

APPROVED



City on a Hill Charter Public School

Minutes

April 2023 Board Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday April 11, 2023 at 5:00 PM

This meeting took place remotely pursuant to a supplemental budget bill which, among other things, extends the temporary provisions pertaining to the Open Meeting Law to March 31, 2025 signed into law by Governor Healey on March 29, 2023.

Trustees Present

Alekz Hirschmann (remote), Andres Tejada Soto (remote), Brooke Fincke (remote), Danielle Canty (remote), Kimberley Thai Small (remote), Melisa Lemire (remote), Michelle Allwood (remote), Ted Gildea (remote)

Trustees Absent

Edelyn Contreras, Jack Gearan, Jacqueline Bennett, Robyn Shahid

Ex Officio Members Present

Sonya Pratt (remote)

Non Voting Members Present

Sonya Pratt (remote)

Guests Present

Jordan Lopez (remote), Regan Kerr (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Melisa Lemire called a meeting of the board of trustees of City on a Hill Charter Public School to order on Tuesday Apr 11, 2023 at 5:09 PM.

C. Approve February 2023 Board Minutes

Ted Gildea made a motion to approve the minutes from February 2023. February 2023 Board Meeting on 02-28-23.

Andres Tejeda Soto seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Edelyn Contreras	Absent
Brooke Fincke	Aye
Danielle Canty	Aye
Alekz Hirschmann	Aye
Michelle Allwood	Aye
Andres Tejeda Soto	Aye
Robyn Shahid	Absent
Kimberley Thai Small	Aye
Jacqueline Bennett	Absent
Jack Gearan	Absent
Ted Gildea	Aye
Melisa Lemire	Aye

II. School Updates

A. General School Updates

Melisa Lemire, Chair, directed the attention of the Board to the General School Updates. Sonya Pratt, Executive Director, shared that much of the School's traditional spring programming, such as the upperclassmen trip to Washington, DC, was underway and the 4th quarter has just begun. She also noted that hiring season had also kicked-off, with hiring managers already interviewing and making offers for instructional and operational roles, as well as the School's Teaching Fellow Program (TFP). She reminded the Board that the TFP is intended as a pipeline to diversify the School's teaching and leadership pipeline, and that two of the current school year's fellows will be returning as full-time teachers in the fall. Finally, Pratt noted that School Leadership and staff would also begin to have discussions with students about supports needed to finish out the year or plans related to any summer school credits to be offered. Pratt then invited the Board to ask any questions they might have.

Trustees inquired about science staffing, a department that has been traditionally hard to fill, and if the School was seeking general science knowledge or specific subjects. Pratt confirmed that the School has offered many different science courses over its history, but is currently focusing on filling positions for biology, chemistry and physics.

B. Enrollment Update

Next, Pratt began her enrollment update by confirming that the initial school year 2023-2024 lottery had taken place, with the School receiving over 300 applications and having an initial waitlist of over 200. She confirmed that the School's Enrollment Team, which includes two Student Recruitment Coordinators and a Community Engagement Coordinator, among others, were also following up via phone and email to all accepted families to facilitate the enrollment process and to maximize conversion of students from acceptance to attending City on a Hill. This team is also continuing to attend and hold events to promote the School, and is also executing a plan to engage new students at least once a month between acceptance and New Student Academy in the fall.

The Board inquired as to how these numbers compare to those of City on a Hill during and before the COVID-19 Pandemic. Pratt confirmed that the application number is higher than that of the initial lottery for school year 2022-2023 and that the School has increased its conversion rate to 50% of offers being accepted, which are positive trends, and also noted that in addition to this initial lottery, the School also backfills students seats through February 15. She explained that while the School sees an initial wave of applications during the initial lottery, City on a Hill's uncommon practice of accepting 10th graders means that the School has also seen a second wave after the school year starts. She also noted that given the proportion of 10th grader applications, the School is also beginning to advertise directly to that population.

Members asked Pratt if the increase in 10th grade applications had any impact on the School's programming and student success. Pratt shared that there were several steps taken to ensure a smooth transition for both the new 10th grader and the School, including 1) Pratt reviewing incoming 10th grade transcripts to ensure correct awarding of credits and class placement, 2) speaking with teachers of new 10th graders to discuss available supports and 3) including new 10th graders in New Student Academy (formerly 9th Grade Academy) to orient them to City on a Hill in the same way that students who join in their 9th grade year experience.

C. Strategic Planning Update

Next, Pratt shared that the Strategic Planning Committee, comprised of school staff, Trustees and students, were continuing to meet and are currently focusing on the School's mission and vision. She then asked Trustees on the Committee, Alekz Hirschmann, Andres Tejeda Soto, and Danielle Canty, if they would share their perspective. All Committee members agreed that conversations have been positive and in-depth, and are looking forward to presenting a final product later this spring.

D. School Year 2023-2024 Recruitment Update

Then, Jordan Pina, Chief of Staff, began a brief update on the School Year 2023-2024 Recruitment Cycle. She confirmed Pratt's earlier update that hiring is already underway, with several key operational hires already being made and all hiring managers meeting weekly to discuss candidates and recruitment strategy. She noted that the school currently has openings in math, science, special education and operations, and encouraged Board members to share the School's posts about hiring and encourage candidates in their network to apply. She also noted that the School is working to re-establish relationships with both Teach for America (TFA) and City Year as additional possible pipelines. Trustees noted they had seen some of the postings, and encouraged their fellow members to follow the School's social media accounts.

III. Circuit Street Campus Updates & Discussion

A. Circuit Street Loan Update

Next, Lemire directed the attention of the Board to the Circuit Street Loan Update. Pratt reminded the Board that the mortgage of the Circuit Street Building, which is owned by the City on a Hill Foundation, is coming due in July 2023. She noted that the Foundation is currently evaluating two banks - Silicon Valley Bank, which is the Foundation's current lender, and M&T Bank - for refinancing of the loan. The Foundation is still awaiting updated term sheets, but Pratt shared that the goal would be to pay down roughly \$2m of the mortgage to ensure that the monthly payments remain the same given current interest rates.

B. Circuit Street Construction Update

Then, Ted Gildea, Vice Chair & Treasurer, began an update on the Circuit Street Construction. He noted that the contractor had recently conducted a site visit on campus and met with the operations team, and will return for a follow-up during April Break. He noted that additionally, due to the mild weather of the winter, the School believes it will be able to provide the contractor with access to the building a week sooner than initially anticipated to be able to allow for additional buffer time. Additionally, Pratt mentioned that the School is still pursuing the HVAC Grant mentioned in previous facilities updates to allow for more efficient heating and cooling of classrooms.

IV. Board Committee Updates

A. Governance Committee Update

Next, Lemire directed the attention of the Board to Committee updates. She began by sharing that the Governance Committee and School Leadership had not received updates about new Board member leads, and clarified the Committee's ask that Trustees reach out directly before connecting the candidate with the Governance Committee. Then, Pina shared that School Leadership is also working with the Governance Committee to provide opportunities for interested Trustees to visit campus and observe

City on a Hill's programming. She confirmed that she'd send a follow-up message to the Board to schedule with interested members.

B. Academic Excellence Committee Update

The April 2023 Academic Excellence Committee Meeting was rescheduled to April 24, 2023. The Committee will provide an update at the May 2023 Board Meeting.

C. Executive Director Support Committee

The April 2023 Executive Director Committee Meeting is being rescheduled for May 2023. The Committee will provide an update at the May 2023 Board Meeting.

D. Finance Committee Update

The April 2023 Finance Committee Meeting was rescheduled to April 25, 2023. The Committee will provide an update at the May 2023 Board Meeting.

V. Organizational Goals Dashboard

A. Organizational Goals Dashboard

Finally, Lemire directed the attention of the Board to the Organizational Goals Dashboard. Pratt began by sharing that due to the 11th and 12th grade trip to Washington, DC, the end of the 3rd quarter was pushed back a week, and therefore the passing rate data was not yet ready to be presented. She noted the Academic Excellence Committee would review this data at their next meeting, and it would also be reviewed at the May 2023 Meeting. She noted, however, that with the exception of science, the School has continued to meet its passing rate goals for core subjects and students with Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs).

Pratt then highlighted the School's current Average Daily Attendance (ADA), which continues to remain above the School's goal of 85% average daily attendance, with a current ADA rate of 87.6%. She noted that Chronic Absence (CA) rate, however, continues to be an issue, with the current rate being 45.6%. Pratt explained that this rate is not only affected by full-day absences, but also tardies, and that the School is also working on a plan to engage parents around on-time arrival.

Next, Pratt noted a slight increase in the School's Out-of-School (OSS) suspension rate to 5.6%, but confirmed that it was still below the School's goal of fewer than 10% of students having an OSS or In-School Suspension (ISS), and she expects to meet that goal by the end of the year.

Finally, Pratt reviewed several district updates that were mentioned previously in the meeting, including current lottery and enrollment data, as well as a reminder that the School Year 2023-2024 Budget is being worked on and will be presented to the Finance Committee for review and recommendation to the Board at their next meeting.

VI. 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 6:24 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Melisa Lemire

Documents used during the meeting

- Organizational Goals Dashboard_Apr23.pdf