

MINUTES

Friendship PCS Board of Trustees Meeting

Monday, October 22, 2020 – 9:30 AM

Meeting conducted via Zoom

Participating Board Members were: Donald L. Hense, Chairman; Gregory Prince, Vice Chair; Darrin Glymph, Treasurer; Victor Long, Secretary; Patricia Brantley; Carol Thompson Cole; Tracy Gray, Eric McKinley King, Deborah McGriff, Jeanette Mendes, Anise Walker and Chris White.

Staff Members in attendance were: Ken Cherry, Chief of Staff; Vielka Scott-Marcus, Chief Academic Officer; Catherine Sanwo, Comptroller; Candice Tolliver-Burns, Chief Communications Officer; James Waller, Chief of School Operations; Zachary Morford, Chief of Performance; Monique Miller, Director of Performance Reporting and Evaluation; and Kimberly Campbell, Strategic Advisor.

Guests in attendance were: Kyle Schafer, Maner Costerisan, and Gabrielle Montgomery, parent representative nominee.

Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 9:33 AM.

Approval of Minutes. On a motion by Victor Long and second by Anise Walker, the board voted unanimously to approve the minutes from the June 22, 2020 board meeting.

Finance Committee Report. Mr. Hense turned the meeting over to Darrin Glymph, Treasurer and Chair of the Finance Committee. Mr. Glymph stated that the Finance Committee met and reviewed the materials presented. The committee also met with the auditors to discuss the FY 2020 audit. Mr. Glymph then turned the report over to Catherine Sanwo. Ms. Sanwo provided highlights of the Finance report and transitioned the presentation to Mr. Kyle Schafer, auditor from Maner Costerisan. Mr. Schafer reviewed the audit process, which was completed virtually, and the results from the FY 2020 audit report. On a motion from Eric McKinley King and second by Deborah McGriff, the board voted unanimously to approve the audit as presented.

Ms. Sanwo then presented the budget for FY2021 that projects sufficient revenues to cover all expenses, meet debt obligations, and fund all reserves. Ms. Sanwo noted for the Board the in-person Learning Hub program that was added to the budget to support parents who are essential workers and students who have critical learning needs. This addition resulted in a \$1M increase in the budget, which covers additional staffing, health and safety compliance monitoring, COVID testing, enhanced building maintenance and instructional materials. Ms. Sanwo discussed Friendship's enrollment that increased over the prior year and staff's projection. Victor Long asked the cause for the increase in enrollment. Ms. Brantley stated that the increase occurred because of Friendship's strong response and transition to distance learning that occurred in the spring. Retention rates were stronger as a result and extended family members enrolled in Friendship. Friendship saw growth in our online programs for Collegiate and Online,

for families that wanted a stable online experience versus a traditional school going online. We will be monitoring enrollment and performance over the coming years.

Ms. Sanwo stated that the proposed budget includes revenue of \$114M, which is up \$9.3M based on the increase in student enrollment. Ms. Brantley noted that most of this \$9.3M will be invested in programming. A net income of \$718,439 is projected as well as fully funding reserves by the end of the year.

Ms. Sanwo turned the report over to Dr. Prince to provide an update on plans for facilities and to give an overview of the resolution to be presented to the Board to replenish the facilities reserve. Dr. Prince shared that the Collegiate field will be completed in a few months and the cost. In addition, pressures were placed on the facilities reserve due to the modifications and enhancements made to school buildings to ensure the health and safety of staff and students during the COVID pandemic. Darrin Glymph then presented to the board the resolution, which previously was approved by the Finance Committee to allocate \$1.5M from the Friendship controlled reserve to replenish the facilities reserve. On a motion by Gregory Prince and second by Victor Long, the board voted unanimously to approve the resolution to replenish the facilities reserve.

Mr. Glymph also presented to the board an inducement resolution for \$70M that (1) refinances the 2012 bond at a significantly lower rate that will result in substantial savings and (2) provides new money for capital improvement projects. On a motion by Gregory Prince and second by Carol Thompson Cole, the board voted unanimously to approve the inducement resolution.

Mr. Hense asked that the board accept the entire Finance Report that includes the FY2021 budget. On a motion by Darrin Glymph and a second by Deborah McGriff, the board voted unanimously to accept the finance report in its entirety that includes the FY2021 budget.

School Performance Report. Mr. Hense transitioned the discussion to the School Performance Committee Report and asked Deborah McGriff and Gregory Prince, Committee Co-Chairs, to introduce the report. Dr. McGriff stated that staff provided an excellent report that explains why Friendship was off to such a great start for distance learning and Friendship Learning Hubs, the challenges we have had, and the lessons learned. Dr. McGriff then turned the report over to the staff to present. Vielka Scott-Marcus opened the report with a reflection of where Friendship is after seven months of distance learning due to COVID.

Mrs. Scott-Marcus stated that planning for the school year was informed by the current health conditions in Washington, DC and the situational updates provided by the Mayor. These updates prompted leadership to open schools 100% virtually. Mrs. Scott-Marcus reviewed the preparation of staff over the summer to execute this virtual opening. Extensive professional development was provided to teachers and staff on online instructional platforms as well as additional technologies. In response to families requesting some form of in-person support, Friendship opened Learning Hubs at five sites; three sites served students in grades PS-8 and two sites for students in grades 9-12.

Mr. Cherry explained what a day-in-the-life looked like for a student attending a Learning Hub. Mr. Cherry reviewed the safety protocols including procedures for building entry and exit, and the process of going to a “learning pod” and the instructional day students experience. Mr. Cherry stated that data collected from Friendship team members via town hall meetings indicate that staff appreciate the regular COVID-19 testing that is provided to staff who work in the facilities. Team members also liked the presence of Busy Bee staff who are frequently seen cleaning areas that makes them feel safe and healthy, as well as the physical set-up of the spaces to ensure physical distancing of students and staff. Mr. Cherry also stated that Friendship is planning to expand the Learning Hubs across all campuses beginning November 9. Victor Long stated that our virtual platform has run more smoothly than other systems and wanted staff’s thoughts about what accounts for this. Mr. Cherry responded that Friendship capitalized on the platforms our teachers were already using and continued the use of them; this made the transition easier for staff and students. Other jurisdictions may have introduced new platforms to staff. Mr. Long also asked about any anticipated challenges in COVID testing and the frequency of testing. Mrs. Scott-Marcus stated that testing occurs on a bi-weekly basis at each Learning Hub site and that any team member who may enter a Learning Hub has access to testing. Further discussion about COVID-19 testing, contact tracing, and Learning Hub attendance occurred. Mrs. Scott-Marcus stated that Friendship is planning for a safe hybrid return to occur potentially at the end of the 1st semester.

To close out the report, Ms. Brantley called the Board’s attention to the performance metrics outlined in their packet. Ms. Brantley stated that the metrics reflect what our school community thinks will be important to track so that we deliver on the quality that is expected. Ms. Brantley asked the Board to review the metrics carefully and provide any additional feedback.

On a motion by Deborah McGriff and second by Anise Walker, the board voted unanimously to accept the School Performance Report.

Nominations and Governance Report. Mr. Hense transitioned the report to Carol Thompson Cole to review the nomination of Gabrielle Montgomery. Ms. Cole stated the purpose of the nomination and shared with the Board the committee’s review and recommendation that Ms. Montgomery be approved to serve as the parent representative of the Board. Ms. Cole asked that Ms. Brantley and Monique Miller review the process and provide the background of the nominee. Ms. Miller stated that Ms. Montgomery is the mother of an 11th grader at the Friendship Collegiate Online Academy. Ms. Montgomery brings the important and timely perspective of an Online parent and an extensive background in early childhood education. Ms. Miller explained the interview process and introduced Ms. Montgomery who attended. Ms. Brantley discussed with the Board the online perspective that is needed and acknowledged the invaluable contributions made by Anise Walker.

The board voted unanimously to approve Gabrielle Montgomery to serve as the parent representative on the Friendship PCS Board of Trustees.

Mr. Hense asked James Waller to provide an update on the Collegiate Football Field. Mr. Waller stated that the Collegiate Football Field will be completed in the next two months and planning is underway for a dedication and groundbreaking ceremony.

Adjournment. On a motion by Eric McKinley King and a second by Carol McKinley King, the board voted to adjourn the meeting at approximately 10:42 a.m.