Proprietors Meeting Minutes
Monday 18 August 2025 from 9:00 pm to 9:51 pm

Present: Byron Lynds (Presiding Member), Stacey Newlands (Deputy Presiding Member), Ava Szabo (Principal), Juliette George (Staff Representative), Rod Webster, Lillian Park, Rhiannon Jarvis, Tara Israelson (Staff Representative), Rachel Visser (Student Representative, left 9:21 pm), Hayley Luan (minutes)

Apologies: Anahera Brown, Jenny Jellicoe

Declaration of Interests

Byron is a member of the Trust.

Rhiannon has a conflict of interest for property maintenance projects regarding plumbing and drainage.

Acceptance of Previous Minutes

Motion: The minutes of the last Proprietors' meeting held on Monday 16th June 2025 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

Moved by Lillian; Seconded by Rhiannon; All in favour motion carried

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

Property Committee Updates

Byron presented the Property Committee updates. The High School car park construction is completed and the lines will be marked in three weeks during the September holidays. The grass field at the back of the High School has been levelled and more plans will be made for that field after the Primary playground upgrade is completed. The architectural design for the 6-9 classrooms veranda and decking has been approved by the Property Committee today. The project will take place in December 2025 to January 2026 and be completed before Term 1 starts in 2026. The Primary sports field will be drained and levelled over the summer holidays and a minor retaining wall will be built underneath the current fencing. The Property Committee has been in touch with the company who completed the drainage work for Naenae Park. The Primary playing equipment will be upgraded in stages during the school holidays throughout 2026. Byron shared the approved design for the veranda and decking. Rachel pointed out that the children may try to jump from the platform next to the bottom of the ramp. Byron will pass this feedback to the Property Committee for further discussions.

Financial Update

Hayley presented the August financial updates.

Although the ECE grant received in July was about $120k lower than budgeted, it did not cause a big concern for the Preschool cash flow. The Preschool roll forecasting looks healthy. Byron questioned the reason why the ECE grant was lower than budgeted. Hayley noted that the budget was drafted based on last year's figures. The ECE grant received in July contains 70% advance funding and a wash up for the last ECE grant. The ECE grant is calculated based on the forecasted booking hours and the wash up funding will be received in November which reflects the actual booking hours in the Preschool for this funding period. The funding shortfall may be because of timing and will be corrected in November.

The Preschool teachers' registration fees are covered by the MoE for three years from July 2025 to 2028. There are 10 registered teachers in the Preschool and this will save the Preschool around $5k over the 3 years.

Deloitte is still auditing our 2024 accounts. Ava will talk with the partner regarding the delay in auditing.

Rachel left the meeting at 9:21pm.

The Trust donation collection rate is similar to the previous year and the actual donations received is slightly higher in 2025. The Playgroup outdoor space will be turfed and a new shade sail installed during the September holidays. The Preschool kitchen refurbishment is now completed.

P1 money is received every quarter for the Area School major maintenance projects above $5k. The major maintenance projects should focus on health and safety or to modernise current integrated areas.

In terms of the change of audit firm for the Council 2025 audit, three quotes have been received. Deloitte quoted for $6,500, Crowe quoted for $8,500 and BDO quoted for $14,000.

Byron noted that both Crowe and BDO audit the financial accounts for HIBS and they both finish auditing on time. BDO is excellent but the charge is double the price. Crowe has only 1 audit partner, whereas BDO has multiple audit partners and they are the 4th biggest audit firm in New Zealand. BDO provides better service around reporting. They will find more issues to bring the Board's attention and are more thorough.

Stacey questioned whether the Council is comfortable with the $8k increase in the audit fee for budgets. Byron noted that some auditors may undercut due to charging a cheaper audit fee. It may be better to pay a higher audit fee for better service.

Motion: That the Council appoints BDO as the audit firm for the Council 2025 audit.

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

Preschool Fee Increase

Byron presented the Preschool fee increase proposal with two options. He noted that there could be other options if the Council requires. The Preschool fee has not been increased for 3 years (since 2023). The intention is to increase the Preschool fee every three years so that every child experiences one increase during the time whilst they are in the Preschool. The families that have two children in the Preschool may experience two increases though.

The reason for the fee increase is to recognise the large inflation over the previous three years. The 10% Preschool fee increase in 2023 was a catch up increase as there was no fee increase over the previous 5 years due to COVID. It is time for another catch up fee increase.

Rhiannon noted that according to Byron's market research, other local ECE centres had major fee increases over the recent years. Byron noted that those ECE centres may not have holiday programmes and may open daily with no term breaks. The financial committee reviewed the fee structure at Capital Montessori as suggested by Michela at the June meeting. Their ASC system is different from us and they charge a similar price to us but they do not provide lunch during the day like we do. Tara noted it makes sense that Capital Montessori School charges more if they open for longer and do not provide lunch like we do. Ava noted that there is more than one family at present being referred to a debt collector due to not paying their Preschool fees.

Tara noted that we are a Montessori school and people send their children here to experience an authentic Montessori education. All the Preschool teachers are Montessori trained and we are not just a day care. Byron noted that there are people who want to come but are unable to because of transport issues or no places available etc. Rhiannon questioned what the finances look like? We need money to ensure we are upholding our Montessori special character and can deliver Montessori philosophy.

The Council would prefer to have one Preschool fee increase every 3 years. Tara questioned whether any families left because of the previous fee increase? It was noted that there may have been one family, but most of the families stayed. Byron noted that we were previously worried that people were coming to us because we are cheap. It was noted that most of the Montessori schools overseas are private.

It was noted that by increasing the Preschool term fee by 10%, the increase is for $10 a week including food. The CPI has increased by 10.7% and food has increased by 4.6%. According to the current forecast, the 10% fee increase would make us break even over the 3 years. The fee increase notice will have to be sent out to the community in Term 4 2025.

Motion: That the Council agrees to increase the preschool fee by 10% to $1,118 per term from Term 1 2026.

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

Other Business

The Council thanked Lillian for her dedications to the Board over the past 9 years. Lillian was the driver of the new Council Constitution. She was on the Collective Agreement negotiation committee and Lillian is happy to stay on the committee for the current Preschool bargaining.

Administration

Correspondence

The correspondence was noted.

Risk Register

Nothing to discuss.

The meeting closed at 9:51 pm

The next Proprietors' meeting is scheduled for Monday 15th September 2025 in the Tāwari classroom at the High School.

Signed Presiding Member, Wā Ora Montessori School

Date 2 October 2025

Action	Personnel	Due
Hayley to adjust the office salaries budget to reflect the actual figures	Hayley	Before the next Board meeting on 15th September
Hayley to inform Deloitte and BDO regarding the change of audit firm for the 2025 Council audit	Hayley	Before the next meeting on 15th September
Byron to send out a community notice to increase the Preschool fee by 10% for Term 1 2026	Byron	At the beginning of Term 4 2025

2025 Council/BOT Meetings

7.00pm at Wā Ora Montessori School – Tāwari Classroom

January – No meeting
Monday 17 February 2025 (Week 3, Term 1)
Monday 17 March 2025 (Week 7, Term 1)
April – No meeting
Monday 19 May 2025 (Week 4, Term 2)
Monday 16 June 2025 (Week 8, Term 2)
July-No meeting
Monday 18 August 2025 (Week 6, Term 3)
Monday 15 September 2025 (Week 10, Term 3)
Monday 20 October 2025 (Week 3, Term 4)
Monday 17 November 2025 (Week 7, Term 4)