

APPROVED



City on a Hill Charter Public School

Minutes

November 2023 Governance Committee Meeting

Date and Time

Monday November 20, 2023 at 2:00 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. The meeting was held via Zoom at <https://cityonahill-org.zoom.us/j/87237510633>.

Committee Members Present

Brooke Fincke (remote), Melisa Lemire (remote), Ted Gildea (remote)

Committee Members Absent

None

Guests Present

Jordan Lopez (remote), Sonya Pratt (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Melisa Lemire called a meeting of the Governance Committee of City on a Hill Charter Public School to order on Monday Nov 20, 2023 at 2:02 PM.

II. Leadership Transitions Discussion

A. Leadership Transitions Discussion

Melisa Lemire, Board Chair, directed the attention of the Committee to the Leadership Transitions Discussion. Lemire announced that Sonya Pratt, Executive Director, had shared her intention to step down as Executive Director at the end of her current contract, which expires in June 2024. Lemire shared that while the Board is saddened to see her go, they respect her decision and have accepted her over six months' notice as required by her contract. Lemire shared that she and Ted Gildea, Board Vice Chair, been in contact with consultants to best launch next steps for finding a replacement, and asked Pratt if she would like to share any additional information before the Committee discusses recruitment.

Pratt shared that in addition to discussing her transition with Lemire, she has also spent time coming up with a proposal for the timeline. She noted that she believes a strong communication plan is in order as Laura Edouard, Principal, will also be moving on at the end of this school year. She noted that she felt that given she and Edouard have been a collaborative pair at City on a Hill for many years and that time is of the essence for recruitment, it would be best to announce the transitions simultaneously before Winter Break. She noted that the message would be communicated to staff, families and other community partnerships.

The Committee expressed concerns around possible perceptions of school stability Pratt and Edouard's longevity, but again shared that they respected their decisions, and would want to move quickly to maximize successor overlap. Gildea confirmed he had made contact with the recruitment firm who had supported City on a Hill during its last external leader search, as well as an independent background check company for any finalists. He shared that the intended goal was to bring on a new Executive Director by April or May 2024. Gildea inquired as to whether the Committee and Pratt felt it best to also move forward with the Principal search, or whether the next Executive Director should lead that process. Pratt shared that she felt starting the search in late spring would not be enough time. Additionally, she acknowledge the concerns raised by the Committee, and shared that she felt that leading with transparency and announcing with a plan would be the best way to ensure stability.

The Committee also inquired as to whether there was internal talent who might be prepared for the Executive Director or Principal roles. Pratt shared that while there are some folks who are well on their way to being in those type of roles, she was unsure of current interest. Pratt shared that she was aware of some other schools going through similar transitions, and that some are considering internal interims while launching more robust searches. The Committee agreed that an interim Principal who is an internal candidate could be helpful for continuity. Pratt shared that, regardless, that the role would be publicly posted before Winter Break.

The Committee returned to the Executive Director discussion, and also noted that an external candidate may also want to bring along colleagues they have previously worked with to fill roles, as the last external CoaH leader had, and that they were open to also filling roles in that way. The Committee then turned to communication, and she and Pratt agreed that in addition to the letter to families from Pratt and Edouard, that there should also be messaging directly from the Board of Trustees. Pratt confirmed that she and Edouard are working to complete their communications, and will have it completed for the December 2023 Board of Trustees meeting. The Committee agreed to also bring their communication, as well as the full plan for discussion, to that meeting.

Then, Gildea reminded the Committee that Jordan Pina, Chief Operating Officer, also announced that she would be leaving and the Committee inquired to her timeline and if discussions for team structure had happened. Pina shared that she was also intending to step down by June 2024, and had also begun conversations with Pratt about backfilling. She shared that the School is interested in talking to a staffing consultant, as it has changed the District and Operations Teams' structure every year for the past several years, and has not yet found the right structure. She noted that currently they were considering dividing her role into her former Chief of Staff role, which she felt definitely had internal candidates who could step up, and a Operations Team leader, for which there is not a clear successor.

The Committee agreed to reconvene in December before the Board Meeting to review communications, and review completion of next steps.

III. Board Growth & Engagement Discussion

A. Board Growth & Engagement Discussion

Due to time, this section was not covered.

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 3:01 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Melisa Lemire

Documents used during the meeting

None