

APPROVED



City on a Hill Charter Public School

Minutes

January 2023 Board Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday January 10, 2023 at 5:00 PM

This meeting took place remotely pursuant to An Act Relative to Extending Certain State of Emergency Accommodations signed into law by Governor Baker on July 16, 2022.

Trustees Present

Alekz Hirschmann (remote), Brooke Fincke (remote), Danielle Canty (remote), Jacqueline Bennett (remote), Massiel Eversley (remote), Melisa Lemire (remote), Ted Gildea (remote)

Trustees Absent

Andres Tejeda Soto, Edelyn Contreras, Jack Gearan, Robyn Shahid

Ex Officio Members Present

Sonya Pratt (remote)

Non Voting Members Present

Sonya Pratt (remote)

Guests Present

Anika Williams (remote), Julia Bowen (remote), Michael McGean (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 Jan 10, 2023 at 5:00 PM.

C. Approve December 2022 Meeting Minutes

Ted Gildea made a motion to approve the minutes from December 2022. December 2022 Board Meeting on 12-13-22.

Alekz Hirschmann seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Danielle Canty	Aye
Edelyn Contreras	Absent
Jacqueline Bennett	Aye
Massiel Eversley	Aye
Jack Gearan	Absent
Ted Gildea	Aye
Melisa Lemire	Aye
Andres Tejeda Soto	Absent
Robyn Shahid	Absent
Brooke Fincke	Aye
Alekz Hirschmann	Aye

II. CoaH Site Visit Logistics

A. CoaH Site Visit Logistics

Melisa Lemire, Board Chair, directed the attention of the Board to the Site Visit Logistics discussion. Sonya Pratt, Executive Director, began by reviewing information for the School's upcoming Site Visit from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Pratt explained that a renewal happens every five years, with site visits occurring throughout the charter term. During the fourth year, DESE, led by the Commissioner of Education, evaluates the School's performance to determine their recommendation to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) on whether the charter should be renewed. She reminded Board members that City on a Hill (CoaH) is currently on probation as a result of its most recent renewal cycle, and the School's next site visit will take place on February 9th, 2023. Pratt confirmed that this would be a "Targeted Visit," which means the Department will be focusing on specific performance criteria. CoaH will be evaluated on the schools academic performance, organizational viability and faithfulness to the Charter. During this visit, DESE representatives will meet with School Leadership, students, families and teachers, as well as perform building observations. DESE will also be looking to meet with Board members

to share their perspective on the Board's governance and the School's progress. Board members inquired about the general process for the meetings, and noted that several new Board members have not been with CoaH through the entirety of this term. Pratt confirmed that the Department understands that not everyone in the group will be able to answer every question based on their experience, but the goal is for the group to generally be able to address all aspects of its oversight of the School and its structure.

III. Strategic Planning Discussion

A. Strategic Planning Discussion

Next, Lemire transitioned the Board to the Strategic Planning discussion. Julia Bowen, Strategic Planning Consultant from Prospect Leadership Group, gave a brief introduction of herself as a charter school founder and consultant. She noted that she has been working with CoaH leaders for several years through the New Leaders Cohort of the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association (MSPCA), and shared her excitement to work closer with the Board. Bowen then explained that she has visited CoaH and shared her initial observations beginning with CoaH's strengths and weaknesses. Some of the strengths were mission statement, leadership and their vision, teacher review, growth mindset, clear goals and vision to achieve said goals, and school culture. Bowen asked the Board if they had any questions, or if these takeaways aligned with their understanding of the School. Trustees affirmed that they did, and that it was reassuring to have an external source see it as well.

Some of the areas of improvement are ensuring there is a clear cohesive understanding of the school mission across all grade levels, space constraints, compensation and shared ownership of student culture. Trustees inquired about what was meant by shared ownership of school culture, and Pratt explained that it related to the comfort and skill of staff to perform classroom management while teaching. She shared that in most teacher preparation programs, instruction is focused without much explicit training on how to manage behavior, and given that, the School has focused several professional development sessions on the topic. Pratt also noted the importance of mentorship and explained the benefit of that relationship with students and that it can be seen to positively impact student academic studies.

Next, Bowen asked the Board to reflect on the School's mission, and to share what about it inspires them. Many Board members shared the School's pillar of Citizenship, and its intersections with community, as a key part of the mission that drew them to the School. Trustees also noted the mission's language related to preparing students to compete in the 21st century, citing the School's support for whatever a student's post-secondary plans may be as a key part of that. Moving forward, Bowen asked the Board to share their goals for the School. Members shared goals around positive school experiences for students, as well as for teachers, that prepared them to continue in their goals.

Following the Board's remarks, Bowen then transitioned the conversation to discussing the timeline for the creation of the Strategic Plan for which she would use this meeting's feedback. She noted that a Strategic Planning Committee, composed of multiple stakeholders including Board members, would be assembled by the School by the end of the month. She noted that the months of February through April would focus on using the information gathered to develop the plan, before holding a school community feedback process in May. Finally, she noted that the Board would then review the finalized document and take a vote to approve the plan.

Lemire and Pratt then thanked Bowen for her work and time, and asked any Board members interested in joining the Strategic Planning Committee to reach out to Leadership.

IV. 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 7:03 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Melisa Lemire

Documents used during the meeting

- Strategic Planning Discussion Pre-Work.pdf
- SY23 CoaH Targeted Site Visit Board Presentation.pdf