

APPROVED



## City on a Hill Charter Public School

### Minutes

#### February 2023 Board Meeting

---

#### **Date and Time**

Tuesday February 28, 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), Andres Tejeda Soto (remote), Brooke Fincke (remote), Danielle Canty (remote), Jack Gearan (remote), Melisa Lemire (remote), Ted Gildea (remote)

#### **Trustees Absent**

Edelyn Contreras, Jacqueline Bennett, Massiel Eversley, Robyn Shahid

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

Sonya Pratt (remote)

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

Sonya Pratt (remote)

#### **Guests Present**

Anika Williams (remote), Jordan Lopez (remote), Kimberley Thai Small (remote), Michelle Allwood (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 Feb 28, 2023 at 5:04 PM.

### C. Approve October 2022 Board Minutes

Melisa Lemire made a motion to approve the minutes from October 2022. October 2022 Board Meeting on 10-25-22.

Alekz Hirschmann seconded the motion.

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

#### Roll Call

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

### D. Approve January 2023 Meeting Minutes

Melisa Lemire made a motion to approve the minutes from January 2023. January 2023 Board Meeting on 01-10-23.

Alekz Hirschmann seconded the motion.

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

#### Roll Call

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

**Roll Call**

Jack Gearan            Aye

**II. Board of Trustees Membership Votes**

**A. Vote to Approve Kimberly Thai Small and Michelle Allwood as Board of Trustees Members**

Melisa Lemire, Chair, re-introduced Kimberley Thai Small and Michelle Allwood as candidates to join the Board of Trustees. She reminded the Trustees that both had met with members of the Governance Committee and School Leadership, in addition to shadowing the last two Board of Trustees meetings. Lemire asked both Small and Allwood speak more to their motivations for joining the Board. Both cited their previous personal and professional experience within the educational equity and access spheres, and thanked the Board for the opportunity. Lemire thanked both candidates, and called for a motion to approve both candidates.

Ted Gildea made a motion to approve Kimberly Thai Small and Michelle Allwood as Board of Trustees Members.

Alekz Hirschmann seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

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

**III. Approve Updated Financial Policies and Procedures**

**A. Approve Updated Financial Policies and Procedures**

Lemire then directed the attention of the Board to the updated Financial Policies and Procedures document. Jordan Pina, Chief of Staff, reminded the Board that reviewing the School's policies and procedures typically happens during one of the first meetings of the year, as it did in September 2022, but noted that there have since been changes required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to ensure language reflective of Massachusetts Procurement Law. Pina shared that the School's finance vendor, CentralSource, worked with the Department to confirm that the changes were up-to-date and submitted the updated document in late January. She also added that multiple members of District Leadership would be attending additional procurement

training given the School's upcoming projects. Lemire then asked if the Trustees had any additional questions. Trustees thanked Pina for the review of changes, and stated they were comfortable taking a vote to approve.

Melisa Lemire made a motion to approve City on a Hill's updated Financial Policies and Procedures.

Brooke Fincke seconded the motion.

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

**Roll Call**

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

**IV. School Updates**

**A. General School Updates**

Lemire next directed the attention of the Board to School Updates. Sonya Pratt, Executive Director, gave an overview of recent school events, including a very well attended Black History Month Trivia Night and a Family Food Drive. She also highlighted that the School is beginning to look towards spring culture events, including a Wellness Night, Field Day and the Class of 2023 Graduation, as well as the return of the School's traditional 11th grade trip to Washington, DC to engage in civic learning and visit colleges. She also noticed that in addition to the Quarter 2 data reviewed by the Academic Excellence Committee that will be shared during the Organizational Dashboard portion of the meeting, the School is at the end of the 3rd quarter and that data will soon be available for review.

**B. Enrollment Update**

Next, Pratt reminded the Board of the School's upcoming February 15th Claim, which provides a snapshot of students served by CoaH since the beginning of the year. While the claim was still being finalized, she shared that current enrollment is 199 students, which is an increase from the School's October 1 Student Information Management System (SIMS) submission of 183 students. She pointed to the School's increase in 10th grade applicants as a major contributor to this increase, and confirmed that the School is continuing to invest in advertisement specific to interested 10th graders.

She also noted that while the School's initial school year 2023-2024 lottery was not yet completed, preliminary data showed that the School maintained the level of interested applicants from school year 2022-2023. Pratt shared that the team plans to capitalize on the increased conversion rate of applicants to enrolled students that the School has seen with recent additional investments to the recruitment team to reach it's overall enrollment goal for the school year. She also reminded the Board that the School's Enrollment & Attrition Committee continues to meet and is also discussing strategies to reduce summer and school year attrition of students.

Next, Pratt reminded the Board of the School's upcoming February 15th Claim, which provides a snapshot of students served by CoaH since the beginning of the year. While the claim was still being finalized, she shared that current enrollment is 199 students, which is an increase from the School's October 1 Student Information Management System (SIMS) submission of 183 students. She pointed to the School's increase in 10th grade applicants as a major contributor to this increase, and confirmed that the School is continuing to invest in advertisement specific to interested 10th graders.

She also noted that while the School's initial school year 2023-2024 lottery was not yet completed, preliminary data showed that the School maintained the level of interested applicants from school year 2022-2023. Pratt shared that the team plans to capitalize on the increased conversion rate of applicants to enrolled students that the School has seen with recent additional investments to the recruitment team to reach it's overall enrollment goal for the school year. She also reminded the Board that the School's Enrollment & Attrition Committee continues to meet and is also discussing strategies to reduce summer and school year attrition of students.

### **C. Strategic Planning Update**

Finally, Pratt shared that the Strategic Planning Committee had begun meeting to discuss their purpose and the work throughout the spring. Pratt confirmed that their focus will be on evaluating the School's mission while also considering long-term academic goals and ensuring the right staffing model for the School's size. She also reminded the staff that three members of the Board, Danielle Canty, Alekz Hirschmann and Andres Tejeda Soto, are also part of this committee, and asked for them to share their experience so far. They all noted the strong collaboration that is being facilitated by the School's consultant, Prospect Leadership Group, and that they were looking forward to future meetings. Pratt then asked if any Trustees had questions about any of her updates. The Board inquired as to the implementation for the strategic plan following their approval, and Pratt confirmed that implementation would begin as soon as approval from the Board was received.

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

### **A. Circuit Street Renovation / Construction Update**

Next, Lemire directed the attention of the Board to the Circuit Street Renovation Update. Ted Gildea, Vice Chair & Treasurer, announced that the School received two bids for the project, which would both install moveable partitions in several classrooms to create breakout space and add administrative offices for staff who do not currently have dedicated workspace following the termination of CoaH's lease of its former Network office.

Gildea confirmed that both bids were above the estimated budget costs, but are affordable under CoaH's current standing. He shared that he asked the School's project manager, NV5, to further evaluate the bid for additional cost savings, but that he and Pratt agree based on their conversations to move forward with the lower bid. He also confirmed that the School would be having an additional call with NV5 on Friday to confirm next steps, and again stress the timeline of the construction. Board members inquired as to whether the School has made contingency plans for the occupation of space. Pratt and Pina confirmed that the construction will be limited to spaces that are not necessary for use during summer programming, and that specific dates have been shared with NV5 so they are aware of the School's needs.

## **VI. Board Growth Discussion**

### **A. Board Growth Discussion**

Next, Gildea continued on to the topic of Board Growth. He acknowledged that the Board has brought on several members over the past month, and while the Board is now approaching its goal of 15 members, the Governance Committee hopes to add additional members beyond that to plan for any natural attrition of Board members following their terms. Gildea thanked the School for the support in advertising and scheduling interviews on behalf of the Governance Committee, and stated that the work of recruitment also needed to be shared more widely by the Board. He shared that the Governance Committee would be asking for all Board members to share 4-5 names of contacts that they would reach out to in order to discuss becoming Board candidates, and that a template for initiating these conversations would be shared to support the process. Trustees inquired as to what profile of candidate the Board is looking for, and Gildea named finance, operations and legal experience as areas of need, as well as members of the Roxbury community.

## **VII. Board Committee Updates**

### **A. Governance Committee Update**

Melisa Lemire, Chair, reminded the Board that the modifications to Open Meeting Law (OML) put in place by An Act Relative to Extending Certain State of Emergency Accommodations in 2021 are set to expire on March 31, and as such, the Board would be returning to in-person meetings. Pina clarified that the School would continue to utilize Zoom as an opportunity to maximize public participation, so members who could not

attend in person would be able to do so remotely, but that OML requires that a quorum be physically present for the meeting to be compliant. She shared that all meetings for the rest of the school year have been entered into BoardOnTrack, and asked that Committees evaluate their current times and share any needed shifts for the School.

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

Alekz Hirshmann, Committee Member, shared that the Committee reviewed Quarter 2 data, which continues to show the positive trends in achievement and growth described during Quarter 1. Pratt also noted that while not ready at time of the Academic Excellence Committee's meeting in January, the winter administration of the NWEA MAP Growth Test showed that the school is exceeding its growth goals. She shared that additional updates would be presented at the April 2023 meeting, following further analysis by the School's data team.

#### **C. Executive Director Support Committee**

Ted Gildea, Committee Member, confirmed that the Committee met with Pratt for an informal review of her goals, which currently remain on track to be met by the end of the school year.

#### **D. Finance Committee Update**

Ted Gildea, Committee Chair & Treasurer, reminded the Board that the Finance Committee's major topics for the year are the School's audit, which was completed and approved by the Board in the Fall, and the annual budget, which the Committee had a preliminary discussion about. He confirmed that the School would be presenting a budget to the Committee at the next meeting for evaluation and feedback before presenting a recommendation to the full Board of Trustees at the May 2023 Board Meeting. He also confirmed that the Committee reviewed the School's most recent financial statements, which have the school remaining on track with the school year 2022-2023 budget.

### **VIII. Organizational Goals Dashboard**

#### **A. Organizational Goals Dashboard**

Finally, Lemire directed the attention of the Board to the Organizational Goals Dashboard. Pratt shared that academic trends remain positive current passing rates for Math (82.5%), English (80.9%) and Science (61.2%) to be on track for the School's related goal. She also shared that the passing rate for students with Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) is currently exceeding its goal of 70% by 5%. She reiterated that MAP data would soon be presented. Trustees inquired as to whether use of the MAP Growth Test excluded students from being eligible for state-funded scholarships related to the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). Pratt confirmed that it would not, as the MAP Growth Test is administered in addition to the MCAS, which is a graduation requirement of all students.

Next, Pratt highlighted the school's suspension rates, which were 0% In-School Suspensions (ISS) and 0.2% Out-of-School Suspension (OSS), which is currently surpassing the School's goal of no more than 10% of students suspended in the school year. Pratt shared that the School plans to further invest in this initiative by creating a partnership with Cartwheel, an organization that provides mental health services to students in collaboration with the School.

Finally, Pratt shared that the School is continuing to pursue a grant which would allow for HVAC and window upgrades across the building.

## **IX. 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 6:13 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Melisa Lemire

---

## **Documents used during the meeting**

- Kimberley Small Resume.pdf
- Michelle Allwood Resume.pdf
- CoaH Policies and Procedures (updated 01.12.23).pdf
- Organizational Goals Dashboard\_Feb23.pdf