

International Schools Association, Suva, Fiji

Annual General Meeting 2023 Minutes

Date: Thursday, 18 May 2023

Time: 6.00 pm

Location: ISS Campus

Members attending: Salasaini Vatumoto, Joanna Batten, Aaron Batten, Leba Kereni Colawai, Joelyn Whippy, Doreez Crampton-Kutty, Francesco Ponzoni, Malini Raghwan, Kate Reimann, Laura Sasvari, Omid Saberi, Helen Shepherd, Kamal Singh, Akosita Tuisiga, Alfereti Vamarasi, Silvio Lazzari, Stefania Francescon, Benitera Koroiijuta, Samuel McAleese, Rebecca Pratt, Isoa Soko, Tanya Vatubua Ulacake, Timothy Ulacake, Amali Rasalusalu, Joji Vunicagi, Jone Kurusiga, Rebecca Clentworth, Paul Horkan, Daniel Kark, Gabor Sasvari, Bradley Taylor, Elenoa Vamarasi, Katy Hourston, Victor Lange, William Weems.

Non-members attending without voting rights: Megan Streeter (Board Chair), Ersthad Ali (Auditor), Ashneel Prasad (Auditor), Staff - Shelly Forbes, Renee Dansey, Steve Cathers (Head of School).

Proxies and Electronic votes: Sereana Lobendahn Wood, Raniro Tenorio. 96 member registered for electronic voting.

1. Welcome and Introduction

The Annual General Meeting of 2023 commenced promptly at 6:10 PM, with Megan Streeter, the Board Chair, presiding over the gathering. A substantial number of Association members were present, ensuring a robust quorum. Megan warmly welcomed all attendees, extending her greetings to both members and non-members in attendance.

During her opening remarks, Megan acknowledged the presence of the two Auditors from Ernst & Young (Fiji) and expressed gratitude for their participation. Recognising the importance of an accurate and transparent voting process, she requested the assistance of one parent member to collaborate with the auditors, Joelyn, and Doreez in the vote counting procedure.

The Chair conveyed heartfelt gratitude on behalf of the Association to the departing Board members, Omid Saberi and Nilesh Goundar. Omid Saberi, who had served two terms as the Finance Chair, exhibited exceptional dedication and leadership. Likewise, Nilesh Goundar's three years of valuable service on the board have been greatly appreciated. Their unwavering commitment and notable contributions to the association were recognised and commended by Megan.

2. Approval the minutes of the pervious AGM

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on June 9, 2022, were unanimously approved as presented. Omid Saberi proposed the motion, which was seconded by Kate Reimann. The attendees agreed that the minutes accurately captured the discussions and decisions made during the meeting.

3. Report from the Chair of the Board

Megan Streeter, presented her report to the attendees. She discussed the strategic plan to involve Thomas van der Wielen in shaping the future direction of the school. Megan announced that Thomas would assume the position of Head of School (HOS) starting in August 2023. She highlighted the reasons behind this decision and the potential benefits for the school.

Megan acknowledged Stephen Cathers' s years of dedicated service to the school. She expressed appreciation for his contributions to the organisation, highlighting specific achievements or areas of impact.

4. Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)

Megan presented the PTA updates on behalf of Fran Wilson, President of PTA. Megan highlighting the efforts in building bridges between the PTA, the Board, and expressing satisfaction with the direction it is heading. The PTA was gearing up for another Fun Day event this year to be held 29 July 2023 and would coincide with the 50th celebration of the school.

5. Finance Committee Report

The Finance Chair, Omid Saberi provided a financial report, covering the following points:

- Parents were encouraged to join the committee.
- The 2022 financials showed positive outcomes, despite a decrease in student numbers.
- The audit received a positive assessment.
- The school was reported to be in a good financial state.
- A loan of \$16.64 million was obtained, which is linked to construction projects.
- Financial instructions were received to allocate the borrowed funds towards building-related expenses.
- The 2023 budget is aligned with enrollment projections.

During the Q&A session, a parent inquired about the utilisation of the surplus from 2022 in 2023. It was explained that the school aims to avoid ending the year with a zero balance and needs to start with a surplus to cover teachers' salaries since fees do not begin until the start of Term 1. The Board monitors the budget throughout the year and approves additional items not initially budgeted for, if necessary.

A suggestion was made by a parent for future AGMs to share examples of how the surplus is used throughout the year. Alfereti Vamarasi (Governance Chair) provided further clarification on the matter. Megan added that the school is working towards securing a term deposit equivalent to three months' operating costs to ensure resilience in times of crisis.

At this AGM, the Board proposed two motions.

1. Acceptance of the 2022 audited accounts; the Association unanimously approved this motion.

2. To appoint Ernst & Young as Auditors for 2023; the Association unanimously approved this motion.

6. Governance Committee Report

Alfereti Vamarasi the Governance Committee Chair presented their report.

The committee discussed several key activities carried out during the reporting period. These activities included:

- **Reviewing Policies and Articles of Association:** The committee focused on reviewing and updating policies and articles of association to meet the operating requirements of the school members and stakeholders.
- **Development of Training Framework:** The committee highlighted the ongoing development of a training framework for board members. This framework aims to enhance their skills and knowledge.
- **Staff Policies Review:** The committee discussed the importance of reviewing staff policies and ensuring streamlined processes and procedures to avoid unnecessary delays.
- **Recommendations for Approval** The committee noted that they had reviewed existing practices and created recommendations for approval. These recommendations will be presented to the appropriate authorities for consideration and further action.

The committee outlined the following next steps:

- a) The committee discussed the importance of integrating the certificate process into the governance structures. They recognised the need for full funding and potential legal implications related to the involvement of volunteers in creating the practices and acquiring necessary equipment.
- b) **Focus for the Future:** The committee highlighted their decision not to pursue certain activities, possibly due to resource constraints or other reasons. They emphasised the need to priorities key focus areas.

The Facilities Committee emphasised the importance of listening to students' needs when planning facility improvements. They expressed a desire to increase parent involvement and foster interactions within the school community.

7. Facilities Committee Report

Kamal Singh, Chair of Facilities highlighted the committees key achievement during 2022.

- Primary School Play area hard court & running Track, play structures, sun shades and Inquiry-based water feature
- Nokno Access Road
- School truck and school boat

Facilities focus for 2023

- Monitor and update school facilities Master Plan
- Complete and open ECH building
- Integrate fire systems to improve monitoring
- Upgrade PA announcement system
- Open underground parking and primary student drop-off
- Complete feasibility planning for swimming pool concept
- Continue to improve maintenance systems and Admissions reception area
- Create coffee parent area
- Improve handicap accessibility

8. Marketing and Communications Committee Report

Rebecca Pratt, a member of the Marketing Committee, reported on their second year of operation on behalf of Leanne Hunter, Chair of the Marketing Committee, noting the following points:

- Increased engagement through social media channels.
- Sharing regular updates on school activities with the community.
- Improved alumni engagement, including initiatives like "throwback Tuesdays."
- Community involvement through social media, notably through a Year 12 Mat Weaving post.
- Planning the 50th anniversary of ISS from the 21 till the 29 July.

8. Election of Board Vacant Seats

During the AGM, the election process was conducted to fill four vacant Board seats. Seven candidates stood for election, namely Alfereti Vamarasi, Bradley W. Taylor, Francesco Ponzoni, Joanna Batten, Laura Sasvari, Sam McAleese, and William Weems.

There were three options for voting: electronic, proxy and in person. The ballots were counted by two association members and verified by the two Ernst & Young (Fiji) auditors.

New Board members for 2023 are Alfereti Vamarasi, Joanna Batten, Laura Sasvari and William Weems.

9. General School Report

Stephen Cathers, the Head of School presented his report and highlighted achievement for 2022:

- Full recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic
- Restored programs in phases with lower risk activities first
- Large group activities were restored with added precautions
- Standardised test scores showed academic progress above international averages once more
- Teacher PD's was restored
- Restored outdoor programs during terms 3 and 4 of 2022
- Year 12 autonomous study room was opened
- Some outdoor ocean activities were expanded to new levels

Current Enrolment:

- ISS finished 2022 year with 512 students, during COVID, ISS lost 20% of its students (650)
- ISS enrolment is 556 and this year's budget goal was 550 students

Current School Direction

- Strong commitment to academic quality and faculty international perspective
- New ECH facility progressing successfully to open in 2024
- Strong instructional team already in place
- Transition to new Head of School (Thomas van der Wielen) during Semester 2.

Appreciation was expressed for the HOS's time at ISS and the years of dedication to the organisation.

10. Adjourn

Megan thanked all attendees for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 7.40pm.