

APPROVED



## City on a Hill Charter Public School

### Minutes

#### September 2022 Board Meeting

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

Tuesday September 27, 2022 at 5:00 PM

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##### **Trustees Present**

Andres Tejeda Soto (remote), Brooke Fincke (remote), Edelyn Contreras (remote), Melisa Lemire (remote), Ollie Osinubi (remote), Ted Gildea (remote)

##### **Trustees Absent**

Jack Gearan, Jacqueline Bennett, Massiel Eversley, Robyn Shahid

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

Sonya Pratt (remote)

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

Sonya Pratt (remote)

##### **Guests Present**

Alekz Hirschmann (remote), Annie Azarloza (remote), Jordan Lopez (remote)

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#### **I. Opening Items**

##### **A. Record Attendance**

##### **B.**

### Call the Meeting to Order

Ted Gildea called a meeting of the board of trustees of City on a Hill Charter Public School to order on Tuesday Sep 27, 2022 at 5:05 PM.

### C. Approve August 2022 Meeting Minutes

Andres Tejeda Soto made a motion to approve the minutes from August 2022. August 2022 Board Retreat on 08-30-22.

Melisa Lemire seconded the motion.

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

#### Roll Call

Jack Gearan	Absent
Robyn Shahid	Absent
Brooke Fincke	Aye
Edelyn Contreras	Aye
Melisa Lemire	Aye
Ted Gildea	Aye
Jacqueline Bennett	Absent
Massiel Eversley	Absent
Andres Tejeda Soto	Aye
Ollie Osinubi	Aye

## II. Executive Session

### A. Executive Session

Melisa Lemire made a motion to to enter Executive Session citing purpose #5 under Open Meeting Law. The Board will return to Open Session.

Andres Tejeda Soto seconded the motion.

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

#### Roll Call

Brooke Fincke	Aye
Melisa Lemire	Aye
Ollie Osinubi	Aye
Jack Gearan	Absent
Ted Gildea	Aye
Andres Tejeda Soto	Aye
Jacqueline Bennett	Absent
Robyn Shahid	Absent
Edelyn Contreras	Aye
Massiel Eversley	Absent

Open Session Adjourned at 5:13pm. Executive Session began at 5:14pm.

Ted Gildea made a motion to adjourn Executive Session and return to Open Session.

Melisa Lemire seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

Brooke Fincke	Aye
Melisa Lemire	Aye
Edelyn Contreras	Aye
Jack Gearan	Absent
Andres Tejeda Soto	Aye
Massiel Eversley	Absent
Ted Gildea	Aye
Robyn Shahid	Absent
Ollie Osinubi	Aye
Jacqueline Bennett	Absent

Executive Session Adjourned at 5:26pm. Open Session resumed at 5:27pm.

**III. School Updates**

**A. General School Updates**

The Board then directed their attention to Sonya Pratt, Executive Director, for updates on the School's programming and operations. Pratt began with a hiring update, noting that while the School is still hiring for a fifth Special Education Teacher and waiting for an additional committed Science Teacher to join in October, all other instructional roles are filled. She reminded the Board of the ongoing hiring hurdles that many schools are facing, and shared that School Leadership is considering a number of ways, including staffing agencies, to fill the remaining teaching role.

Pratt then shared that from a culture perspective, the School has also had a strong start. She shared that many traditional City on a Hill culture events and opportunities for students, such as dances, clubs and field trips, have returned. Further, she reiterated CoaH's commitment to operating as a data-informed school, particularly as it relates to the School's attendance rate. Pratt highlighted the School's attendance goal as a weekly attendance rate of 85%, which she noted CoaH has reached in 3 of the initial 5 weeks of school. Pratt pointed to the School's many culture events as opportunities to incentivize attendance and perseverance in relation to the School's increased academic rigor.

Next, Pratt shared that enrollment continues to be top concern for the School, and mentioned that CoaH's sending district, Boston Public Schools, is seeing a dip in enrollment as well which the School sees as a factor in its slow rebound. Pratt also noted that currently CoaH is enrolling more 10th graders than 9th graders, and confirmed that while this is a shift from the School's traditional trends, programming was prepared to adjust. Pratt also shared that later in the meeting, Leadership would be asking for feedback and additional ideas for enrollment initiatives.

The Board inquired if the School is still experiencing ongoing effects from the COVID-19 pandemic. Pratt noted that while COVID-19 is still a reality, the public health interventions that have happened since the onset of the pandemic, such as vaccines and rapid testing,

have allowed the School to feel as normal as it has been in two years. Pratt noted that the major concern related to COVID-19 is the shift in messaging to students in families relating to attendance. Pratt reminded the Board that over the past two years, COVID-19 guidances at some points have been as stringent as self-isolating for multiple days after possible exposure even if you did not have symptoms. She confirmed that the School continues to message the importance of attending school, and noted that the School's Nurse and Family & Community Engagement Coordinator have been working hard to both provide accurate health information and ensure students are maximizing their learning time. The Board congratulated leadership on not only reaching the staffing goal set in place, but also reaching the 85% attendance goal.

#### **B. FY22 Financial Audit Update**

Pratt then shared that the FY22 Financial Audit has been moving along smoothly, and the Auditors expect to have a draft to present to Leadership within the next two weeks, and that further updates would be coming. She highlighted the process for newer Board members and guests as: (1) the Auditors and Finance Staff attend the October Finance Committee Meeting to discuss the audit in detail; (2) The Finance Committee votes on a recommendation to the full Board on whether to approve the Audit as presented; and (3) the full Board receives a recap of the October Finance Committee Meeting discussion from the Treasurer and votes to accept or reject the recommendation of the Finance Committee.

#### **C. Enrollment Discussion**

Ted Gildea, Vice Chair, then directed the attention of the Board to the enrollment discussion and asked Pratt if there was any additional context she wished to share before the Board began their feedback. Pratt reminded the Board and guests that following the consolidation of City on a Hill Circuit Street and City on a Hill Dudley Square into a single City on a Hill Charter Public School in July 2020, the School has been chartered for 400 students with a current cap of 350. She noted, however, that neither school independently reached that number, and currently the Circuit Street building can only house about 290 students, so that is the School's current goal.

She also reminded the Board that last school year, CoaH created the role of Student Recruitment Coordinator. That role is currently held by a CoaH alum, and the School has seen many indicators of success, including a 20% increase in conversion rate (percentage of students who enroll from the total accepted in the lottery) to 50%. Pratt then mentioned that the School has also implemented a referral process, where students can receive gift cards if an applicant they refer enrolls. Finally, she noted that in conversations with families, a trend is emerging where parents are more interested in sending students to schools closer to home given the recent public health and public transportation concerns in Boston, with the concern being the ability to get a student home in the case of illness.

The Board then began their discussion of enrollment initiatives. Attendees asked Pratt to provide her view on what differentiates City on a Hill from other charters and traditional districts. Pratt shared that CoaH is a "small school with a big personality," and that the School's civic engagement model is meant to empower the next generation of leaders. She also noted as one of the few standalone charter high schools, CoaH is an option for students who were not able to enroll in a charter in elementary or middle school. Attendees reactive positively to the framing of empowering the next generation of leaders and suggested using that as a campaign to pique the interest of parents and families.

Board members also suggested National Partnership for Educational Access (NPEA) and other sites as places to advertise the School's availability and maximize reach. Further, members suggested that if the trend the School is seeing is families going to school closest to their home, the School should look into neighborhood partnerships and community spaces where information can be shared.

Finally, the Board inquired as to any other feedback received from families who decided not to attend CoaH. Pratt shared that the primary feedback was the trend around distance to home, but that the School would continue to probe and collect that data.

#### **IV. Consent Agenda**

##### **A. Overview of Changes**

Gildea then directed the attention of the Board to the Consent Agenda. Jordan Pina, Chief of Staff, shared that each year the Board of Trustee reviews and approves all School handbooks and policies. She noted that given they are all very long documents, management has traditionally given an overview of changes from the previous year's version.

Then, Pina noted the following changes to the Student and Family Handbook:

- Shifts to titles referenced in the handbook to reflect the School's return to an Executive Director-led model;
- Removal of references to virtual learning; and
- Language confirming the School's shift to being uniform optional.

Next, Pina noted the following changes to the Staff Handbook:

- Removal of COVID-related federal sick leave policies.

Finally, Pina noted the following changes to the school's Fiscal Policies and Practices:

- Shifts to titles referenced in the handbook to reflect the School's return to an Executive Director-led model;

- Updating credit card holders to be Executive Director, Chief of Staff, Principal, Vice Principal and Director of School Operations; and
- Reflecting changes in procedures related to the School's use of Bill.com and Quickbooks Online.

**B. Vote to Approve the School Year 2022-2023 Staff Handbook**

Andres Tejeda Soto made a motion to approve the School Year 2022-2023 Staff Handbook.

Edelyn Contreras seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

Melisa Lemire	Aye
Robyn Shahid	Absent
Andres Tejeda Soto	Aye
Jack Gearan	Absent
Massiel Eversley	Absent
Jacqueline Bennett	Absent
Edelyn Contreras	Aye
Ted Gildea	Aye
Ollie Osinubi	Aye
Brooke Fincke	Aye

**C. Vote to the Approve School Year 2022-2023 Student and Family Handbook**

Andres Tejeda Soto made a motion to approve the School Year 2022-2023 Student and Family Handbook.

Edelyn Contreras seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

Melisa Lemire	Aye
Jacqueline Bennett	Absent
Massiel Eversley	Absent
Ted Gildea	Aye
Brooke Fincke	Aye
Robyn Shahid	Absent
Andres Tejeda Soto	Aye
Jack Gearan	Absent
Edelyn Contreras	Aye
Ollie Osinubi	Aye

**D. Vote to Approve Updated Fiscal Policies & Procedures**

Andres Tejeda Soto made a motion to approve the School's updated Fiscal Policies and Procedures.

Edelyn Contreras seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

Jacqueline Bennett	Absent
Jack Gearan	Absent
Melisa Lemire	Aye
Ollie Osinubi	Aye
Edelyn Contreras	Aye
Robyn Shahid	Absent
Andres Tejeda Soto	Aye
Massiel Eversley	Absent
Ted Gildea	Aye
Brooke Fincke	Aye

**V. Circuit Street Renovation / Construction Update**

**A. Circuit Street Construction Update & Discussion**

Next, Pratt reminded the Board of the previous construction conversation where the School shared that the construction project to install movable partitions into select classrooms to create smaller spaces was no longer able to be completed on its original timeline as permits were not secured in time to install before school began in August. She continued that both Melisa Lemire, Chair, and Ted Gildea, Vice Chair & Treasurer, have attended further meetings with project managers, where they requested multiple possible scenarios forward.

These scenarios included trying to complete the work on an accelerated timeline during Winter Break, an option which includes the risk of not completing on time if an unexpected factor were to come into play and affecting the School's ability to welcome back students in January, and forgoing construction for another year and rebidding the project. Pratt noted that rebidding the project would also mean that there could be the possibility of getting a better quote given the shifts in the market since the original bid went out in early 2021.

Pratt also highlighted the continued need for administrative space, as many non-instructional administrators must either work remotely or share an office with multiple other people, making meetings and private conversations difficult. She shared that in the process of rebidding the project, this additional space could also be included for summer 2023. Gildea also noted that Board Officers have created a sense of urgency so that similar permitting issues do not occur again.

Board members inquired as to whether the partitions would still be used moving forward. Pratt confirmed that they will, and are currently being stored.

**VI. School Year 2022-2023 Board Calendar & Committee Assignments**

**A.**

## **School Year 2022-2023 Board Calendar & Committee Assignments**

Gildea reminded Trustees and guests that all Board members serve on at least one committee, and that the Organizational Chart shared with the Board does not currently have placements for candidates still under consideration, but that they would join one when officially appointed.

Then, Pina confirmed that the Board will have the same sub-committee structure as school year 2021-2022, with Governance, Academic Excellence, Executive Director Support and Evaluation and Finance Committees taking deeper dives into the work of the Board. She then projected the proposed Committee assignments that were decided upon by the Governance Committee, and noted that there would be on final opportunity for members to accept or request alternate assignment.

## **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 6:03 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Ted Gildea

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## **Documents used during the meeting**

- City on a Hill Employee Guidelines\_Aug2022.pdf
- \_Student and Family Handbook 22-23.pdf
- CoaH Policies & Procedures (updated 9.26.22).pdf