Proprietors Meeting Minutes
Monday 16 June 2025 from 7:00 pm to 8:20 pm

Present: Byron Lynds (Presiding Member), Stacey Newlands (Deputy Presiding Member), Ava Szabo (Principal), Juliette George (Staff Representative), Jenny Jellicoe (via Zoom), Lillian Pak (via zoom), Rhiannon Jarvis, Michela Homer (Staff Representative), Anahera Brown (via zoom), Rachel Visser (Student Representative), Hayley Luan (minutes)

Apologies: Rod Webster

Welcome New Member

The Council welcomed Rhiannon Jarvis who has been elected as the new Council/Board member at the 2025 AGM. The Board members introduced themselves around the table.

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 19th May 2025 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

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

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

Property Committee Updates

Byron presented the Property Committee updates. The last property committee meeting was held 2 weeks ago. The High School car park is ongoing and is currently awaiting Council approval for installing storm water sumps. The Primary 6-9 decking and veranda will be built over the summer holiday (Dec/Jan) along with the grass field being levelled and proper drainage installed. The Property Committee will begin looking at major projects for the long term plan, including turning the fale area into a new Kawakawa classroom and combining the current Kawakawa classroom and T2 into a new gym area.

Preschool Fee Increase

Byron noted he attended an AI PD session at the recent SBM meeting. After the session, he asked AI to compare our Preschool fees with other ECE centres in the Lower Hutt region. The results showed that our Preschool fee is substantially lower than other ECE centres in the region, such as Child Space, Nga Tamariki etc. These centres operate similar hours to us, but do not have term breaks. Michela noted that the Preschool now has extended days to include the before school care and after school care programme hours. The payments for those extended hours should be taken into consideration when comparing Preschool fees.

Byron noted he also asked AI to forecast a financial model of the Preschool fees for the next 9 years. The suggestion returned was having a large Preschool fee increase of $1,132 for one year, which is equivalent to an increase of $283 per term. Michela noted there is a high percentage of qualified teachers at our Preschool compared to other ECE centres and we have a special character with Montessori philosophy. Byron noted there is room for the Preschool fee to be increased and as a parent, he would not be pushed away or surprised by having to pay a higher Preschool fee. The reality is most of the Preschool children transition to the Primary, which indicates that parents want their children to stay in a Montessori environment rather than attending a mainstream school. However, it is hard to test the consequences of a fee increase without actually doing it.

Byron noted the goal of a Preschool fee increase is to have a break even position over the course of 3 years. It breaks down as a surplus in the first year, break even in the 2nd year and a deficit in the 3rd year. Michela noted the teacher full pay parity is now funded by ECE funding and the teachers' pay may increase again in 2026. The ECE grant is calculated based on the total booking hours for all Preschool children. Stacey noted that given the funding is sensitive to student roll, if the Preschool roll reduces due to the increased

Preschool fees, that could have detrimental consequences to the school financials. Ava noted that with increasing redundancies and job losses in the Wellington region, it would be difficult for families to pay more Preschool fees, however the Preschool has to operate and be sustainable financially.

Michela noted that almost all the Preschool teachers are at the top rate. They are well qualified teachers who provide a high standard of education to the children. The current ECE grant funds for 80% qualified teachers, whereas 90% of our Preschool teachers are qualified teachers and they are paid above the full parity scheme. Byron noted the purpose of bringing up the Preschool fee increase is to raise awareness. The Preschool fee was increased by 10% from $925 to $1,017 per term in 2023. Michela suggested that the fee increase could be spread over 3 years with a slight increase every year rather than having a big increase over one year. It would provide a level of understanding about what the intentions are and give comfort to the school community. Rachel noted that detailed explanations should be included in the letter going out to the community regarding the reasons for the Preschool fee increase.

Anahera noted it may be better for the Council to collect feedback from the school community on the potential Preschool fee increase. Stacey questioned if any lessons have been learned from the previous community consultation? Lillian noted that there was no consulting with the school community for the previous fee increase, but a communication letter sent out from the chair of the Council explaining the reasons for the fee increase. Parents would understand that the Preschool fee has to keep up with the rising costs. The CPI has increased by 2.5% every year since the previous fee increase. Byron noted that it is important to look at the Preschool funding model with a future focus. Ava noted that she will keep a close eye on the Preschool roll. It would be concerning if the Preschool roll drops. We are a small school and the change of a couple of families could make a big difference in ECE funding.

Byron noted the financial committee will have a further discussions regarding the Preschool fee increase and will report back to the Council at the August meeting. Michela noted that the committee can refer to the fee structure at Capital Montessori School which operates in a similar way as Wā Ora. They have the core hours and extended hours for before school care and after school care. Hayley will talk further with Michela.

Byron noted a correction of fact regarding the notice period. At the 2025 AGM, Byron noted that there should be 2-terms notice for a fee increase, whereas it should be 1 terms notice.

Preschool Staff Leave Request

Michela presented a leave request from Imee who has requested leave for 2 weeks in November 2025. This is a cultural celebration and a family reunion for a special occasion. A reliever will be arranged to cover Imee whilst she is on leave.

Motion: That Imee's leave request be accepted.

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

Financial Update

Hayley presented the June Financial Updates.

The Preschool cash flow will be tight by the end of June and then be relieved by the ECE grant received in July. As the before school care and after school care are part of the extended Preschool days, The BSC/ASC fees are recorded as Preschool term fee income rather than the BSC/ASC fee income. The Preschool term fee income will therefore be higher than the budget with the BSC/ASC fee income being lower than the budget. The increased Preschool operational hours will not attract more ECE funding as the ECE funding only funds for up to 20 hours a week.

The major maintenance projects happened in May were covered by the P1 grant. The Preschool kitchen refurbishment will be covered by the Preschool ECE funding.

The Trust donation collection rate is similar to 2024. According to the line graph, the Trust donation collection is increasing slightly every year.

Byron noted at the AGM last week, the Council agreed to change the audit firm for the Council 2025 audit, but have not agreed on which audit firm should be appointed. The main reason for the change of audit firm is that Deloitte is unreliable in meeting deadlines over the previous 5 years. The financial sub-committee will submit a proposal for the audit firm at the Council meeting in August. It was noted that the new audit firm will review the Council reports with fresh eyes and ask a large number of questions to fully understand the school for their first year audit.

Other Business

The new constitution was adopted at the recent AGM. Hayley will re-register the Council under the new Incorporated Society Act 2022.

The Council chairperson and the treasurer are the same individual at present, which is unconstitutional. The Council may co-opt someone to be the treasurer if required. This will be reviewed at the September meeting after the Board election.

Stacey questioned if there should be another Board member joining the financial committee. Ava will check with the community to see whether an accountant would want to be the treasurer. Byron noted that it would be good to have another member on the financial committee after the September Board elections.

The September Board elections will be held online for 3 vacancies. The election day is set for 10th September 2025. The nominations will be called on 18th July.

Administration

Correspondence

The correspondence was noted.

Risk Register

Nothing to discuss.

Agenda items for the next meeting

- Preschool fee increase consideration

The meeting closed at 8:20 pm

The next Proprietors' meeting is scheduled for Monday 18th August 2025 in the Tawari classroom at the High School.

Signed Presiding Member, Wā Ora Montessori School

Date 18/08/2025

Action	Personnel	Due
Hayley will talk with Michela and draft a 3 year forecast to reflect the potential impacts of the Preschool fee increase for the financial committee to discuss	Hayley	Before the next meeting on 18th August 2025
The financial committee to discuss the Preschool fee increase for 2026	Financial sub-committee	Before the Board meeting on 18th August 2025

The financial committee to make a proposal to the Council on which audit firm to appoint for the Council 2025 audit	Financial sub-committee	Before the Board meeting on 18th August 2025
Hayley to re-register the Incorporated Society under the Incorporated Society Act 2022	Hayley	Before the end of June

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)