Minutes of the Otahuhu College Board of Trustees' Meeting,

Thursday, 30 July 2026 at 5:30pm **at Ōtāhuhu College in Principal's Office**

1	**Present**: John Pulu, Neil Watson, Hannah Coleman, Jasmine Reynolds, Susan Afoa, Manako Lutui, Rulon Brown and Chrissy Reuelu (minutes) **Apologies**: Craig Sionetuato **Absent:**
2	**Conflict of Interest** Nothing to report
3	**Minutes from last meeting** Move that the minutes are a true and accurate record: Moved by John seconded by Hannah. **Matters arising**
3.1	**Correspondence – Inward** Nathan Selesele Letter from Youth Law regarding exclusion. Principal has replied to the information that was requested. Summer Hall Letter from Parent. In committee. Craig advised that he has decided to step down from his role as a Board member. John accepted his resignation on behalf of the Board. The vacancy will be communicated in the next school newsletter, inviting expressions of interest from members of the school community to fill the position.
3.2	**Correspondence – Outward**
4	**Principal's Report** Neil advised that the CAA results were similar to last year's results and remain an area of concern. The school continues to review and implement different approaches to improve achievement rates, including strengthening pastoral support and aligning the discipline system with teaching practices, particularly for Years 9 and 10. Teachers requiring additional classroom support due to discipline issues are identified each month. Mrs Stretton observes teaching practice while Tarres observes classroom engagement. Classes are rated on a scale of 1–10, and Deans receive reports identifying students who are not engaging so appropriate interventions can be implemented. Neil also visits classes requiring additional support. A Board member asked whether English classes were spending time in the library Neil answered yes but questioned the effectiveness of this approach. Neil explained

that the school is reviewing its reading enrichment programme in response to the increasing number of students experiencing difficulties with reading and literacy.

Neil advised that the new curriculum will be significantly more demanding, particularly in English. The CAA writing assessment requires students to write for one hour based on multiple reading texts, and the curriculum expectations will continue to increase. Students will be required to study a range of texts, including a film, short stories, two novels, a play, and poetry. Neil noted that there is considerable work to be done to ensure students are prepared for these increased literacy expectations. He also commented that, by comparison, the previous curriculum was considerably less extensive.

Neil advised that attendance has improved; however, there continues to be a high number of unexplained absences, often because parents do not notify the school or have changed their contact details without updating the school. Parents can currently report student absences by sending a written note, emailing, phoning the school, or submitting an absence through the school website.

It was noted that some schools use the SchoolBridge app, which allows parents to report absences for one or more children, sign and return permission slips, access school reports, and book parent-teacher meetings. Question was asked whether this option could be explored, and Neil agreed to investigate the use of the SchoolBridge app.

Neil reported on the Year 9 student Travellers wellbeing survey, which identified a lack of sleep due to excessive screen time as a significant issue affecting students. Question was asked whether there was an opportunity to provide an information evening for parents on the importance of managing devices, screen time, and internet use as she had attended one which was informative.

Overall, the survey results were positive, with students reporting a strong sense of cultural connectedness. It was confirmed that the survey is currently undertaken only with Year 9 students.

The Board also asked about the effectiveness of the school's health and wellbeing programmes. Neil advised that, while individual student information could not be shared due to privacy requirements, future reports could include general information about programme participation and outcomes, such as whether students are attending school more regularly and engaging more positively in learning.

Neil also noted that, for the first time, Year 9 students had completed Physical Education examinations.

	Neil advised that staff recruitment remains ongoing. Neil noted that there could be a few long-serving teachers who are possibly retiring. Recruitment planning is underway to ensure staffing needs continue to be met. We had outstanding results for the Bollywood Showdown Competition and won best costume award and finished fifth out of 23 groups. The First XV still remains unbeaten. Neil will talk to John Boscowen when he's back from his trip. Move to accept the Principal's Report Moved by Jasmine seconded by Hannah
5	**Martin Block Remediation** We should know by the end of July if the Ministry will approve the remediation of M Block. If not approved then there is a need to push for Boiler replacement and remediation of west wing estimated cost of this is 4.5 million. Neil talked about his concerns regarding the communication from the Ministry of Education about issues replacing the existing gas boiler with an electric alternative. Neil advised that a draft letter has been prepared for the Minister of Education. Neil will circulate the draft letter to Board members for feedback before it is sent to the Minister. Suggestion that a timeline of events, including all related correspondence with the Ministry of Education, should be attached. Jasmine offered to assist with the preparation of the correspondence if required.
6	**Finance and Property** M block roof project is scheduled to be completed in 3 weeks. The pavilion asphalt is in bad condition and needs replacing have received 2 quotes the cost will be a maximum of 30K. Recommendation that the monthly report be accepted moved by Neil seconded by Hannah Recommendation to approve the credit card payment for June of $3249 moved by Susan seconded by Jasmine Recommendation to apply to Akarana Trust for up to 3k for the arts award's trophies and badges. Moved by Jasmine seconded by Susan Recommendation to approve the preferred contractor for the cyclical painting moved by Manako seconded by John.

	The school recorded a loss of approximately $14,000 of operational costs for the month. Neil advised that this is largely due to payroll timing, with some months containing three pay cycles. Overall, the school's financial position remains strong and will continue to be monitored.
7	**Health and Safety** The Japan trip returned safely. The Board expressed its appreciation to Lees Green for organising a successful trip and requested that John write a letter of thanks acknowledging her efforts.
8	**Ōtāhuhu College Trust** Neil advised that when he meets with John, he will discuss the future management of the Ōtāhuhu College Trust. The Deed Trust could be change so it would no longer be required to undergo an annual audit. Advice received from the Trust's accountant indicated that, as the Trust is no longer consolidated with the school's financial statements, an annual audit is no longer considered necessary due to the Trust's small size and limited number of transactions. The accountant suggested that, if members wished to retain an independent review process, the Trust's annual accounts could instead be reviewed by an external accountant rather than audited. The accountant also advised that any changes to the Trust's Constitution could be completed by updating the Trust's rules through the Charities Services website and obtaining approval from the committee members. Neil also advised that the Old Students' Association Trust currently holds approximately $30,000. As the authorised signatories have since passed away, there may be issues accessing or administering these funds, and this matter will require further investigation. Neil will provide an update on both matters at the next Board meeting.
9	**Centenary** No Centenary Committee meeting has been held this month. Neil advised that in the holidays he visited his former school in Christchurch who had recently had a centenary, where he saw display boards featuring photographic collages of former students from each decade. He suggested that Ōtāhuhu College consider creating a similar display as part of the centenary celebrations.

	Neil also proposed establishing a "Hall of Icons" to recognise a small number of distinguished former students who have made exceptional contributions in their respective fields. As an example, he mentioned David Lange. The concept could include commemorative brass plaques installed within a landscaped garden area on the school grounds. The Board noted the ideas for further consideration as centenary planning progresses.
10	**In Com**mitt**ee** Went into in-to-In Committee at 6.48pm came out of In Committee 6.54pm. **In Committee Correspondence** Nothing to report.
13	**Any Other Business** The Student Representative raised several matters on behalf of students. Students asked whether the school hall would be available for graduation. Neil advised that, due to delays with the Ministry of Education building programme, it is likely the hall will be available for the graduation ceremony. Students had commented on the frequency of assemblies, suggesting that if assemblies were not held every day, students may arrive on time more consistently. Neil explained that assemblies are an important way of communicating key messages to students and reinforcing expectations around punctuality. It was noted that they also provide opportunities to celebrate cultural weeks and teach students the importance of being on time. Concerns were raised regarding the availability of toilets, with students noting that limited toilets are available. Neil explained that some toilets are locked due vandalism, vaping, drug use, smoking, and students wagging classes this has resulted in some toilets being closed to minimise damage and misuse. It was also noted that there are restrictions or no access to toilets during lessons. Board members expressed concern about this. Neil explained that students are generally in class for one-hour periods and that, when given permission to leave, some students use this time to meet friends, vape, or engage in other inappropriate behaviour. Manako was encouraged to work with students to develop ideas and possible solutions that promote responsible behaviour and improve access to facilities. A question was asked regarding drug use and Neil advised that students found using or in possession of marijuana are referred to the school's drug and alcohol support programme, while students found selling drugs are suspended.

	Deans continue to follow up on student truancy, and the Board welcomed further ideas from students on addressing these issues. Rulon advised that the Union had recently conducted a survey. It was requested that the survey findings first be shared with the school's management team before being presented to the Board. Rulon invited Board members to attend the school's home game this weekend with the upcoming semi-finals he's hoping the team would progress to the grand finals. Susan and Hannah shared their reflections following attendance at the New Zealand School Boards Association Conference. They described the conference as an excellent professional development opportunity that provided valuable learning, networking opportunities, and increased confidence in their governance roles. They appreciated hearing from experienced board members and former Otahuhu College students and found the conference both motivating and informative. Susan suggested that the Student Representative should attend the conference each year, as it would empower student voice and provide valuable governance insights. It was also suggested that professional development opportunities continue to be made available for all Board members. Board members discussed the use of CCTV within the school and requested that a policy be developed outlining ownership, access, storage, and privacy requirements. Neil agreed to bring a draft policy to a future meeting. The Board also discussed the secure storage of Board documents and the use of school email addresses for Board members to ensure confidential information is managed appropriately. The use of a central Google storage area for Board documentation was also considered. The importance of declaring conflicts of interest during student suspension hearings was discussed. It was suggested that a conflict of interest form be developed for Board members to complete prior to participating in suspension hearings. This would enable members to disclose any personal or professional connection with a student or their whānau, ensuring impartiality and transparency throughout the decision-making process. Finally, the Board discussed succession planning and noted the value of recruiting additional members with expertise in areas such as property, engineering, and finance to strengthen the Board's governance capability.
	Meeting finished at 7.08