

Canberra Montessori Society
AGM meeting, March 19 2019
DRAFT Minutes

Place: Eucalyptus (Staff) Room, Canberra Montessori School

1. Welcome from the Board Chair

- *Meeting opened at, attendees, apologies, proxies,*

The Meeting opened at 7.05pm.

Attendees: Tara Wood, Rose Nairn, Martin Drinkwater, Felix Pirie, Sam Scott, Tim Bourke, Sharon Watson, Darren Leech, Nemanja Jovanovic; Mel Buswell, Emma-Kate Potter, Diamond Saha. James Bell, Jaime Garbutt, Belle Chadwick, "AR".

School: Anthony Vandermolen, Kate Luck, Rael Matthews

Apologies: Richard Willard-Turton (provided proxy); Lejla Buzza

2. Adoption and signing of the previous minutes

Motion: to adopt the previous AGM minutes.

Moved: Sharon Watson; Seconded: Felix Pirie

3. Welcome from the Principal

Principal Anthony Vandermolen provided an update:

Stronger positive engagement with the community, plans coming to fruition with upgraded materials and grounds. Mr Vandermolen spoke about efforts to build social dynamic in Cycles 2 and 3, and links with other Montessori schools.

Mr Vandermolen spoke to questions regarding the future student numbers for Cycles 2 and 3, and keeping parents informed about strategies to retain students to provide more class mates for older students. Mr Vandermolen spoke about marketing plans in place, approach to building the enrolment base and strengthening retention. He noted in 2018-19 CMS had seen the highest retention between Cycles 1 and 2. In 2020 the forecast is for reduced Cycle 3 numbers before increasing again as Cycle 2 students transition to Cycle 3. CMS has a strategy focusing on building a positive culture, which other Montessori schools are interested in.

The Community noted the improvements to the grounds based on the good work of all including Vic Micallef. Mr Vandermolen noted the improvements provide peace and serenity in the environment to the students.

4. Presentation and adoption of the Annual Report

Board Chair, Tara Wood spoke about the staff satisfaction surveys, positive atmosphere in class rooms and the school.

Chair discussed efforts to improve society governance, including a professional board with a mix of parent and non-parent members, though this will take time. Chair noted significant turnover in Board membership. The Chair:

- introduced and welcomed the new school Business Manager, Kate Luck.
- spoke to the Chair's message in the 2018 Annual Report
- noted the board focus on supporting staff to ensure students have what they need.
- noted the development of a more through audit plan
- discussed the school's significant investment undertaking a mock registration process, given concerns about level of preparation and capability. Compliance is required for ongoing operations. The mock process helped test whether required documentation is in place and will improve compliance when non-government school registration next takes place.
- noted continuing collaboration between the school and the board to strengthen governance and help build the school's leadership capacity. Grateful to the principal, staff and all of the community for efforts.

The community queried whether NAPLAN results impact enrolments. Mr Vandermolen noted good results, the school does its own testing and staff map child progress against mastery of materials. Mr Vandermolen noted that the school is rolling out 'Transparent Classroom' software platform to better inform parents about progress.

Mr Vandermolen noted that if he can get parents of potential students to the school, then they enrol. The challenge is attracting students to the school, that is his focus. School tours work well. Discussed the effort involved in fundraising and Spring Fair that didn't proceed. Looking to have the Parents and Community lead the fund-raising efforts rather than school staff. Mr Vandermolen noted the development of a Digital Marketing Plan.

Motion: to adopt the 2018 Annual Report.

Moved: AR; Seconded: Emma-Kate Potter

5. Presentation and adoption of Annual Audited Financial Statements

The Board Chair spoke to the financial statements and noted:

- Deficit of \$267,000 in 2018; after 2017 surplus of \$227,000. The variation was due to student enrolments declining in 2018. Employee expenses were reduced but not by a commensurate amount.
- Looking to adopt a new accounting to system (Xero) to reduce the complexity and reduce the risk of human error. Other systems were considered. The current accounting package requires significant intervention to get the reports we need.
- On the revenue: there were problems with our formulae around student numbers. Anticipated growth in Cycle 1 student numbers in Term 3 did not eventuate. We lost more students during the year and struggled to recover. On the expenses, we kept expenditure tight.
- In Chair's opinion cash flow and solvency in a good position, the school has made advance payments against the mortgage.
- There is good equity in the school, the challenge is with student conversion.
- The auditor recommended a separate employee entitlements account, the Board is looking at options for this.
- The Board is also looking at options to diversify income sources, such as the Early Learning Centre.

Motion: to adopt the 2018 Annual Audited Financial Statements.

Moved: James Bell; Seconded: Sam Scott

6. Appointment of Auditor

Motion: to reappoint Lateral Chartered Accountants as the Society's auditors.

Moved: Martin Drinkwater; Seconded: Mel Buswell

7. Election of Board Members

Current Board member Martin Drinkwater, re-standing; and from the floor Mr Tim Bourke, were both elected.

8. Sub-committee expressions of interest

Chair spoke about the opportunity for parents to help without being on the Board itself, but help with sub-committees. Mr James Bell expressed some interest.

9. Meeting Close

The Chair thanked Felix Pirie for his work on the Board, Felix is stepping away after two years on the Board.

Meeting closed 8.05pm.