

THORNDON SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF MEETING – 23 JUNE 2015 AT 6.00 PM IN THE STAFFROOM

Present: Alistair du Chatenier (Principal), James Turner (Chairperson), Andrew Pennell (Staff Representative), Darren Stafford, Victoria Parsons, Phil Evans, Ian Fitzgerald, Jo Cribb

Apologies: Andrew Hickey, Simina Toimata, Nicola Ngawati, Davina Parangi-Brown

James welcomed everyone to the meeting. He introduced Ian Fitzgerald and the purpose of his attendance at the meeting. He also introduced Phil Evans and welcomed him to his first meeting. A karakia started the meeting.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest:

James Turner – consultancy work with tertiary education providers.

Victoria Parsons – has recently taken up a contract with the Ministry of Education but the work does not involve policies which impact on primary schools, nor school funding.

James explained that the Board decided, over a year ago, to do a self review so that we could be as effective as possible. Ian Fitzgerald, highly experienced Director and governance advisor, came along to a meeting around Christmas time. James and Ian developed and circulated a Board effectiveness questionnaire which seven people filled in. It would be useful to talk about the key issues raised.

6.12 pm Jo Cribb arrived.

Ian reiterated that as a Board it is important to have clarity of purpose. It is important to work as a team and be heard. This should be a safe environment. As a Board we need to hold the Principal to account. We need to look at ourselves and ask how well are we tracking. Ask questions. There may be no right or wrong answers, but it is something that should lead to a conversation. To sharpen things up at meetings Alistair just needs to tell the Board the key things that the Board needs to know. The Board meeting can then become an opportunity to ask questions, rather than discussing things at a detailed level. Discussion would focus on ensuring that everyone understood the key issues and was on the same page, and could carry out their governance responsibilities effectively. Ian suggested that topics to be discussed are topics that lead to significant goals and achievements eg. what would the school look like in three years time? With any issues such as this, the Board should go through the process of considering the perspectives of staff, parents, students, and the rest of the community. It would give some awareness of what parents are thinking in a general sense. He suggested the Board spend the rest of this year evaluating and deciding what to focus on.

From Ian's perspective, the Thorndon School Board is an effective, functioning, forward thinking Board. We do however need to think about how to get the best out of our limited time on the Board. We must be prepared to hold the Principal to account (which will be a fairly new development). People should be able to talk explicitly at a meeting to each other but these discussions should be at an appropriate level.

James asked the question "Where to next?" He thought some reflection time was needed, and that it would be useful to set aside some time, where we aren't looking at business as usual, to discuss further, particularly the question about where the school should be in

three years. He thought it important that we create an environment where we get the most out of everybody's participation and contribution. The "Board effectiveness" questionnaire should be a regular survey. It was decided unanimously that we should create some strategic time. This also entails being clearer about how to structure our "business as usual" time, and we should add to the calendar what the meetings will focus on. James thanked Ian for his valuable time.

7.00 pm Ian Fitzgerald left the meeting.

Principal's Report:

- Taken as read.
- Alistair requested some guidance around the Thorndon After School Care charges. He was interested in the Board's thoughts about raising fees for this service as there hasn't been a change in price for approximately 5 years and we have weathered a couple of minimum wage increases over this period of time. There was an agreement to raise the fees as proposed in the paper. There was also a conversation around the procedure of debt collection. Alistair would get Julie Prout to investigate a direct credit/debit procedure. The Board left the final decision on this to Alistair.

Resolution: *"The proposed new fees structure as prepared in the "TASC Fees – Review" paper (attached to the Board papers) is accepted. This will become effective as of the beginning of Term 4 (12 October 2015)."*

*Moved: James Turner
Seconded: Darren Stafford*

- Whanu hui – there has been a request from whanau that a whanau Board member take a place on the Property Committee.

Resolution: *"The Board supports Phil Evans and Nicola Ngawati to be a part of the Property Committee."*

*Moved: James Turner
Seconded: Victoria Parsons*

- Alistair asked that a decision be made to purchase five iPads for the second new entrant class that was due to start at the beginning of Term 3, and also to purchase to further laptop devices. One would be used by the new teacher in Room 13, the other would be used as a floating device as we have had a situation lately where teacher devices have gone away for repair and we haven't been able to provide a suitable replacement.

Resolution: *"The Board agreed to the purchase of five iPads for the second new entrant class and the purchase of two further teacher laptops."*

*Moved: Darren Stafford
Seconded: Victoria Parsons*

Darren asked a question with regard to the roll and managing the expectations of parents where siblings are due to start, but the family lives out of zone. Alistair will address this in a newsletter.

TIMMS – It was pleasing to see that children like doing maths. Also good to see that two teachers are having professional development in maths and science.

7.25 pm Carol Weston arrived

Rebuild – Darren informed us that the letter written to Peter Hughes has had some impact. At the moment there is a draft plan for 9 classrooms and an administration area.

Carol then gave a general overview of the meeting. The Board agreed the worst thing to do is to spend money on refurbishing instead of rebuilding Block B. In the next four to six weeks the architects will start working on more details. James will get a copy of the minutes from Octa to Darren. James will also write a report on this to the parents via the newsletter once there is some more news.

7.55 pm Carol Weston left the meeting.

Fair – Victoria reported on a meeting that she attended a couple of weeks ago. There is a clear message from the Fair Committee that they want direction from the Board. They also want more engagement from children and parents. The Fair Committee have also met to have a “brainstorming session” looking at ideas to improve the fair. It is important that we support Karen Smith who has taken over the driving of the fair. The Board are happy to take risks but not to the detriment of losing any money. Victoria will continue to be the communications link between the Board and Fair Committee.

Principal’s Appraisal – Jo Cribb explained the process of the Principal’s Appraisal. The performance agreement is determined at the beginning of the year. At the end of the year an independent Principal goes through the process of talking with Alistair and teaching staff on professional leadership. James and Jo build on this with discussions about Alistair’s performance against his objectives. Jo explained that the exit interviews were also incorporated into the appraisal. Alistair will meet Neil Worboys in the holidays to see if he’s an appropriate person to do the independent review (taking over from Liz Millar) for the next cycle.

Whanau Meeting – Phil Evans advised that Lee Ruahina-August from the Port Nicholson Settlement Trust attended the whanau meeting. There was a lot of enthusiasm about the rebuild. The whanau are interested in mana whenua involvement. Talked about iwi interested in this area, and having it acknowledged through motifs, gateway, etc. They have set up a sub-committee to work on this. Lee’s interest is to help advise the school about potential possibilities and decisions that can be linked back to the land. Also discussed was the possibility of having the huia bird as a motif.

Finance:

Taken as read.

Resolution: *“The Board approves expenditure year-to-date as noted in the finance report.”*

*Moved: Alistair du Chatenier
Seconded: Darren Stafford*

Minutes of Previous Meeting:

The minutes of the 28 April 2015 meeting were accepted as being a true and accurate record.

*Moved: James Turner
Seconded: Andrew Pennell*

Meeting Closed at: 8.20 pm

Date for Next Meeting: 28 July 2015

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
James Turner
Chairperson

Action Points:

- James to email a copy of the Octa minutes to Darren.