

APPROVED



## City on a Hill Charter Public School

### Minutes

#### September 2020 Board Meeting

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##### **Date and Time**

Tuesday September 22, 2020 at 5:00 PM

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This meeting took place remotely pursuant to the March 12, 2020 Baker-Polito Administration announcement of an emergency order temporarily modifying the state's open meeting law.

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##### **Trustees Present**

Andres Tejeda Soto (remote), Cara Stillings-Candal (remote), Gary Morton (remote), Jack Gearan (remote), Jacqueline Bennett (remote), Jeff Jablow (remote), Melisa Lemire (remote), Ted Gildea (remote)

##### **Trustees Absent**

Karin Wall, Sarah Griffin

##### **Ex Officio Members Present**

Kevin Taylor (remote)

##### **Non Voting Members Present**

Kevin Taylor (remote)

##### **Guests Present**

Edelyn Contreras (remote), Jessica Yang (remote), Jordan Lopez (remote), Laura Edouard (remote), Maddie Collins (remote)

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## 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 Tuesday Sep 22, 2020 at 5:08 PM.

### C. Approve August 2020 Meeting Minutes

Melisa Lemire made a motion to approve the minutes from August 2020 Board Retreat on 08-14-20.

Andres Tejeda Soto seconded the motion.

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

#### Roll Call

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

### D. Approve Student/Family and Staff Handbooks

Jordan Pina, Chief of Staff, shared that the Staff Handbook is relatively structurally unchanged from School Year 2019-20. It has been edited to reflect changes related the ratified Collective Bargaining Agreement with Unit A union staff, COVID-19 related personnel policies, and compliance with updated Title IX procedures.

Laura Edouard, Principal of City on a Hill Charter Public School, gave an overview of the Student and Family Handbook, detailing it as a guide to life at City on a Hill that includes a mission and vision, code of conduct, and policies for City on a Hill students and families. The only new policy that has been added for School Year 2020-21 is the state of Massachusetts mandate for students to receive the flu shot.

The handbook also introduces a new positive/negative referral system a in lieu of the former merit/demerit system used in previous school years, which is being implemented by CoaH's new Director of Climate and Culture, Martin Quirk, and the Deans of Citizenship

The Board discussed the potential impact on CoaH's school culture related to changes in the handbook, staff training around implementation of new culture policies, and CoaH's continued effort to reduce suspension rates among our students.

Cara Stillings-Candal made a motion to Approve Student/Family and Staff Handbooks.

Andres Tejeda Soto seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

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

**E. Approve Updated Fiscal Policies & Procedures**

Kevin Taylor, Chief Executive Officer, shared that changes to City on a Hill's fiscal policy and procedures reflect the consolidation into one school site. Taylor also shared that he, Sonya Pratt, Chief of School, and Andres Soto, Treasurer, are now designated to sign checks for the organization.

Taylor concluded the update by sharing that CoaH has plans to implement an online bill software. An in-depth discussion will occur in the October 2020 Finance Committee Meeting.

Cara Stillings-Candal made a motion to Approve Updated Fiscal Policies & Procedures.

Andres Tejeda Soto seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

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

**F.**

### **Vote to Approve Edelyn Contreras and Jessica Yang as Board of Trustees Members**

Jessica Yang and Edelyn Contreras briefly shared their background and their interest in becoming City on a Hill Board of Trustee members for City on a Hill.

Cara Stillings-Candal made a motion to Vote to Approve Edelyn Contreras and Jessica Yang as Board of Trustees Members.

Andres Tejeda Soto seconded the motion.

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

#### **Roll Call**

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

## **II. School Year 2020-21 & Virtual Learning**

### **A. School Year 2020-21 & Virtual Learning Update**

Eduoard shared an update on virtual learning and the first weeks of school at City on a Hill, noting technology troubleshooting with students and parents has been a challenge. She also shared that her and Pratt have spent time observing teachers as they are instructing online and working with Information Technology at the school to set up a IT help line for students to call in for technology support.

### **B. School Year 2020-21 & Virtual Learning Discussion**

Taylor shared that from an enrollment perspective, CoaH is on track and has very strong student enrollment across all grade levels, allowing the School Year 2020-21 budget to be on track as well. Taylor also highlighted there is currently a waitlist for 10th graders, which City on a Hill has not experienced for several years, and the next lottery will occur on Tuesday, September 29.

Eduoard shared context around new and returning teachers, and highlighted that there are several new staff members. City on a Hill Leadership Team is leveraging the expertise of veteran teachers to train new staff members.

Next, Taylor reminded the Board that while CoaH had come to a Collective Bargaining Agreement with Unit A of the City on a Hill Union, negotiations with Unit B are continuing, as well as processes for discussing how virtual learning will continue as City on a Hill

reacts to epidemiological data and guidances from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Taylor shared that the way the Leadership Team is approaching Professional Development is with a new perspective and sense of adaptability. The team continues to look for ways to make instruction in the virtual world more rigorous.

### **III. School Year 2020-21 Enrollment & Budget**

#### **A. School Year 2020-21 Enrollment & Budget Update**

Taylor share that there are minimal updates from when the Board approved the budget at the May 2020 Board Meeting, but that enrollment is currently stronger than budgeted, though some variation in student count is expected as Boston Public School reopens and students settle into their schools. Taylor noted that as tuition is the largest driver of our budget, the high student count currently should prepare the school for an adequate budget moving forward in the school year.

Taylor also shared that City on a Hill is receiving monies from the CARES Act passed by Congress, in the form of two grants that are allowing us to make updates to the building's personal protective equipment for the purpose of COVID-19 safety.

#### **B. School Year 2020-21 Enrollment & Budget Discussion**

The Board discussed the status of the Dudley Square lease. Taylor reminded the Board that last school year, the Board voted to consolidate the Circuit Street and Dudley Square charters into one, with the goal of educating all students at the Circuit Street campus in school year 2020-21 and beyond. This plan was approved by DESE in February 2020. To accomplish this, CoaH attempted to find a sublessor for the Dudley Street campus to fulfil the three years remaining on the lease, but due to the pandemic, we were unsuccessful in doing so. Instead, CoaH was able to negotiate a termination agreement with the landlord that allows us to pay the termination fee over a two year period. This incredibly positive step places CoaH in a much stronger position with our primary lender, Boston Private.

The Board discussed proactive measures that Taylor and the management team are already taking to prepare for any budget shortfalls in the future.

The discussion concluded by Taylor sharing that this year's audit is already underway. When it is complete, auditors will join the October 2020 Board Meeting and answer in-depth financial questions.

### **IV. Committee Structure & Schedule**

#### **A. Committee Structure & Schedule Update**

Melissa Lemire, Clerk, shared that this year's Committee structure will be more thoughtfully planned, and reiterated expectations around meeting attendance, quorum,

and the process for requesting a meeting be rescheduled within the bounds of Open Meeting Law (OML). Lemire reminded the Board of the ongoing effort to recruit additional Board members, the upcoming Board Chair and Vice Chair searches, and asked the Board to think.

Lemire shared the descriptions of these positions can be found in Board on Track, and that the Governance Committee will be contacting Board members individually to gauge interest in filling these two roles.

Committees were then asked to review the proposed Board and Committee Calendar and confirm their availability or request updates for all meetings in school year 2020-21.

## **B. Approve City on a Hill Governance Action Plan**

Pina shared the draft Governance Action Plan, which addresses Condition #6 in City on a Hill's probation, requiring engagement in proper governance training, including obligations related to Open Meeting Law, as well as a written plan for adequate governance.

Pina shared the document includes ongoing actions that the Board began following the renewal decision, such as engaging a consultant to provide training about proper governance roles and responsibilities at the annual Board Retreat, as well as future items such as performing a Board skills assessment and a Board Chair search.

Cara Stillings-Candal made a motion to Approve City on a Hill Governance Action Plan.

Andres Tejeda Soto seconded the motion.

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

### **Roll Call**

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

## **V. The CoaH Effect**

### **A. The CoaH Effect**

Taylor shared the purpose of the CoaH Effect, a snapshot of school data that can be read like a dashboard. It is created to allow for understanding of key measures at the school and steps the organization is taking to move forward towards school year goals.

Taylor walked through COAH Effect dashboard and provided explanation of the progress towards each goal, including additional context for goals that do not have data available at the beginning of the school year, such as college acceptances, and spring student and staff climate survey data.

## **VI. Board of Trustees Governance Training Review**

### **A. Board of Trustees Governance Training Review**

Due to timing, this section was not discussed beyond the information re-shared during the Committee Structure and Schedule Update.

## **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 7:01 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Cara Stillings-Candal