 deck and veranda, fire alarm system upgrade etc. These projects will be happening over the summer break. The ECE grant received on 1st July was around $20k lower than budgeted and about $200k more than 2023. The unfavourable variance of major maintenance was mainly for the projects that are paid from the P1 account. The Preschool cash flow is still tight compared to BoT. This is a conservative cash flow forecast which has taken consideration of the potential teachers' pay increase. The Council will request the Trust to pay for the insurance premium for 2025 in a lump sum and then pay the Trust back by instalments. This will save the Council paying interest and fees to a third party. The Trust collection looks good and is better than the previous 2 years.

It was questioned whether the analysis of the Trust donations can be broken into to age groups? Ava noted that It depends on the whānau's ability and capability. There may be less families going on holidays post COVID. We are doing internal marketing now which does not cost as much. Question asked whether the bus advertising will continue? Ava noted that it may require 4 buses to reach more people and increase people's awareness of the school. That is expensive marketing and it is unclear whether it links to direct enrolments. The most common ways that people hear about the school is through word of mouth, school Facebook page. The new website is money well spent. A High School Tour Event has been organised for 30th August where Primary whānau will be able to visit the High School.

Motion: That the August Council financial report be accepted.

Moved by Byron; Seconded by Anahera; All in favour motion carried

Delegations

Drew has resigned from the Council and the sub-committees he was on. It was noted that it is workable for Lillian and Stacey to remain on the Constitution sub-committee and not replace Drew.

Montessori Authenticity PD

There has not been much time spent talking about Montessori authenticity during Council meetings. Byron queried whether it would be good to set up another sub-committee for school special character? Ava noted that there are a lot of observations happening across the school and maybe the Board could participate also. Byron noted for Board members, it is the responsibility to ensure the Montessori authenticity is well maintained and members should have the knowledge to answer any related questions. Having a focus about what does it mean for Montessori authenticity would be good.

Anahera remembered participating in a Montessori fundamental course with Anna when she first joined the Board. That could be a good starting point. The Board would then be able to apply the philosophy when making decisions. Anna asked what aspect does the Board want to know about Montessori. Anna is happy to arrange a PD session regarding Montessori philosophy to educate the Board.

It was noted that 2 new staff members are completing the Montessori orientation course at present and Kristen will study for her Montessori diploma in 2025 for 2 years. In Primary, all the teachers will be fully trained in Montessori. In Tōtara, Anna Freeman is a fully trained Montessori teacher and Nadine has begun her Montessori training this year. In Rātā, Tania is fully trained and Robyn is undertaking her Montessori orientation course now and begin her Montessori diploma in 2025. Everyone has taken on some sort of Montessori training when they start working at Wā Ora. Hilary has a Montessori diploma and Tanya has also completed the orientation course which was provided by MANZ.

Administration

Correspondence

The correspondence was noted.

Risk Register

Nothing to discuss.

Agenda Items Next Meeting

- Draft Constitution

The meeting closed at 10 pm

The next Proprietors' meeting is scheduled for Monday 16th September 2024 in the Tawari classroom at the High School.

Signed Presiding Member, Wā Ora Montessori School

Date 16/9/24

Action	Personnel	Due
Hayley to talk with a new insurance broker as recommended by Byron for further information	Hayley	Before the next meeting on 16th September
Hayley to break down the donations payment into age groups	Hayley	Before the next meeting on 16th September
Hayley will contact Jo to add Phil to the property committee email list.	Hayley	Before the next meeting on 16th September
Providing PD to the Board regarding Montessori Philosophy	Anna	Before the Board meeting in April 2025

2024 Council/BOT Meetings

7.00pm at Wā Ora Montessori School – Tawari Classroom

January – No meeting
Monday 19th February 2024 (Week 4, Term 1)
Monday 18th March 2024 (Week 8, Term 1)
April – PD Session - TBC
Monday 20th May 2024 (Week 4, Term 2)
Monday 17th June 2024 (Week 8, Term 2)
July – PD Session – TBC
Monday 19th August 2024 (Week 5, Term 3)
Monday 16th September 2024 (Week 9, Term 3)
Monday 21st October 2024 (Week 2, Term 4)
Monday 18th November 2024 (Week 6, Term 4)