

## November 2023 Board Meeting

**Date:** Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023 from 19h to 23h20

**Location:** Teachers' Canteen Woluwe & Online (ZOOM)

**Present in situ:** Célia ALVES RODRIGUES – Andrew Janis FOLKMANIS – Pim GESQUIERE – Andrea GRGIĆ – Nicolas LACROIX – Elita PETRAITIENĖ – Albert RÄDLER – Monika SZULYOSZKY – Francesca TUDINI – Alberto TOSO – David ZELINGER

**ZOOM:** Eleonora APPONI-BATTINI – Vincent CATOT – Alexander CORNFORD – Catarina DUARTE GOMES – Ursula HÖNICH – Maija KNUTTI – Bettina SCHMIDBAUER-MOGENSEN – Ulrike STOROST – Christian VISANI

**Absent:** Peter EDLIND

## Agenda Points

### 1. Approval of the agenda

The Chair takes the floor to explain the presentation of the agenda points. Ulrike Storost makes a statement for the record "Endorsing the agenda also implies its time frame. The scheduled meeting time should be respected and followed as closely as possible, so that all Board members (including those with heavy family and/or work duties) can properly exercise their duties and responsibilities, namely to take part in discussions and decisions on important items. Should any item require further in-depth discussion, or should new issues emerge, those should be (pre-)discussed in a separately scheduled meeting or in the relevant working groups, rather than extending the length of scheduled meetings beyond any reasonable limit."

The agenda is approved.

### 2. Approval of the report 24/10/2023

Célia Alves Rodrigues makes a statement for the record regarding the report of the 24/10/2023 "the explanations of the APEEE Director *'The APEEE director takes the floor and informs the Board of the practice which has been in place in the APEEE for multiple years, stating after a minimum of 6 written reminders, service accesses are cancelled. However, if a child presents themselves to the bus in the morning, at the canteen at lunchtime or at the supervision in the afternoon, they are not denied the service. Following the lunch or the transport pick-up or the supervision pick-up, parents are informed their access has been cancelled for the following day, and they are kindly requested to contact the finance department.'* Should be complemented that there is such practice on the rules now, no board decision and there is no offer to discuss a payment plan or to discuss the situation with the concerned families even upon request."

Francesca Tudini wishes to reply with the following statement: *"The APEEE offers payment plans to every parent who requests it. We want to facilitate payments to families who, for whatever reason, cannot make full payments upon issue of the invoice. In 2022-2023 we have granted several payment plans, of which 2 are still in place in 2023-2024"*.

The Chair states the Board will proceed to the voting on the report of the 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and clarify that the quote is made by the APEEE Director.

The Board votes on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023 minutes, including the modification of the director's quote.

12 votes for yes (Pim Gesquiere, Maija Knutti, Célia Alves Rodrigues, Elita Petraitienė, Francesca Tudini, Ulrike Storost, Nicolas Lacroix, Andrew Janis Folkmanis, Catarina Duarte Gomes, David Zelinger, Eleonora Apponi-Battini, Monika Szulyovszky) = 80% and 3 votes for abstain (Christian Visani, Bettina Mogensen-Schmidbauer, Vincent Catot) = 20%

**Decision: The Board approves the report of the 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023, including the modification.**

### 3. Approval of the report 07/11/2023

David Zelinger states there should be a sentence adding there were two previous failed attempts in organising extraordinary meetings (on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November and 6<sup>th</sup> November, during which a quorum was not met).

14 votes for yes (Maija Knutti, Christian Visani, Célia Alves Rodrigues, Francesca Tudini, Ulrike Storost, Nicolas Lacroix, Andrew Janis Folkmanis, Ursula Hönich, Bettina Schmidbauer-Mogensen, Vincent Catot, Catarina Duarte Gomes, David Zelinger, Eleonora Apponi-Battini, Monika Szulyovszky) = 82% and 3 votes for abstain (Pim Gesquiere, Elita Petraitienė, Andrea Grgić) = 18%

**Decision: the Board approves the report of the 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023.**

## Discussion Points & Votes

### 1. Evere Zoning: Status & Plans

The Chair takes the floor to present the Evere zoning situation (proposal of new zonal rules) and states that himself, the overcrowding task force coordinator and the Vice President for Administrative Affairs have been in contact with lawyer and have received a quote of 6.000€ to advise the APEEE on this matter. The Chair adds that a submission to the public enquiry would be the right thing to do and underlines that inactivity of the Board it could be seen as a silent endorsement of the zoning plan.

The Chair presents the actions proposed regarding the zoning of Evere.

- Make a deposition to the public enquiry,
  - o Challenge Belgium's right to make the zoning change given promises from the Belgian government to the contrary,
  - o Insist that in any case, a school territory be compulsory in any development plans.
  - o Ask for a territory some multiple of the current territory for a school.
- Political lobby to make our point to senior Belgian and European politicians.
- (to be investigated), if (1) (a) fails, we can consider an administrative challenge in front of the Conseil d'Etat.

Member takes the floor that the budget to be voted, should not be linked to a certain invoice, but to reassure parents that an amount of the APEEE finances will be allocated to the support of the Evere zoning search for legal advice.

The Chair takes the floor to invite the task force overcrowding to discuss the Evere zoning and look where they can find the experts amongst the parent community within the next 7 days. If it were not to work out, the APEEE would move forward with the lawyer.

- Ask for volunteers in the parent community (lawyers, zoning experts, etc).
- Ask the other APEEE for contribution to the other EEB APEEE, as it is a cross-cutting topic.

- Will send the names of the parents who reached out to the APEEE secretariat with questions on the topic.

The Board votes on the request to the taskforce to form a team (extending the invitation to the parent community) by the 21/11, if not, the Board will revert to the lawyer and approve a maximum of 6.000€ to cover the legal fees.

16 votes for yes (Pim Gesquiere, Andrea Grgic, Christian Visani, Bettina Schmidbauer-Mogensen, Vincent Catot, Maija Knutti, Célia Alves Rodrigues, Elita Petraitiene, Ulrike Storost, Nicolas Lacroix, Andrew Janis Folkmanis, David Zelinger, Eleonora Apponi-Battini, Monika Szulyovszky, Ursula Hönich, Albert Rädler) = 89% and 2 votes for abstain (Francesca Tudini, Catarina Duarte Gomes) = 11%

**Decision:** the Board approves the decision to give 7 days to the overcrowding taskforce to put in place a team and if not, to revert to the lawyer approving a maximum of 6000€ for legal fees.

## 2. Update on HSS

The Health, Safety and Security (HSS) working group coordinator takes the floor. Following the terrorist attack on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023, parents from the different European Schools of Brussels have reached out to Commissioner Hahn to convey their concern regarding the pupils' safety in the schools. Members discuss the options that were presented to the school to enhance the security around the school and how security and surveillance can be heightened.

The Board discusses and agrees to ask the coordinator of the HSS working group, to come back to the Board in December with an idea of how the APEEE can best present this to the parents during the info session, as well as in the annual report, removing any loopholes in the EEB security.

**Action Point:** Andrew Janis Folkmanis to share the parent letter when he receives it.

## 3. Update on IT audit

The Chair and members of the IT working group have been working with a parent volunteer trying to figure out a way forward with the IT project and working group.

A report of the review of the IT situation was drafted by the parent volunteer, who is a professional IT project manager. The report has been shared with the Board members; the report shares a state of play of the current situation and lists recommendations and suggestions.

3 recommendations:

- Hire a dedicated project manager, currently the Financial Advisor is the manager.
- Introduction of a steering committee made of staff members and board members
- A budget of 5 to 8% of the turnover would be the normal IT costs instead of the current 2%.

Members are split on the report made by the parent volunteer.

Nicolas Lacroix leaves the meeting.

Bettina Schmidbauer Mogensen makes a statement for the record and *“notes specifically the fact that Board meetings in this year were never without improper behaviour of a few board members who repeatedly insulted other board members and contributed that a number of members left the board before their mandates are finished. Such a situation cannot be sustained. There is a serious malfunctioning of the board overall”*.

Andrea Grgic makes the following statement for the record: "I agree with Bettina, I will not allow to be called (inappropriate derogatory words) at board meetings."

Members discuss putting on hold the IT system and what the IT Team needs to move forward.

- Web developer with skills concerning Salesforce
- Half-time project manager

**Action Point:** Anja Galle provide for the next Board meeting a recommendations on staffing changes for IT (if needed).

Pim Gesquiere states that following doubts about the lack of a Project Manager and the lack of a steering committee as recommended by the external volunteer, the current invoicing project cannot move forward. 2 other members state the same as P. Gesquiere, however, other members disagree and do not believe the APEEE Invoicing system should be put on hold.

Albert Rädler leaves the meeting following the request for a vote on putting the invoicing software project on hold.

David Zelinger leaves the meeting following the request for a vote on putting the invoicing software project on hold.

Francesca Tudini complains that a contract was signed the week before and after few days a vote is done to put the work on hold without any assessment of what the consequences would be.

The Board votes on putting on hold the APEEE activities invoicing system.

4 votes for yes (Pim Gesquiere, Elita Petraitienė, Andrea Grgić, Célia Alves Rodrigues) = 27%, 8 votes for no (Francesca Tudini, Christian Visani, Ursula Hönich, Maija Knutti, Ulrike Storost, Andrew Janis Folkmanis, Bettina Schmidbauer Mogensen, Eleonora Apponi-Battini) = 53% and 3 votes for abstain (Monika Szulyovszky, Catarina Duarte Gomes, Vincent Catot) = 20%

**Decision: the Board approves that the invoicing system project will not be put on hold.**

#### 4. AGM draft agenda & resolutions

The members agree to not invite external speakers.

Members discuss:

- Inviting class representatives to send their questions to allow the APEEE to allocate a timeframe during the AGM.
- Organising info sessions beforehand during which class representatives will be able to ask questions.

The Board discusses the agenda and shuffles the schedules.

**1- 19h00:** Approbation de l'ordre du jour

**2- 19h20 – 20h35:** Approbation des scrutateurs et du président du bureau électoral ; élection des membres du C.A.

**3- 20h35 – 21h45:** Rapport financier

- ⇒ Présentation du rapport financier
- ⇒ Allocation des réserves

- ⇒ Approbation des comptes 2022-2023
- ⇒ Approbation du budget 2023-2024
- ⇒ Cotisation 2024-2025
- ⇒ Quitus donné au Commissaire

**4- 21h45 – 22h45: Rapport annuel 2023**

- ⇒ Présentation du rapport annuel
- ⇒ Approbation du rapport annuel
- ⇒ Quitus donné au C.A.

**5- 22h45 – 23h00: Résultat des élections du C.A.**

The Board votes on the agenda with resolutions including a reformulation of resolution 3 (18 vacant positions, with a max of crosses per ballot).

14 votes for yes (Ursula Hönich, Maija Knutti, Alexander Cornford, Ulrike Storost, Célia Alves Rodrigues, Andrew Janis Folkmanis, Francesca Tudini, Vincent Catot, Elita Petraitienė, Catarina Duarte Gomes, Eleonora Apponi Battini, Monika Szulyovszky, Andrea Grgic) = 100%.

**Decision: the 11/1/2024 AGM agenda and draft resolutions are approved.**

Pim Gesquiere takes the floor, as Statutes Update Coordinator, to establish a procedure in case the 7/12/2023 EGM needs to be cancelled in the event the attendance quorum is not reached. He suggests that the Chair, the Secretary of the Bureau and the APEEE Director shall be granted the power to jointly decide if the EGM needs to be cancelled.

The Board votes on the delegation of authority to the Chair, the Secretary of the Bureau, and the APEEE Director to decide if the EGM can be cancelled.

13 votes for yes (Pim Gesquiere, Francesca Tudini, Ursula Hönich, Maija Knutti, Alexander Cornford, Ulrike Storost, Célia Alves Rodrigues, Andrew Janis Folkmanis, Vincent Catot, Elita Petraitienė, Eleonora Apponi-Battini, Monika Szulyovszky, Andrea Grgic) = 93% and 1 vote for abstain (Catarina Duarte Gomes) = 7%

**Decision: the Board approves the delegation of authority.**

Célia Alves Rodrigues makes a statement for the record: "I feel ill at ease with the amount of alcohol being consumed at the board meetings at the cost of parents. Some board members have consumed so much alcohol that they become aggressive while others are nearly sleeping. This is detrimental for a parent association and this custom should stop."

Francesca Tudini wishes to make a statement for the record: "In 7 years in the Board, and more than 70 meetings. I have never seen someone being drunk or sleepless during meetings. The above statement by my colleague is baseless and has the only purpose to position herself as the "good" member versus the others. Minutes are an important document and should not be used for personal reasons, to shine in front of the parents community".

## **5. InterParents – Legal Costs AGSEV**

InterParents, on behalf of APEEE Varese, requests to allocate 834€ of their budget (made of the APEEEs yearly contribution) to reimburse EE Varese's legal costs for the legal advice provided for the security and insurance agreement between the European school and APEEE Varese.

The Board votes on the approval of the reimbursement request of the Parents' Association of the

European School of Varese (AGSEV) for the total amount of 834€ in legal fees incurred by the Association in conjunction with the forced "implementation" of the Safety and Security Framework Agreement at the European School of Varese.

9 votes for yes (Pim Gesquiere, Maija Knutti, Ulrike Storost, Andrew Janis Folkmanis, Célia Alves Rodrigues, Vincent Catot, Elita Petraitienė, Monika Szulyovszky, Andrea Grgić) = 65% 2 votes for no (Francesca Tudini, Catarina Duarte Gomes) = 14% and 3 votes for abstain (Ursula Hönich, Eleonora Apponi-Battini, Alexander Cornford) =21%

**Decision:** The Board approves the reimbursement request of the Parents' Association of the European School of Varese (AGSEV) for the total amount of 834€ in legal fees incurred by the Association in conjunction with the forced "implementation" of the Safety and Security Framework Agreement at the European School of Varese.

#### **6. Dates December Board meeting & informal Christmas gathering**

The members agree on the following dates:

- December Board meeting: Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023
- Christmas gathering: 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023

#### **7. Dates Info sessions on Financial Accounts & budget and Annual report IT and Evere zoning.**

The Chair informs the treasurer will be asked for his input and availability.

### **AOB**

- 1. Non-payment policy not discussed due to lack of time**
- 2. Canteen not discussed due to lack of time**
- 3. Reform of the European School System not discussed due to lack of time**

The Chair has sent the document which was input to the Extraordinary Board of Governors' meeting in October, which contains what needs to be corrected, an assessment of the Sec Gen and the assessment of what the Sec gen thinks the Board of Governors should do. InterParents met and went through the document and for each resolution, worked out an intervention.

- 4. Mandatory school trips – questions & complaints not discussed due to lack of time**

Meeting ended at 22h55.

Next meeting is scheduled on the Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023.