

APPROVED



## City on a Hill Charter Public School

### Minutes

#### March 2020 Board Meeting

---

**Date and Time**

Monday March 2, 2020 at 6:00 PM

**Location**

City on a Hill - Circuit Street (Forum), 58 Circuit Street, Roxbury, MA

---

**Trustees Present**

Cara Stillings-Candal, Gary Morton, Jacqueline Bennett, Karin Wall, Melisa Lemire, Sarah Griffin

**Trustees Absent**

Andres Tejada Soto, Jeff Jablow

**Ex Officio Members Present**

Kevin Taylor

**Non Voting Members Present**

Kevin Taylor

**Guests Present**

Elizabeth Dignan, Jackie Hayes, Jordan Lopez

---

**I. Opening Items****A. Record Attendance****B.**

### **Call the Meeting to Order**

Cara Stillings-Candal called a meeting of the board of trustees of City on a Hill Charter Public School to order on Monday Mar 2, 2020 at 6:15 PM.

### **C. Approve January 2020 Meeting Minutes**

Melisa Lemire made a motion to approve the minutes from January 2020 Board Meeting. January 2020 Board Meeting on 01-21-20.

Karin Wall seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

## **II. Consent Agenda**

### **A. Vote to Extend the Term of Cara Stillings-Candal**

Melisa Lemire, Clerk, announced that the third term of Cara Stillings-Candal, Chair, has ended. Lemire shared that after deliberation in previous Governance Committee meetings in February, the Committee is recommending the extension of Stillings-Candal's term by an additional year. Lemire explained that the Committee's main factor in coming to this recommendation was the need for consistent leadership during upcoming organizational shifts.

Jordan Pina, Deputy Chief of Staff, reminded Board of Trustees members that all members agree to three year terms for up to three years. The vote to extend a Board member's term by additional year is allowed by the City on a Hill Charter Public Schools Board of Trustees bylaws, and is limited to a single, one-year extension.

Gary Morton made a motion to extend the final term of Cara Stillings-Candal by an additional year, ending February 2021.

Cara Stillings-Candal seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

### **B. Vote to Establish an Escrow Account**

Kevin Taylor, Chief Executive Officer, shared that as a condition of City on a Hill Charter Public School Circuit Street's (CoaH CS) renewal on probation, which will be discussed further in the next session, the school must establish an escrow account to pay for any potential closing, legal, and audit expenses associated with closure, should that occur, by April 15, 2020.

Elizabeth Dignan, Chief Operating Officer, shared that City on a Hill management will continue to be in contact with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to confirm the terms of the escrow account, including the amount required to remain in the account and when and under what conditions funds would be released back to the school.

Melisa Lemire made a motion to direct City on Hill management to establish an Escrow Account on behalf of City on a Hill Charter Public School Circuit Street to fulfill Condition #3 of the charter's probationary conditions.

Jacqueline Bennett seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

### **III. CoaH Circuit Street Renewal and CoaH Boston Consolidation Decisions**

#### **A. COAH Circuit Street Renewal and COAH Boston Consolidation Decisions Update & Public Comment**

Cara Stillings-Candal, Chair, introduced the recommendations of the Commissioner of Education for the applications for 1) the renewal of the City on a Hill Charter Public School Circuit Street (CoaH CS) charter and 2) the consolidation of CoaH CS and City on a Hill Charter Public School Dudley Square (CoaH DS).

Stillings-Candal then read the conditions to the group. These conditions include:

1. Until further notice, the school must submit to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department), at [charterschools@doe.mass.edu](mailto:charterschools@doe.mass.edu) or 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148, board meeting agendas, materials, and minutes prior to each board meeting at the same time that these items are sent to the school's board members. These monthly materials must include financial statements to be presented to the board. These monthly financial reports must reflect all considerations in revenue and expenditures, including lines of credit, debt obligations, and fundraising.
2. By March 31, 2020, the school must submit evidence to the Department that it has provided the school community with notice of the school's renewal and that the school's charter has been placed on probation with conditions that the school must meet. The school must inform parents/guardians, teachers, staff, board members, students, and other community members of the school's current status.
3. By April 15, 2020, the school must establish an escrow account to pay for any potential closing, legal, and audit expenses associated with closure, should that occur.
4. Until further notice, the school will provide weekly updates to the Department of the total number of students in attendance, and the total number of students on the waitlist, by close of business on Friday of each week. The school must maintain student enrollment levels adequate to provide a strong academic program and financial and organizational viability, as determined by the Department.
5. By June 30, 2020 the school must submit to the Department for approval a comprehensive action plan for improving academic performance, school climate, staff culture, and faithfulness to its charter. The action plan must specify the evidence-based strategies the school will use to improve performance in mathematics, English language arts, and science for all student subgroups. The

plan should also include strategies to provide a program that is faithful to the school's mission and key design elements and to improve school climate, including student discipline practices and staff culture. The action plan must set clear and specific implementation benchmarks, with a clear timetable and deadlines for completion of key tasks, sufficient to allow the school's board of trustees and the Department to monitor implementation. The school must provide evidence that it has shared its action plan with the school's community including, but not limited to, students, parents/guardians, and staff.

6. By July 31, 2020, the board of trustees must engage a consultant and participate in training about proper governance roles and responsibilities, including obligations related to the Open Meeting Law. The board must develop an action plan and schedule for adequate oversight of the school according to the Charter School Performance Criteria, Criterion 9: Governance.
7. By December 31, 2022, the school must demonstrate that it is an academic success by providing evidence that the school has exhibited significant and sustained academic improvement in mathematics, English language arts, and science on the statewide assessment.
8. Enrollment at the City on a Hill Charter Public School is limited to 350 students. When the Commissioner determines that the school has met the conditions imposed on its charter, including the conditions for academic success, enrollment may increase to a maximum of 400 students. Should the school fail to increase student enrollment in accordance with a growth plan approved by the Commissioner or report fewer than 350 students enrolled at the school on October 1, 2024, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education may reduce the school's maximum enrollment below 400 accordingly.

Stillings-Candal shared that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) approved the recommendations of the Commissioner at their meeting on February 25, 2020.

Kevin Taylor, Chief Executive Officer, asked guests if there were any questions or comments to be made.

Parents' comments included their students' continued frustration with the amount of change in the current school year and that some students may not return due to the shifts. Parents and staff present also inquired about the timeline and initiatives for improving academic results, such as Saturday school and MCAS tutoring. Taylor confirmed that the academic action plan would be developed in the coming months, and would consider a variety of options.

## **IV. Committee Updates**

### **A. Development Committee Update**

Cara Stillings-Candal, Chair, announced that the City on a Hill Gala has been moved to June 4, 2020 and will be held at City Year Boston. This decision was made with the financial constraints of the organization in mind, and will continue to include silent auction items.

Stillings-Candal reminded Trustees of the Board's "give or get" policy for fundraising throughout the year. All Board members are required to either donate or otherwise facilitate the donation of \$2500 yearly. Board members made suggestions of possible items to solicit, including experience packages and meet-and-greets with community leaders.

#### **B. Academic Excellence Committee Update**

Karin Wall, Committee Chair, shared that the previous Academic Excellence Committee did not achieve quorum, and therefore, the Committee does not have an update.

#### **C. Governance Committee Update**

Melisa Lemire, Committee Chair, introduced the topic of Board usage of the BoardOnTrack portal. Lemire requested feedback on the use of the portal. Board members shared that using the portal can sometimes be more of a hinderance of their engagement than a facilitation of it.

Next, Lemire shifted the attention of the Board to the Finance Committee, which currently does not have a chair, due to the rolling off of the former Chair. Lemire shared that the Governance Committee recommends the interim appointment of Cara Stillings-Candal as Chair until additional Board members are recruited.

Then, Lemire shared the Governance Committee's goal of recruiting additional Board of Trustees members. The Governance Committee identified specific needs for members with experience in finance, facilities, employment law, and development, as well as folks who can share the parent and alumni experience.

Finally, Lemire introduced the topic of meeting schedule through the rest of the current school year. Lemire shared her gratitude for the flexibility of Board members to shift meetings throughout a tough year, and acknowledged the shifts' affect on the ability to achieve quorum. Lemire shared plans to create a calendar for next school year with the intent that it would allow Trustees to better schedule around Board commitments.

#### **D. CEO Support Committee Update**

Cara Stillings-Candal, Chair, introduced the topic of the Chief Executive Officer contract. Stillings-Candal announced that the contract of the Chief Executive Officer, Kevin Taylor, is to expire at the end of the 2020-2021 school year. She then shared the Committee's belief of the need for a consistent leader given current changes under consolidation and City on a Hill Circuit Street's renewal with probationary conditions. Stillings-Candal noted

that due to financial constraints, additional salary compensation would not be an option in the new contract.

Stillings-Candal then shared potential alternatives to additional salary compensation, which included paid parental leave, a stipend for professional development, an executive coach, and additional vacation time. She then asked the Board to vote to delegate authority to continue to negotiate the final terms of the contract to the CEO Support Committee.

Gary Morton made a motion to delegate authority to negotiate the Chief Executive Officer's contract on behalf of the Board of Trustees to the CEO Support Committee.

Melisa Lemire seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

## V. The COAH Effect

### A. The COAH Effect

Kevin Taylor, Chief Executive Officer, reintroduced the purpose of The COAH Effect to the Board and guests as a progress monitoring tool. Taylor walked through the dashboard and provided explanation of the status of each goal, highlighting enrollment, suspensions and academic results as areas of concern. Due to time constraints, this item was not covered further.

## VI. Executive Session Related to Union Negotiations

### A. Vote to Enter Executive Session

Melisa Lemire made a motion to enter Executive Session under Purpose 3: To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the Board and the Chair so declares. Candal stated that having the discussion in open session would have a detrimental effect on the public body's negotiating position and bargaining position and that it would reconvene in Open Session after the Executive Session.

Gary Morton seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

#### Roll Call

Cara Stillings-Candal	Aye
Karin Wall	Aye
Melisa Lemire	Aye
Jeff Jablow	Absent
Andres Tejeda Soto	Absent
Sarah Griffin	Aye
Gary Morton	Aye
Jacqueline Bennett	Aye

Open Session ended at 7:44pm. Executive Session began at 7:47pm.

**B. Vote to Adjourn Executive Session**

Jacqueline Bennett made a motion to adjourn Executive Session and reconvene in Open Session.

Melisa Lemire seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

Karin Wall	Aye
Sarah Griffin	Aye
Melisa Lemire	Aye
Andres Tejada Soto	Absent
Jacqueline Bennett	Aye
Cara Stillings-Candal	Aye
Gary Morton	Aye
Jeff Jablow	Absent

Executive Session ended at 8:06pm. Open Session began at 8:08pm.

**VII. Closing Items**

**A. Adjourn Meeting**

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:09 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Cara Stillings-Candal