

DEPARTMENT OF CITY CLERK

CITY HALL

MARCH 15, 1993

The Committee on Finance meets this day at 6:30 o'clock P.M., in Committee Room "A", City Clerk's Department, City Hall.

PRESENT: Chairman Dillon, Councilwoman Fagnoli and Councilman Igliazzi.

ABSENT: Councilman Glavin and Councilman Fenton.

(Subsequently Councilman Glavin joins the Committee).

Also present are Stephen Woerner, City Internal Auditor, Boyce Spinelli, Finance Director and Claire E. Brooke-Stewart, Assistant Clerk.

COMMUNICATION FROM HIS HONOR THE MAYOR DATED FEBRUARY 18, 1993, INFORMING THE HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL THAT PURSUANT TO SECTIONS 302 (B) AND 701 OF THE PROVIDENCE HOME RULE CHARTER OF 1980, HE IS THIS DAY APPOINTING MR. PAO ROBERT KUE OF 18 WAVERLY STREET, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND, AS A MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL BOARD FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE IN JANUARY, 1996 AND RESPECTFULLY SUBMITS THE SAME FOR YOUR APPROVAL. MR. KUE WILL BE REPLACING MS. JINTANA POND WHOSE TERM HAS EXPIRED.

CHAIRMAN DILLON: First of all, I apologize to the members because I missed two items, one was the other one. We have Mr. Pao Robert Kue with us this evening. He has been appointed to the School Board. Mr. Kue is from the 8th Ward. We are very happy. It has been a long time since we have had an 8th Warder on the School Committee. Do you want to tell us a little bit about yourself. A graduate of LaSalle Academy and the University of Rhode Island.

MR. KUE: I came here with all my family members in 1979, straight from Thailand. I have been here ever since. I did go to public school, public high school for two years and then transferred to LaSalle Academy.

CHAIRMAN DILLON: Where did you go to grammar school?

MR. KUE: No grammar school. I started 9th grade in this country. I had a lot of things to learn fast. Then I went on to the University of Rhode Island, open studies and since I have graduated I have worked with URI Urban Field Center and then I worked with some of the Dropout Prevention Programs and also Data Analysis for the Center, worked for the Providence School Department on ----- School Desegregation. I have been there for two years. In 1990 I went over to the Educational Opportunity Center at CCRI. I worked as a Coordinator/Counselor and I

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organize outreach activities to inform low income, first generation adult for interest in going to postsecondary educational training and assisting individuals at the EOC in applying for financial aide for admissions and information on how postsecondary education -----.

CHAIRMAN DILLON: So when you came to this country you spoke English?

MR. KUE: Very little.

CHAIRMAN DILLON: And you went to Central?

MR. KUE: I went to Hope for two years.

CHAIRMAN DILLON: Was it second English as an ESL class?

MR. KUE: Yes, I did two years.

CHAIRMAN DILLON: And then you went to LaSalle?

MR. KUE: Yes.

CHAIRMAN DILLON: How did you find the ESL class?

MR. KUE: It was helpful, as a matter of fact, it helped me build my basic foundation on English because without that, I wouldn't have survived the courses at LaSalle Academy.

CHAIRMAN DILLON: But only two years you were able to.....

MR. KUE: Only two years. I read a little.

CHAIRMAN DILLON: Where did you learn that in Thailand?

MR. KUE: In Thailand, in the camp.

CHAIRMAN DILLON: And you are Cambodian?

MR. KUE: I am Hmong. And I credit a lot of my English skill to my former ESL teacher at Hope High School who is an excellent teacher.

COUNCILWOMAN FARGNOLI: Did you learn English in your native country?

MR. KUE: No.

COUNCILWOMAN FARGNOLI: So when you came to this country you had no English background at all?

MR. KUE: I learned it for 6 months at the camp in Thailand.

COUNCILWOMAN FARGNOLI: You did remarkably well.

MR. KUE: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN FARGNOLI: Do you have children?

MR. KUE: I have a 23 month old.

COUNCILWOMAN FARGNOLI: Not ready for school yet.

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MR. KUE: Not ready.

CHAIRMAN DILLON: But after two years in ESL, you were ready to just go to LaSalle?

MR. KUE: Yes. I had to try extra effort.

CHAIRMAN DILLON: I am sure you did.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: Mr. Kue, when did you come to this country?

MR. KUE: In 1979.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: And how old were you?

MR. KUE: Back then I was about 14 almost 15.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: Are you a political refugee?

MR. KUE: Yes.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: Because I had a friend I went to law school with, who was a lawyer. Where are you from?

MR. KUE: I am from Laos.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: You are from Laos. That is where he was from. He was a lawyer in Laos and then when all the turmoil occurred, he had to leave because obviously being a government lawyer, he would have been in very, very deep trouble. It is interesting to know. Is all your family here?

MR. KUE: I still have one sister in Thailand but most of my family is here.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: I'll tell you, it just goes to show, I am looking at your resume, it just goes to show if we had Americans who put their minds to it as much as you did we wouldn't be in the difficulties we are suffering now. Let me ask you, maybe these questions were asked and I apologize for leaving the room, how much do you know about the educational system in the City of Providence?

MR. KUE: I did go through two years of public high school, myself, --- ESL and all my brothers and sisters are graduates from the Providence Public School System.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: Do you know about other educational systems in other parts of the country?

MR. KUE: Limited. I don't know of any specific programs.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: I would just encourage you, all things being equal on this board. You should take a look at the 4th

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District in East Harlem, New York. You should get information. You should contact those people down there. That district was the worst system in the State of New York. It is now one of the best. They didn't throw money at it. They just did some fundamental changes in the way they operate the system, things that you are probably going to hear Council people say and you are going to hear a lot of Administrators for the School Department and Unions say it can't be done but you are always going to have those problems but I would really encourage you to look at that and I talked to Mr. DeRobbio and I asked him to do it and I am going to ask every educational board member over there as well as the Administrators at the School Department. It is just one example of what is going on in the country about changing the way we operate the School System. I'll just give you some basic facts. Our school system has operated like this since the beginning of the school systems and all the evidence to date indicates that you only retain 10% of what you hear somebody say, yet we continue to teach in that method. You retain 90% of what you participate in and that was the key to that 4th district East Harlem. They changed the method of teaching and the children, obviously just ----- because it is so obvious. We are built on this idea that you just speak to children and they are going to learn and if you don't learn, you know how they just assume all children are the same and they all learn at the same rate, well all the evidence points just the opposite. You need to have children participate and there is going to be different schedules and different kinds methods to teaching. I know I am saying a lot of things that are probably a little far of you but I encourage you to be creative, be innovative and be active on this board, change the form.

At this time Councilman Glavin joins the Committee.

MR. KUE: I am just back from, I served on a task force at URI, the Providence Community Compacts Study for Students ----. I don't know if you have ever heard of that program. It is funded by the ----- Trust and I was a working member and we just invited the college President from New York. She gave us some very good ideas which I think will do a lot of good for the Providence school system if we can get it moving.

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COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: I just encourage you to be very pro-active in that sense because if you are not, you just have too much in your status. Your status quo is just not reasonable anymore. I mean in this system, I think. I think if we don't have some major changes in the School System and it is going to be people like you. You are young. You are educated. You seem to care. You have children that are going to be in the system pretty soon. I am going to have children in the system. I would like to see it change before the next five years.

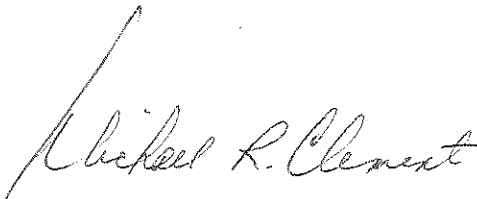
MR. KUE: I hope so too.

COUNCILMAN IGLIOZZI: Thank you for you time.

CHAIRMAN DILLON: Any other questions for Mr. Kue?

On motion of Councilwoman Fargnoli, seconded by Councilman Igliazzi, it is voted to approve the foregoing appointment of Mr. Pao Robert Kue as a Member of the School Board.

ADJOURNMENT: On motion of Councilman Glavin, seconded by Councilwoman Fargnoli, it is voted to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 o'clock P.M.



CLERK



Assistant Clerk