

**Paul Cuffee School
Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting
November 19, 2009**

A meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Paul Cuffee School was held on November 19, 2009 at the Paul Cuffee Lower School in Providence, Rhode Island.

Present: Su Almeida, Kathleen Alvarez, Luz Avila, David Burnham, Russell Carey, Joan Canady Countryman, William Clifton, Sr., Stefano Crema, Philip Gould, Maria Monteiro, Joop Nagtegaal, Martha Newcomb, Leanne Nyahkoon, Dorothy Patrick, Ana Cecilia Rosado, Babak Taleghani.

Excused: Elizabeth Colon, Michelle Cortes-Harkins, Keith Mathews, Carolyn Pemberton, Sarah Reis.

Paul Cuffee Staff Present: David Bourns, Jonathan Conklin, Nina Giannotti, Julia Karahalidis, Nell Sears.

Guests: Dan Moos, Bill Lyons, Jane Foote, Allyn Copp, Sherry Waldman.

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m. President Joop Nagtegaal began by welcoming everyone to the November meeting of the Board of Trustees and asking all present to introduce themselves.

In his opening comments Joop remarked briefly on a recent op-ed in the *Providence Journal* by Sandy McCulloch regarding the positive developments in Rhode Island in the area of school reform. Joop then invited Dave Burnham to read a recent letter of greetings received from the Paul Cuffee Research Center in the United Kingdom on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of Paul Cuffee's birth.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the September 17, 2009 meeting of the Board were approved unanimously, with one correction noted and made. The motion to approve was made by Joan Countryman and seconded by Babak Taleghani.

Search Committee Report

Russell Carey, co-chair of the Head of School search committee with Carolyn Pemberton, provided a brief update and overview of the activities of the search committee since the last Board meeting. Following the September Board meeting where the overall objectives and principles of the search process were discussed, Joop convened a meeting of the Executive Committee to discuss the process in greater detail. He asked Russell and Carolyn to co-chair the committee and they agreed to do so. They worked to develop a process which would result in the selection of the best possible candidate and which would substantively engage a broad cross-

section of the Paul Cuffee School community – including teachers, administrative staff, parents, and Board members – in the search. They also, in consultation with the Executive Committee and David Bourns, formed a search committee which is representative of the diversity of the school community. The members of the Search Committee are:

Becky Bueno, Teacher, Lower School
Russell Carey, Board Member and Parent, *co-chair*
Joan Countryman, Board Member
Ben Hall, Teacher, Middle School
Sandy LeClerc, Teacher, Lower School
Alicia Luzon, Administration and Parent
Maria Monteiro, Board Member and Parent
Leanne Nyakhoon, Board Member and Teacher
Carolyn Pemberton, Board Member, *co-chair*
Mark Santow, Parent, Co-Chair PCS Parents Association
Jim Vandermillen, Parent
Ariana Wohl, Teacher, Middle School
Joop Nagtegaal, President, Board of Trustees, *ex officio*

The search committee interviewed several potential search firm partners, and selected Independent Thinking (IT) of Newton, MA. IT has been working with schools on their administrator searches since 2000 and the two principals, Jane Foote and Bill Lyons, were teachers and administrators prior to forming IT. Jane and Bill are currently spending time at Paul Cuffee School to meet with faculty, staff, parents, Board members and students in order to engage members of the community in discussion about their hopes, aspirations, concerns, and goals for the Head of School. This will assist in the development of a position profile and also enable the firm to get a full and deep understanding of the culture, values, and mission of Paul Cuffee School.

IT will then engage in the development of a pool of candidates, from which a short list of candidates to be interviewed by the search committee will be selected. From that interview process, finalists will be selected. The finalists will be invited to visit Paul Cuffee School and meet with and/or make presentations to teachers, administrative staff (including all direct reports to the Head of School), members of the Board of Trustees, parents, students, members of the Search Committee, and friends of the School. The intent of the finalist visits will be to engage a diverse representation of the Paul Cuffee School community in the search for the new Head of School.

The Search Committee will collect and assess the feedback from the finalist visits and conduct any final references and required background checks which have not previously been conducted. The Search Committee will make a final report, with a recommendation for hiring, to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will deliberate and then make a recommendation to the Board, who will make the final selection.

Conversation with Search Firm, Independent Thinking

Joop asked Bill Lyons and Jane Foote to lead the Board in a conversation regarding the search for the next Head of School. Members of the Board engaged in an exercise to help identify the most important areas of strength for the new Head of School to possess as well as goals for the Head to focus on in his or her first year. Further discussion was held regarding challenges facing the school, including: high school expansion, fiscal challenges, fundraising, strengthening academics, integrating diverse cultures (including parents) into the school community, continuing the development of good citizens, and the overall challenge of constantly improving. Essential qualities for the next Head included: appreciation of the importance of diversity and experience with similarly diverse communities, effective communication skills, teaching and administrative experience, knowledge of the history and background of Paul Cuffee, being open to new ideas, patience, sense of humor, familiarity with the changing landscape of public education, ability to lead and inspire people, and a collaborative consensus builder.

Bill concluded the discussion by briefly reviewing the search process, emphasizing the importance of confidentiality with regard to individual candidates, and encouraging members of the Board to provide names of individuals, networks, or other suggestions and ideas to Bill or Jane or any member of the search committee. There were questions and comments from members of the Board.

Head of School November Report

David Bourns referred to his written report and reviewed several highlights, including Commissioner Gist's recent visit to the school and the efforts and communications related to H1N1 influenza. Several parents commented favorably on the information which has been communicated to families regarding the flu. There were questions and comments from members of the Board.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Nominating Committee

Joan Countryman delivered the report of the Nominating Committee. Allyn Copp recused himself from the meeting, and Joan reported that the Committee was recommending that Allyn be elected a member of the Board of Trustees. Information about his prior service on the Board and professional qualifications had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Joan moved Allyn's election as a Trustee, the motion was seconded by Judge Clifton, and approved unanimously. Allyn was welcomed back to the meeting with applause.

Joan reviewed the discussions of the Committee with regard to the Board's committee structure and organization and the most effective manner in which to conduct the work of the Board. Those discussions will continue and the Committee will return to the Board with recommendations at a later point.

Plant & Property Committee

Russell Carey delivered the report of the Plant and Property Committee. He reviewed the work that has taken place since the last meeting of the Board, focused on the two highest priorities for the Committee and the School: (1) locating a site for the high school, and (2) determining the best use of the Living Room property. The acquisition of the Living Room property is moving forward slowly, so there was not much to report on with regard to that priority at this time (although great preliminary conceptual planning work has been done by Ed Neubauer so we are well-positioned to proceed when the acquisition is complete). Dan Moos then presented to the Board the work that he has been leading to identify and secure a site for the high school. He reviewed a number of potential short- and long-term solutions and identified those which are most promising and which he and the Committee will be focused on over the next several months. The goal is to have a recommendation for, at a minimum, a short-term solution for Fall 2010 at the January meeting of the Board. There were questions and comments from members of the Board, and Joop concluded the report by thanking Dan for his hard work and excellent presentation.

Finance Committee

Babak Taleghani delivered the report of the Finance Committee. He reviewed the conversation to the new MIP financial software system, and provided an updated on the acquisition of the Living Room property which is moving forward but not yet complete. He also reported on the status of the interest rate swap and the Citizens Bank credit rating and letter of credit situation and further discussions are planned with Citizens to discuss this issue. Finally, he reported that the Committee met with the external auditors. The audit went very well, with no significant issues identified, and the Committee accepted the Audited Financial Statements as presented.

Other Business

There was no other business brought before the Board.

Adjournment

Martha Newcomb moved to adjourn. Allyn Copp seconded. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Russell C. Carey, Clerk