

Minutes of CA meeting 31st January 2008

3 Rue Spa
12.30

Present: Hilary Crowder
Anke Held
Guido Ricci
Camilla Wikstedt Gaudina
Ivan Torre
Remo Bettiol
Antonella Banbagini Oliva
Antonio Cenini
Natalya Simons
Aedín O'Byrne
Yves Herman

Excused: Isabelle Perignon

1. Approval of the Agenda: The Agenda was approved with IT's comments taken into account that the purpose of the meeting was to review the financial situation of the APEEE.
2. Approval of minutes of 18th January 2008: Minutes circulated and approved.
3. Approval of minutes of 22nd January 2008. IT will circulate the updated minutes with all changes accepted so they can be approved at the next meeting.
4. Approval for purchase of a multitasker, printer, copier, scanner, fax for the office. Approval was granted for a separate fax machine given that a working fax line has been found in the next door office and due to unreliability of machines that are all in one and if one part breaks down then you cannot use the other functions. A new printer/copier/scanner will be bought for the office. For both items CG to get two quotes as no budget was decided upon.
5. Purchase of a computer for Christophe was approved up to an amount of Euro 500 if AO cannot source a free computer. AO to check if she can provide one. If not CG to look into buying one.

6. Approval for purchase of kitchen equipment. The total bill for kitchen equipment of Euro 1 500 was approved. This bill included some items already approved in previous meetings. [CG to pass on decision to Goblet.](#)
7. Decision regarding canteen prices. Prices for a meal in the canteen were raised for parents, guests APEEE members and the head school administrators from Euro 5 to Euro 7 and for teachers from Euro 6.50 to Euro 7.00. Admin staff and teaching assistants continue to pay Euro 5.00. [CG to organise the publishing of the changes.](#)
8. Financial overview of APEEE's activities. IT brought handouts of the budgets from the GA of June 2007 and an updated budget dated January 2008. No actual management accounts were produced. In fact the request was to provide an overview of the financial management of the APEEE for those not yet familiar with it, not to provide detailed accounts on the implementations apparently referred to as "actual management account". Also IT had asked for a special meeting only on this issue but instead other issues have been discussed first. IT regretted that in any case he had not been able to provide the complete requested overview for lack of time.
 - a. IT explained the main differences in the projected loss rising from about Euro 76 000.00 in the June projection to about Euro 102,000.00 in the January projection to be that the number of enrolled pupils in the June 2007 budget was based upon 240 pupils and 200 families, whereas we have 170 pupils currently and that the costs of administrative personnel was too optimistic in June of Euro 42 000 versus Euro 52 000 currently. Internal administrative staff costs are divided thus: 20% for general affairs; 40% Canteen and 40% for transport. The internal admin staff costs include an extra person on the payroll for the months April, May and June. IT stressed that it is not a good idea to crystallize focus and attention on specific figures because we are still working on, a yearly budget approach and what matters in the first place is the respect of the principles; the figures have to follow accordingly, not the other way around. APEEE BRU IV is an AAISBL not a profit company.
 - b. The budgeted operating loss from transport in June of Euro 25 000 has risen to a projected loss of Euro 45 000.00 due to the lower headcount and the necessity of having at least 4 routes. While the morning routes are nearly at 70-80% capacity the afternoon routes are much lower. As a result of the realisation of the much larger loss than expected for the transport activities a Euro 70 000.00 grant has been obtained from the Board of Governors for the

European Schools. A discussion then ensued to determine the extent over which the APEEE can control either costs or revenues for transport. Revenues are difficult for the APEEE board to control for two reasons which limit its flexibility on pricing. The ceiling price the children in Primary pay per head for those whose parents are at the Commission are set by the Commission which has agreed to pay up to Euro 2735 per annum per child for this school year. It was agreed at the outset that prices from Maternelle parents of the Commission (and others not receiving a subsidy from their employer) would not exceed Euro 1000.00. The price for use of the Garderie bus was set at reduced rate like the other ES in Brussels and it is currently set at Euro 500 being 50% of the ceiling rate of 1000. This was because the latter does not run in the morning and has fixed stops at OIB buildings hosting garderies. The grant that has been provided by the BOG is used to subsidise those parents paying the Euro 1000.00 price. If there was an increase in the price Berkendael parents would be less inclined to use the service and Berkendael would be less attractive for prospective parents. The higher cost of our service compared with the other European schools in part relates to our wider catchment area which is affected by Berkendael being a transitory school for the new school at Laeken which is on the other side of the city. GR told us that the wider catchment area is mainly affected by the enrolment policy of the BOG. If new pupils enrolled only came from neighbouring neighbourhoods then costs could be brought down. GR said it has proved difficult to cost each route. It was thought that the breakeven level on the current cost base (taking into account the step affect of taking on new buses) would be at a level of 400 to 500 pupils using the APEEE bus service.

- c. The projected operating loss from the canteen has marginally improved from Euro 47 000.00 to Euro 43 000.00. IT explained that one of the reasons for this is due to the different accounting systems. In June 2007 it was foreseen that double entry would be used. Under this system depreciation was forecast at Euro 5 000.00 for the year. With the single entry system there is no depreciation and taking into account that the APEEE does not have to purchase any fixed assets, no expenditure. A discussion took place as to the level the APEEE board can control revenues and costs for its catering services. The price for a meal for a Primary pupil is Euro 4.70 and for a Maternelle pupil Euro 4.00. The experience of Ixelles, where both groups pay a flat fee of Euro 4.30 was discussed. While Maternelle children may eat less, the number

of servers they require is higher. At the GA parents voted to keep prices the same so that Berkendael has prices which are similar to the other schools. The number of Servers which are provided by Mis a Net (the company which has the cleaning contract with the school) has already been reduced from 6 to 5. HC introduced a discussion about exploring a similar system to that of Ixelles, where the APEEE employs a catering company ISS which caters with fresh food on site but due to its size and experience has purchasing power and good administrative skills. The idea was rejected forcefully by IT and CG due to fears of loss of control over the quality of the food and the fact that such a possibility would be contrary to the whole story and efforts of the APEEE BRU IV with regards to have a full functioning canteen cooking hot meals at Berkendael. Breakeven has been projected to be at 250-300 pupils using the APEEE canteen service. The grant of Euro 70 000 can also be used to shore up part of the loss in the canteen services.

- d. With a projected total loss of Euro 102,000.00 for the APEEEs combined activities and a subsidy from the BOG of Euro 70 000.00, the draw down on the loan from the other APEEEs of the European schools should be reduced from Euro 90 000.00 to Euro 32 000.00. HC voiced concern regarding the viability of this state of affairs. Without the BOG subsidy our possible debt level will rise considerably next year. The total loans that could be borrowed from the other schools amounts to Euro 300 000.00 but with possible yearly running losses of Euro 100 000.00 that does not provide much comfort. The degree of likelihood of the subsidy from the BOG being renewed was discussed. It was agreed that for this year the subsidy is insufficient and that the APEEE board must do all in its power to make a case for it's renewal and increase at the School's Board meeting on the 6th February 2008.

IT tried to explain that the deficit situation was foreseen since the start of the APEEE and that what is important is to have sound financial management and to respect the main principle for which the APEEE has been established first of all as they are not negotiable. The political bodies in charge of the recruitment policy have to assume consequences of their choices and if they hinders the increase of school population in Berkendael, they have to remedy to the dis-economies of scale that they create as it is out of questions that parents in Berkendael would have to pay higher costs to remedy themselves to the effect of the policy which is beyond their control.

9. Software for APEEE invoicing of all our services. This was delayed until next meeting.

10. AOB postponed until the next meeting.