

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
WAVERLEY BRIDGE CLUB INC.
HELD AT THE CLUBROOMS, 21B ELECTRA AVE ASHWOOD**

**Tuesday March 15th 2011
At 5.30 pm**

PRESENT: Peter Buchanan, Mary Elson, Joan Quirk, Rob Quirk, Doug Lavers, Martin Willcox, Denise Rozner

APOLOGIES: Paula Schroor

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the meetings held on February 15, 2011 were agreed by the Committee and signed by the President, Peter Buchanan.

Moved: Joan Quirk

Seconded: Doug Lavers

1. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

- 1 Workmen have been present over recent weeks and the air conditioner is operating. They are currently running tests on the system and results will be given to an auditor to determine if the unit is operating to capacity. We do not, as yet, have a report from Council staff outlining the reasons for the problems we have been experiencing. Reports on electricity will be included in the Treasurer's report
- 2 A debit card has been collected from Westpac. Mary Doug
- 3 Work on bidding boxes is progressing and a sample which seems quite suitable has been shown to Martin and Mary. There still is no price.
4. Peter, Bob, Martin and Mary have discussed the honour boards and have decided that initially one 1200 x 1600, one 800 x 1200 and 2 400 x 800 boards would be ordered. Mary will place the order. Moorabbin Trophies presented a very high quote and Neagle Brothers would be used. Mary
5. Mary has spoken to the Sales Manager of a new retirement village complex and, though nothing has yet been arranged, is hopeful of an agreement regarding sponsorship in the near future. She also spoke to a Financial Planner, but as he was only willing to offer commissions on sales, this was not successful.
6. Mary said that she would be arranging an interview at Ashburton branch of the Bendigo bank in the next couple of days with a view to arranging a sponsorship deal with them.. Bob Stensholt and Doug will be attending. Martin, Mary
7. Martin and Mary attended a Food Handling Course recently, and will now be legally able to run sausage sizzles. Other members of the staff and committee should attend in future. Martin, Mary
8. Mary has booked Martin and herself into a First Aid course to be run in Mount Waverley on Wednesday March 23.

Mary is looking into the availability of Responsible Service of Alcohol courses, and will be Martin and herself into a course in April. Currently Doug is the only holder of an RSA certificate, and more members of staff and the committee will need to gain certificates.

9. Mary has spoken to a Monash volunteer organisation, the Monash Safety Register, and has agreed to put a flyer advertising their services in the next newsletter. The Register offers advice and contact to elderly residents. Mary
10. Members will be approached to ask if they will volunteer to act as mentors for new players at the Wednesday morning session.
11. Martin reported that attendance at the first two Thursday afternoon classes has been high – 15 – 16 tables. The session is still settling in and he will consider some changes in a few weeks. A discussion was held about introducing a hand analysis session linked to the Wednesday morning duplicate session – possibly a one hour session following the duplicate which would be free to attendees of the duplicate session. A decision will be made about this when it is clearer how the Thursday afternoon class is progressing.
12. Interest among WBC members in the coming Trivia Night is low. Numerous announcements have been made but Mary doubts that many will attend.
13. Doug reported that he has spoken to Catherine Jenkins, the auditor, about the retirement of Trish Kersey who has been assisting Mary. Catherine said that she would be happy to do the BAS for a small fee, and said that, because her role would be merely reporting on the financial state of the Club, that this should not impinge on her objectivity as the club's auditor.
14. Mary said that members, overall, are not responding to requests to members to help with Kitchen Duty. A few people have offered to help, but not enough to cope with what is a fairly complex task. A mention would be made in the next newsletter that there may need to be a rise in table fees to pay for kitchen staff if there are not enough volunteers.
15. The Footy Tipping competition is running. Interested members should speak to Peter or Mary.
16. Mary said that the number of people on the committee who were available to help at events was not enough to prevent a large work load for the few who did much of the work. Martin said that volunteers should be sought from the general club membership.

2. CORRESPONDENCE

Inwards:

City of Monash Annual Licence Agreement – Tenancy Requirements.

Outwards:

10 letters welcoming new members
Jean Deacon regarding levelling of croquet courts.

3. **MATTERS ARISING FROM CORRESPONDENCE**

Mary has completed most of the requirements for the Annual Licence Agreement, and has received from Recreation Department instructions and examples for the writing of an Emergency Management Plan. She will write an Emergency Management Plan in the next couple of days and return the forms to Council. Mary

The letter to Jean Deacon stated the support of WBC in the efforts of the croquet club to have their courts levelled.

4. **REPORTS**

Attendance February 2011
Accounts February 2011

Treasurers Report March 2011 Finances

Currently [Thursday 10th March] we have a total of about \$38,000 in cash spread between the Westpac and ING accounts. For the two months to end February, we show a profit of just over \$3000, which compares with just over \$12,000 for the previous period in 2010. For the financial year to date, we show a small net loss of just over \$2000.

Our current total membership is 822 compared with 800 at the end of June last year. However, there is little change in our total attendance, some of which I suspect is due to the poor air-conditioning in the building.

With the current investigation into the latter, there are some grounds for believing that particular problem will be alleviated shortly, but there is a more fundamental problem called inflation.

We last raised our fees in July 2007. Since that time, CPI inflation in Australia is 10.4 %. using the figures for June 2007 and December 2010. Come July, there is some chance that we will be facing an increase in basic staff, cleaning and directing costs, and we know that electricity charges are rising steeply.

It is my view that if our profitability has not returned to a reasonable level by the end of April, the Committee should seriously consider whether a basic rise in table fees should be applied from 1st July. If this is the case, we will need to explain carefully to our membership why this is required, and provide them with plenty of notice. At the same time, we will also have to consider seriously the profitability of some of the sessions we are running.

VBA Finance Committee

I was recently invited to join the VBA Finance subcommittee. The first meeting was yesterday, and I thought it went reasonably well. The area of most uncertainty is where there is an allocation of costs between State and VBA. Cathy Lachmann is digging out some more detailed information for us, and then Neil Ewart [VBA Treasurer]

Cathy and I will be going through the items and documenting exactly how the allocation was arranged.

Solar electricity

In the Appendix, I have provided some notes of the Meeting with Monash Council held on Wednesday.

At this point, it would probably be helpful to the reader to look at the Appendix before continuing, for the sake of context.

The comment below applies to the economics of spending \$23,000 on a 5 kW solar system. The Committee must understand that these numbers are *very* subjective, and reality could be much different. At the moment we possess insufficient hard information.

Working out the economics of such a system is difficult. Firstly, everything I read seems to confirm the view that over the next four years we are facing a likely doubling of power costs. Currently, if we assumed we were actually using about 80 kwh per day, and allowing for some fixed charges, this provides an electricity cost of the order of \$500 per month. [Please recognise that these are very ballpark figures]. From an earlier quote I received, a 5 kW system could be expected to produce about 29 kwh per day. At \$.18 per kilowatt hour this is worth about \$150 per month. However, there would be some contribution from the \$.60 per kilowatt hour feed in tariff, which might raise the figure to about \$170 per month. i.e. a \$23,000 investment would "yield" about \$2000 per year. Obviously, if one feeds in the impact of either a major increase in base electricity prices (? Doubling over four years) or that a substantial part of that power consumption will already attract much higher costs (cf \$.30 per kilowatt hour mentioned in the meeting notes) this transforms the economics.

A doubling of base electricity prices would make a solar power system nearly essential to the Club, as the highest cost of power and power usage would coincide with the maximum efficiency of the system on hot sunny summer days.

At the Meeting, I requested that a quote for a 5 kW system be provided, and indicated that in my view the Committee would be receptive to this. *I emphasised that the final decision remained with the Committee.*

I appreciate that we have nowhere near as much information as we would like to make such a decision, but we are now running out of time. The government has indicated that the rebates available for solar panel systems are being reviewed, and from this it seems likely that they will be phased out in the not too distant future. [? the May Federal budget]. In my view, we need to make a decision very soon with a view to arranging an installation in April, if we are to proceed.

The Club can afford to finance a system costing of the order of \$25,000.

Accordingly, I request the Committee formally resolve that in principle WBC will spend up to \$25,000 on a solar panel system, subject to review and informal discussion when better numbers are available.

Bank accounts

Mary and I will be shortly visiting Bendigo Bank to discuss bank accounts, sponsorship et cetera. We are looking for a reduction in charges, and some significant sponsorship.

Book Keeping

Trish Kersey has indicated that she no longer wishes to be involved in assisting with the Club's bookkeeping.

I would like to express my appreciation for the long period in which she has provided substantial assistance to the Secretary.

In April, our next BAS statement will be due. Preparation will require oversight by a professional bookkeeper. Over the next few days, I will discuss this with our auditor. As a professional accountant, it is likely she will have some useful suggestions.

Doug Lavers
Treasurer

APPENDIX MEETING WITH COUNCIL ON SOLAR PANELS
3-30pm Wed 9th March

Present: Doug Lavers, Charles Nielson, Rohan Waldie, Sam Ielo [Ekoenergy], Ian Vakas [Ekoenergy]

Meeting;

The Ekoenergy representatives came along as they were clearly the Council's preferred supplier of solar panels, and it appeared they had been involved in several other installations.

The meeting opened with a general discussion about where we were on solar panels. I outlined the problem of huge power consumption on hot summer days, which was likely to severely impact costs for WBC both currently and more particularly in the future. There was some discussion about the "smart meters", and the resulting ability of the electricity suppliers to time slice the power costs and effectively charge the consumer a very high marginal cost when demand was high. The Ekoenergy representatives were of the view that \$.30 per kilowatt hour was a likely charge, as against a normal charge of something below \$.20 per kilowatt hour.

Charles mentioned that the reason for the very high fixed charge that the electricity company had applied to the one bill we have seen, is that a very large capacity industrial transformer had been installed on the premises, apparently to allow for expansion. The actual electricity consumption is a small fraction of what this transformer is capable of providing. However it appears that the Council has agreed with Jemima that this fixed charge was inappropriate.

I stated that the problem for the Bridge Club was that the maximum

cost we could currently contemplate for a solar electricity system would be of the order of \$30,000. The 15 to 18 kW system originally planned by the Council for a total cost of approximately \$120,000 was impossible for us. I pointed out that I had checked with various Government and State departments, and we do not appear to fit any of the criteria for direct grants. I asked Charles whether the Council would consider any grants, and he said the best way of approaching this was to contact the Ward Councillors. **By implication, I think he meant we should try for a grant in the next financial year.**

There was a long discussion about the technical aspects of a three-phase air-conditioning system, and how it would interact with a single phase power supply. There seemed to be a view that because of the large background load with the grid, a single phase supply would be acceptable to Jemima, but this was going to be checked. It was also mentioned that the type of installation contemplated would always be much more expensive than a home system, because of enhanced safety and environmental concerns which had to be addressed.

Rohan Waldie produced copies of six months of electricity bills for the WBC portion of Electra Avenue. I only saw briefly the May bill, which from memory appeared to show an average daily consumption of 190 kwh. If we assume we only occupied the rooms for an average of 12 hours a day, this works out at the astonishing figure of a continuous average consumption of over 15 kW. Even the Council appeared embarrassed by the number. I remarked that my fear was that the air-conditioners had been running at full capacity for all the period simply blasting hot air into the atmosphere. There was a short silence after this remark.

Returning to what was actually feasible, Charles pointed out that a 5 kW system is the maximum which would be able to receive the \$.60 per kilowatt hour feed in tariff for excess power. I pointed out that this was unlikely to be a great benefit to the Club, because for much of the time, particularly in summer, our basic power consumption would be higher than this figure. (However there would be some contribution). Charles also mentioned that there was no reason why a modular approach should not be taken to installing capacity. In other words, in a year or two's time further capacity increases could be arranged.

I stated that the WBC Committee would have the final say in any decision, but in my view it would be worthwhile obtaining a quote for a 5 kW system with an attached 6 kW inverter, designed to be capable of future expansion. The latter is important, particularly in considering where the panels should be sited on the roof. I asked the Ekoenergy representatives for a very indicative figure on what they thought such a system might cost. **They replied about \$23,000.** (This is similar to an earlier provisional quote I received from another organisation).

From a timing point of view, Ekoenergy agreed to provide a formal quote in the reasonably near future. I told them I would be on holiday from 23rd of March until 3rd April, but in my absence they should contact the Manager or the President. I emphasise that my target timeline was, subject to Committee agreement, to arrange an April installation.

Overall, I believe the meeting was positive, and there was a real enthusiasm amongst the Council members about such a project. We should also approach the Council in the next three months about a formal grant for extra capacity next year.

A discussion was held about the possible need to raise the table fees in the near future. Though there is no rent to pay, cleaning, electricity, House Committee commitments, increases in staffing levels and depreciation are making a material impact on our income. Recent problems with the air conditioning have kept members away. If table receipts do not show a marked increase by the end of April, announcements may be made to members that a \$1 increase will be introduced on July 1. Vouchers would increase from \$80 for 12 to \$90 for 12. This would give members who use vouchers a 50 cents saving per game, against the current savings of 33 cents per game.

A discussion was also held about the possibility of installing solar panels on the roof and the following motion was passed.

A motion was passed that WBC would cooperate with Monash Council in the immediate installation of a 5kW solar system, at a cost of approximately \$23,000, subject to review after quotes are received, on the understanding that the system would be capable of further expansion.

Proposed: Doug

Seconded: Peter

MANAGER MARCH 2011

The majority of my extra tasks have been reported on in Matters Arising.

I have just completed the annual home club member declarations for the ABF. Currently we have 653 Home Club members and a total membership of 822, not counting new members this month.

I am ordering stocks of the Entertainment Book, and will be able to take orders from now on.

Beginners' lessons are progressing well. I do not think that I have lost any of the 57 students so far. We are currently doing Lesson 6 of 8.

So far I have 18 names to contact before the June lessons and will start advertising next month.

I shall have to take sick leave in the near future, because I have to have a shoulder reconstruction. Though the recovery period could be 8 weeks I shall try to spend at least some time here as soon as I can drive.

5. NEW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS

Membership applications have been received and approved for:
Patricia Cox, John Kent, Mary Cliff, Clifford Pooler, Linda Pooler
and Joanne King

6. GENERAL

1. Mary reported that Rotary is running a car raffle and is approaching Mary local community groups to sell tickets. Every \$2 ticket sold will give \$1.54 to WBC. Mary will ring the organiser.

The meeting ended at 6.55

The next meeting will be on Tuesday April 12 at 5.30 pm