

# Houghton Valley School Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

**Monday 29 March 2021**

**Meeting opened:** 7:00pm

**Present:** Bret McKenzie (Chair), Luana Carroll (Principal), Mike Borough, Georgie Ferrari, Vanessa Smith, Stephanie Bosch (Staff Trustee), Charles Daily (Staff), Miriam Gaynor (Staff), Emily Faith (Secretary)

**Apologies:** Kelly Williams

**Conflict of interest:** None

**Last month's minutes:** Approved

## **1. Meeting with Ministry of Education to discuss roll/enrolment scheme**

At our November meeting we agreed to invite the Ministry of Education (MoE) to a Board meeting to discuss the falling roll. Luana advised the MoE representative was invited to tonight's meeting but was unable to attend. This will be rescheduled.

The Board had a wide-ranging discussion about the roll. The maximum capacity is 252. The current roll is 185, and a small number of children will leave during the year (some moving out of Wellington, and others out of New Zealand). The roll has dropped by 60 on last year (impact of COVID-19, plus the very large Year 6 cohort who went to intermediate). This had a direct impact on staffing and we lost 2.1 staff members. The Board is directly funding half of one salary for 2021.

It would be good to hear from the MoE what our options are. We would like to discuss a) opening the roll to outside enrolments; b) removing the zoning until we reach capacity; and c) how other schools across the Eastern zone are managing.

## **2. Committee item**

Meeting into committee: 7.40pm

Meeting out of committee: 8.10pm

## **3. Principal's Report**

JTB Architects have been awarded the refurbishment project through the MoE process, and visited today. There are four aspects to the project: the library roof, the admin block roof, the Ngaio roof (replace flat roof with a pitched roof), and the junior block reroof and upgrade.

Luana asked if a Board member could take on the property portfolio, as it would be helpful to have a Board voice at the many meetings. Often minor decisions are required quickly (although major decisions will come back to the full Board). Mike volunteered to take on the role.

The architects are currently considering the priorities for the work. Design concepts will come back to the Board, and once details are confirmed we can share these plans with parents. It is hoped that the work will start before the end of the year.

The top bank (retaining wall) project was also discussed. Part of this will be directly funded by the MoE as it relates to health and safety, but there might be the possibility of doing some of the work ourselves (eg building planter boxes). Luana is waiting to hear back from the Ministry property manager and we will advise parents once plans finalised.

## **4. Policy Reviews**

All our policies are reviewed regularly, within a 3 year cycle. Two are currently up for review: the *Home Learning Policy* (on which parent feedback was invited) and

the *Finance and Property Management Policy*. We use the SchoolDocs system for storing and reviewing policies.

### ***Home Learning Policy***

It was noted that home learning was optional and not device-focused.

Policy approved, subject to two additions:

1. Provide a positive link between home and school and aim to engage the whole whanau in the child/children's education.
2. Home learning is accessible to all students, and does not require devices or technology that students potentially may not have access to.

### ***Finance and Property Management Policy***

Policy approved.

Luana advised it would be useful to have a Treasurer on the Board. Georgie volunteered to take on the role for this year.

## **5. Budget update**

We discussed cash reserves held. What is the appropriate amount for a school the size of HVS to hold? Do we need to tag the reserves to specific projects/large items of expenditure?

It was agreed to undertake a mid-year review in June/July, including a reforecast for the remainder of the year.

## **6. Board communication to parents**

Bret to draft an item on new board members for the newsletter. (Bret also reminded all members to register with the New Zealand School Trustees Association – NZSTA.)

Luana asked members to provide a blurb and photo for the school website.

Luana recommended that the Board circulate a newsletter in the last week of each term that is solely focused on Board activities.

#### **7. Any other business**

One Board member has had the loss of the school librarian raised with them by a parent. Luana explained that designated teachers are 'library champions', and there are student librarians. The library opens three lunchtimes a week, and for some children this is an important space. Agreed to include an item on lunchtime openings in the school newsletter.

**Meeting closed: 9.03pm**

Meeting into Committee: 9.03pm

Meeting out of Committee: 9:15pm

**Next Board meeting: Monday 3 May 2021**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul McKinnon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

