

New England Yearly Meeting of Friends

The Religious Society of Friends in New England

From the 2007 minutes

Moses Brown School Care & Relationship

07–29. Joanne Hoffman, head of the Moses Brown School, accompanied by staff members, alumni and overseers, presented her oral report. She highlighted the school's work on their long-range planning process. They have rewritten their mission statement, condensing it from 140 words to its essence in one sentence: "Moses Brown, a Friends school, exists to inspire the promise of each student and to instill the utmost care for learning, people, and place." Friends and alumni spoke of a palpable presence of Quaker values in the school today.

07–30. In 2006, upon receiving the report from the Permanent Board ad hoc Committee on Corporate Restructure (formed in 2002) to look at the YMs relationship with the Moses Brown School, Permanent Board and Moses Brown appointed members to a small committee known as "The Project," which met together over a period of ten months, facilitated by Arthur Larrabee, currently the General Secretary of PYM. The clerk of Permanent Board presented the following recommendations from The Project:

- That NEYM and Moses Brown School establish a caring and nurturing relationship.
- That the title to all real estate used by the school be transferred into a new corporate identity.
- That the expectations of the roles and policies of the Overseers be clarified.
- That the school and YM undertake to address the concerns of Providence MM with respect to these recommendations.

The recommendations will be considered for approval later in the week.

See Minute 60 for the continuation of this business item.

07–60. Richard Frechette (Smith), incoming clerk of Permanent Board, reported on the threshing session held Monday afternoon on concerns over the proposed recommendations for our relationship with Moses Brown School. These were put forward by the Permanent Board and were based on the work of The Project committee. (See Minute 30). He shared their process with us to help inform our consideration of the recommendations. Our history with Moses Brown School is complicated, and this was reflected in the many divergent, passionate views expressed by Friends during our consideration of the Permanent Board's recommendations on Monday.

The presiding clerk expressed our appreciation for the great amount of work done, earlier by the ad hoc committee on Corporate Re-structure, and more recently by The Project. It is clear that the recommendations put forward by Permanent Board do not speak to our condition as a body. The desire is strong to do something about this relationship and to carefully discern the responsibilities that have been laid on us by the initial trust from Friend Moses Brown, our own neglect as a body of our responsibilities to this trust, and the present mix of passionate support, deep disappointment, and desire for a relationship that works for both NEYM and Moses Brown School.

See Minute 72 for the continuation of this business item.

07–72. Nancy Haines reported on the work of a group of Friends who met Wednesday afternoon to continue discernment on the relationship between NEYM and the Moses Brown School. They made the following proposal:

- That NEYM appoint an ad hoc committee to examine the original deed of trust and to determine whether we are fulfilling the terms of that trust.
- That NEYM establish an ad hoc nurture and care committee consisting of 12 members: 6 appointed by NEYM; four appointed by the MBS Board of Overseers; the Head of School; and the School's Friends Education Coordinator. The Clerk of the committee shall be appointed by the YM. This committee will continue the work of fostering understanding and appreciation between the school and the YM, and of building up the trust relationship between NEYM and Moses Brown School that has already begun.
- That NEYM and Moses Brown School undertake to address the concerns of Providence MM in order to strengthen the relationship between Providence MM and the school.

As the work of these committees' progresses, NEYM will continue to consider other aspects of our relationship. Friends approved.