

Draft minutes of the APEEE Services GA of 21 February 2024

Agenda :

- **Presentation of the Annual Report 2022/2023**
- **Accounts and balance sheet 2022/2023: vote for discharge**
- **Auditor's report**
- **Appointment of Board members: vote**

1. Presentation of the 2022/23 Activity Report

1.1 Introduction

Rafael PAPI BORDERIA (President of APEEE Services) opened the meeting by presenting the PowerPoint to the members and the introduction to the [activity report](#).

After the presentation on the Convention between the APEEEs of the European Schools in Brussels and the Central Office of the European Schools, Viktor HAUK (Treasurer of APEEE Services) asked Rafael PAPI BORDERIA if there was a contractual commitment between the different parties when the convention was signed?

Rafael PAPI BORDERIA replied that no commitment was binding, just as no penalty could be imposed. The purpose of the collaboration agreement is to establish the responsibilities of each party and to provide a framework for day-to-day collaboration in order to ensure the smooth running of services and the representative role of the APEEEs within the European Schools. The agreement should be signed during the 2023/2024 school year.

1.2 Transport

Ivo SCHMIDT (Chairman of the Transport Management Committee) presented the annual report of the Transport Service, highlighting the complexity of managing 2 sites, Uccle and Berkendael, and all the actions accomplished (see report). He invited interested parents to join the Transport Management Committee.

Questions/Answers:

Ivo SCHMIDT replied to the speakers that bus supervision now involves 80% adult supervisors. It is on track to reach 100% in the near future. If buses are late, parents should contact the service (number on the [home page under the "contact" tab](#)). He also invites parents to use the Together application if their child(ren) are taking the bus, and to remember to be courteous with the service's staff.

1.3 Canteen

David DELAMARRE (Member of the Canteen Management Committee) presented the canteen's annual report. The challenge remains overcrowding in the secondary section, but the school headmaster is very involved in helping the canteen service find solutions, in particular by introducing a 3rd service in the secondary section to spread the number of pupils more evenly.

Questions/Answers:

Pascale DE SMEDT replied to the speakers (Ivo SCHMIDT, Sandra ANTUNES, Ursula MIDDEL) that a vegetarian dish is served every day, that the products are, as far as possible, chosen locally and organically, but that the choices also take account of market prices, which are constantly rising. The service is careful to keep prices reasonable for parents, especially as some of them are increasingly asking to pay their subscriptions in instalments.

Paola Caruso added that we were welcoming a new observer, the father of a coeliac, who would help us to take better account of the food allergy/intolerance problems of certain pupils.

Georg BECKER congratulates the canteen service for involving the management in the management committee meetings. The same should be done for Transport meetings.

1.4. Extracurricular Uccle (Césame)

Paola CARUSO (President of the Césame Management Committee) was pleased that the service was finally in the black after the covid years, and that the social reserve had been replenished. Registrations for activities are going well, but there are too many cancellations (25%) to manage, due to parents registering their child(ren) for several activities in June to make sure they have enough space for the new school year. They then cancel at the start of the new school year. To avoid such cancellations, we will be introducing a binding registration system.

As for the lockers, we have reached maximum capacity. One solution might be to group lockers by family. To reduce vandalism, Paola is calling on parents to make their children aware of the need to respect the equipment.

Questions/Answers:

Paola CARUSO replied to Sandra ANTUNES that the service's budget before covid had never been negative; it was just about, but the social reserve had taken a hit. Regarding the lockers, Paola approved the idea put forward by one of the speakers to offer training to pupils on the proper use of lockers by relaying this information to the classes so that they would listen better. Pascale DE SMEDT added that the information could also be relayed on Instagram.

1.5. Extracurricular Berkendael

Stéphanie RESSORT (Chair of the Berkendael Management Committee) said that the number of registrations for activities had returned to pre-Covid levels.

Questions/Answers:

In response to Sandra ANTUNES' question about the procedure for hiring instructors, Stéphanie RESSORT and Pascale DE SMEDT replied that it was based on CVs, and that the instructors were professionals. For an activity to take place, there are several factors to take into account:

- The number of participants
- The equipment available
- Access to the premises
- Teachers' agreement to leave equipment (e.g. for piano lessons, you need their agreement to leave the piano in the classroom).

2. 2022/2023 accounts and balance sheet: vote for discharge

Viktor HAUK and Benoît GORET, APEEE Services' chartered accountant, presented the accounts and balance sheets included in [the annual report](#). The positive result of almost €400,000 gives hope of recovering all the losses from the various activities we have had to deal with over the previous two financial periods.

Increases in costs (charges, income and indexations, electrification of buses) have at least been offset by increases in contributions and other income.

Questions/Answers:

Sandra ANTUNES asked whether it was possible to reinvest in the purchase of new pianos as the 5-year amortisation period had been reached. In the Out-turn table for 2022-2023, Ivo SCHMIDT asked why there was such a difference for the canteen/cafeteria service between the budget amount (47,288.81) and the out-turn amount (205,502). Pascale DE SMEDT explains that the department has had to make reserves in stock purchases because the price of certain raw materials has risen enormously, such as olive oil and sugar. There are also wage costs (indexation, etc.). Viktor HAUK pointed out to Sandra ANTUNES that we would ensure that the budget was balanced in relation to inflation in 2024/2025. Ivo SCHMIDT added that the transport department was working to reduce costs with the electric bus companies.

3. Auditor's report

The Audit Belgium group, represented by Sophie TUYTTENS, issues an annual report to the GA, available on our website: [AR23310 \(apeee-bxl1-services.be\)](#). The closed accounts present a true and fair view of the association.

Questions/Answers:

Sophie TUYTTENS replied to Kevin O'CONNOR that the recommendations were intended for the Board only. If more significant recommendations were necessary, the auditors would report back to the AGM.

4. Appointment of Board members: vote

4.1 Presentation of the candidates

Before asking each candidate to introduce himself or herself, Rafael PAPI BORDERIA explained that the order of presentation of the names on the ballot paper followed the same logic as that of the PowerPoint presentation: we put in alphabetical order first those who wished to renew their mandate, then those who were standing for the 1st time. In response to a comment by Sandra ANTUNES, Rafael PAPI BORDERIA has opted for a more neutral procedure:

He indicated a number from 1 to 6 on 6 pieces of paper. He asked each applicant to pick one at random. N°1 went first, and so on. The candidates' presentations are available on the PowerPoint.

Questions/Answers:

Costica TUFA asked candidate Sandra ANTUNES how she would react if one of her projects was not selected by the Board. Sandra ANTUNES replied that a project had to be put to the vote and if it was rejected, it could be improved and put forward again. Stéphanie RESSORT pointed out that some projects were simply not feasible. Ivo SCHMIDT asked all the candidates whether they were in favour of the electrification of buses and facilities for bicycles. All the candidates replied in the affirmative, but with the following reservations:

- Beware of the cost of electrification
- Keep bus season tickets affordable
- Ensuring the safety of our children cycling to and from school
- We need a real mobility plan for the neighbourhood to ensure this safety.

We need to put pressure on the local council to reduce traffic congestion. Kevin O'CONNOR has contacted the mayor, but we need the school management on board to push the politicians. For this reason, Georg BECKER believes that the school management should be present at certain meetings of the Transport Committee.

4.2 Disputes brought to the AGM

Paola CARUSO (President of the Césame Committee) informed the meeting of a dispute at the Board. Césame staff had brought to the attention of the Board a complaint against Sandra Antunes, who was now standing for election to the Board. Paola gave the

background: Sandra ANTUNES had proposed an activity in Portuguese that the Césame manager had set up last year. The activity was not as successful as had been hoped, and due to a lack of enrolments and space constraints, we had to cancel the activity. This was followed by numerous exchanges of emails that Césame staff considered harassing on the part of Sandra ANTUNES towards Césame staff; this led Dominique BODIN, Césame's manager, to make written complaints to the Board in December 2023. The Board was asked to set up mediation, which has not yet been done or discussed.

Sandra ANTUNES replied that she was not aware of the allegations made against her and wondered whether it was legal to be informed at the General Meeting Assembly without first going through mediation. She understood that she was not to be appreciated, but asked that she be kept factual. She had proposed several activities:

- Mindfulness
- Coding
- More piano lessons
- Activity given in a minority language (Portuguese)

Her proposals for activities were initially turned down by the Césame manager. When the activities were introduced later, Sandra ANTUNES was no longer consulted. However, the activities were all a success. Motivated by minority rights, she managed to find 12 students for the Portuguese-language drama course. She adds that there are activities in Chinese, even though it is not a European minority language. She would like to be present at the Césame/CA mediation to defend herself.

Dominique Bodin (manager of Césame) replied that what bothered her was not the content but the form. It was Sandra ANTUNES' attitude of harassment that was the problem, the fact that she didn't listen to the department's responses, that she received threats and that she was discredited. Dominique felt harassed and found it unacceptable to be treated in this way by certain parents, and was prepared to write to the entire school community if further action was needed.

Ivo SCHMIDT thanked all the departments and explained that in the transport department, it had taken 8 years for things to change and for his green transition and adult supervision project to be implemented. He supported Sandra ANTUNES in her perseverance. He added that the parents are here as volunteers, motivated to come in their spare time.

Georg BECKER concluded that it was necessary to specify guidelines for extracurricular activities (limit on the number of participants, material criteria, etc).

A new speaker thought that the welfare of operational staff should be the parents' priority and that things needed to be put in place to ensure respect for them.

Rafael PAPI BORDERIA emphasised that the problem was the dynamics and not the project proposals. As the parents are volunteers here, respect is THE priority.

4.3 Results of votes on appointments to the Board of Directors

Number present: 35 members and 56 proxies for a total of 91 ballots.

Rafael PAPI BORDERIA concluded the meeting by announcing the results of the ballot counts for the Board appointments:

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstention</u>
- ANTUNES Sandra :	33	58	0
- BECKER Georg	83	8	0
- BENGOETXEA Endika	76	11	4
- DELAMARRE David	84	3	4
- HAUK Viktor	91	0	0
- RESSORT Stéphanie	72	14	5

Rapporteur : Stéphanie WOUTERS