

May 2024 Extraordinary Board Meeting

Date: Monday 27th May 2024 from 19h to 23h35

Location: Online (ZOOM)

Present Célia ALVES RODRIGUES – Sofia AMOR – Luca CARAPELLI – Pierre DEBAR – Catarina DUARTE GOMES – Sabrina FASOLI – Pim GESQUIERE – Andrea GRGIĆ – Andrea HUTTERER – Nicolas LACROIX (until 23h) – Bruno LARANJEIRA (as of 20h) – Elita PETRAITIENĖ – Myriam PINI – Albert RÄDLER – Fabricio SANTOS – Monika SZULYOVSKY – Francesca TUDINI – Jan VON PFALER – David ZELINGER

Absent: Andrew Janis FOLKMANIS

Others: Anja GALLE – Keiko KAWAHARA (as of 20h) – Clémence EUGENE

All related documents were sent to the Board members before the meeting.

Agenda Points

1. **Approval of the agenda.**

Decision: the agenda is approved.

Discussion Points and Vote

1. **First Reading of Draft Budget 2024-2025 & Meal Price Evere School Site.**

J. Von Pfler, as Treasurer, takes the floor to introduce the first reading of the draft budget for 2024-2025. The presentation provides a context and overall state of play for the financial year 2024-2025. It is explained that the overall aim is to have a breakeven point for the services, and a 2% margin for the Transport as authorised by the Institutions to compensate additional needs.

It is stressed that the meeting should focus on the vote of the draft Budget with estimated costs & registrations which will be replaced by the actual costs and registrations during the month of October 2024, when exact number of registrations will be available. The need to approve the draft budget is related to the opening of the registrations on 1st June for canteen and transport in order to inform parents in advance whether there are any price increases to expect. The final prices will be confirmed to the parents during the month of October when the actual costs & registrations are known.

The Board discusses and some members state they are missing information related to the prices and salary costs for the services. The Director replies that all data on this was sent on Friday 24th May 2024. The presence of the new Finance & Administration Manager was requested, since following a misunderstanding, she had not been invited. She joined the meeting as of 20h.

Members discuss the budgets, including the proposed price rise for périscolaire and canteen services.

Sofia Amor takes the floor and makes a statement for the record: *“The draft budget 2024-2025 presented to the Board for voting proposes a pricing increase of all the services. I regret to acknowledge there has been and it continues to be an approach of a systematic yearly increase of costs billed to our*

members (independently of inflation) which I believe is not viable after the yearly increases the Board has asked of the parents in recent years.

We need to be very clear on why such financial effort is being asked to parents. On the proposed services' increases (periscolaire; canteen; transport), we haven't been provided a proper analysis or financial assessment for justifying the proposed budgetary increases. We need an analytical assessment per activity, to agree on a short-, medium- and long-term approach for the coming school years. At today's discussions this has been raised by other Board Members. I have participated in almost all meetings, I believe I missed only one, I have repeatedly raised the issue of the need to have an assessment. To my understanding there are no scenarios nor services' trends analysis made.

More and more parents are complaining about the services, its price vis à vis its quality. We need a proper analysis on existent services' demand trends with a proposal of short, medium, and long-term solutions aimed at overcoming the existent budgetary constraints.

However, no concrete measures to restructure the services and reduce the costs are presented. On the contrary, additional increases in the services pricing are proposed as the main response.

Additionally, in past Board meetings critical issues were reported regarding the existent IT system with serious budgetary implications. As Board, we need detailed information to be presented allowing to fully understand the current and future budgetary situation and the justification for possible budgetary deviation if applicable. And mostly, proposals to address the issue in a way that this does not carry over throughout the years.

In this context, I am not able to vote favourably on the proposed draft budget as I cannot, based on the available information, be certain that the proposal reflects the interests of the APEEE or its members to whom we are accountable to and to whom we should be able to explain our actions if ever demanded.

As a Board Member, I have the legal obligation to act in the interest of the APEEE and the moral obligation to represent its members to the best of my ability.

I cannot be held liable nor responsible for the proposed draft budget to which I do not agree."

Célia Alves Rodrigues, Fabricio Santos, Andrea Grgić, Pim Gesquiere support Sofia Amor's statement for the record.

The Treasurer continues the presentation, and some members mention the need to have detailed information related to modifications in each service. It is confirmed that the prices for the year are officialised in October of the school year, once the number of registrations is known and based on the actual registrations the actual modifications & costs in each service.

Related to the Canteen draft budget, it is said that the Evere canteen is managed by an external provider. Consequently, the prices include a commission paid to the APEEE to cover its fixed costs. Compass has proposed maintaining the same prices for 2024-2025 as in 2023-2024, including the same royalties. However, members are concerned that the canteen prices at Evere should not negatively impact the Woluwe site.

It is suggested to inform parents that the percentage price range rise for the school year 2024-2025 in the services might be:

- Transport Woluwe/Evere: between 4% and 6%
- Canteen Woluwe: between 4% and 6%

- Extracurricular Activities Woluwe/Evere: between 5% and 8%

The Board discusses the matter and is divided on whether there is sufficient information to proceed with a vote. Some members believe that the details provided about the cost reduction for extracurricular activities and canteen services are not clear enough.

The Treasurer wraps up the whole discussion and repeats his findings that he has a mixed feeling as the very first draft budget used a working assumption of a price increase of 18 %. Furthermore, the Treasurer concludes that the budget as presented by him appears to be correct for the canteen and transport service. For the périscolaire he cannot give a full approval as he said that he had not received all information necessary to have the full picture but that he would trust the people.

The chair replies that the first draft budget was a mere working assumption of 18 % price increase and that all participants at this internal meeting agreed that this is unrealistic. The chair thanks the Treasurer for having looked so deeply into the figures, but also reminds that the issues presented by the Treasurer would go into very detailed cost audits and should not be the subject of discussions at the board but at the level of the working groups. The Chair suggests looking into the “numbers behind the numbers” and actually assessing the necessity of volunteers and staff in a dedicated meeting with board members with accounting experience. The Chair decides to conduct a single vote on the whole draft Budget and consequently with the proposed range of price increases as listed above.

The Board votes on the approval of the first reading of the draft budget with the following estimate for price increase to be communicated to parents - canteen: between 4% and 6%, transport between 4% and 6%, périscolaire: between 5% and 8%.

7 votes for yes (Myriam Pini, Pierre Debar, Jan von Pfaler, Albert Rädler, Luca Carapelli, Francesca Tudini, Monika Szulyovszky, David Zelinger), 9 votes for no (Bruno Laranjeira, Andrea Grgić, Sabrina Fasoli, Célia Alves Rodrigues, Fabricio Santos, Elita Petraitienè, Sofia Amor, Pim Gesquiere, Catarina Duarte Gomes) and 1 vote for abstain (Andrea Hutterer).

Decision: the first reading of the draft budget with the following estimate for price increase to be communicated to parents - canteen: between 4% and 6%, transport between 4% and 6%, périscolaire: between 5% and 8% is not approved.

Due to the risk that not approving the budget will delay registrations and create uncertainties regarding business continuity, the Board decides to vote on the proposed draft budget for each service individually.

The Board votes on the approval of the first reading of the draft budget with the following estimate for price increase to be communicated to parents: **transport** between 4% and 6%.

13 votes for yes (Myriam Pini, Andrea Grgić, Pierre Debar, Jan Von Pfaler, Sabrina Fasoli, Fabricio Santos, Albert Rädler, Luca Carapelli, Elita Petraitienè, Pim Gesquiere, Francesca Tudini, Monika Szulyovszky, David Zelinger), 3 votes for no (Sofia Amor, Bruno Laranjeira, Catarina Duarte Gomes) and 1 vote for abstain (Célia Alves Rodrigues)

Decision: the first reading of the draft budget with the following estimate for price increase to be communicated to parents: **transport between 4% and 6% is approved.**

The Board votes on the approval of the first reading of the draft budget with the following estimate for price increase to be communicated to parents: **canteen** between 4% and 6%.

8 votes for yes (Myriam Pini, Pierre Debar, Jan Von Pfaler, Albert Rädler, Pim Gesquiere, Francesca Tudini, Monika Szulyovszky, David Zelinger), 8 votes for no (Andrea Grgić, Bruno Laranjeira, Sabrina Fasoli, Célia Alves Rodrigues, Fabricio Santos, Elita Petraitienė, Sofia Amor, Catarina Duarte Gomes), 1 vote for abstain (Luca Carapelli).

Decision: the first reading of the draft budget with the following estimate for price increase to be communicated to parents: canteen between 4% and 6% is not approved.

The Board votes on the approval of the first reading of the draft budget with the following estimate for price increase to be communicated to parents: **périscolaire** between 5% and 8%.

6 votes for yes (Myriam Pini, Albert Rädler, Luca Carapelli, Francesca Tudini, Monika Szulyovszky, David Zelinger) 10 votes for no (Andrea Grgić, Bruno Laranjeira, Jan Von Pfaler, Sabrina Fasoli, Célia Alves Rodrigues, Fabricio Santos, Elita Petraitienė, Sofia Amor, Pim Gesquiere, Catarina Duarte Gomes) and 1 vote for abstain (Pierre Debar).

Decision: the first reading of the draft budget with the following estimate for price increase to be communicated to parents: **périscolaire** between 5% and 8% is not approved.

Consequently, the Board agrees to continue discussions and vote on the canteen and périscolaire budgets, as well as on the updated General Terms & Conditions and the Evere meal price, during the Board meeting scheduled for June 6, 2024, and to postpone registrations until that date.

2. **General Terms & Conditions** (not discussed due to lack of time).

Any Other Business

Meeting ended at 23h35

Next Board meeting is scheduled on Thursday 6th June 2024.