APPROVED

Collegiate Charter School of Lowell

Minutes

Regular Board Meeting

May 2025

Date and Time
Tuesday May 20, 2025 at 5:30 PM

Location
Collegiate Charter School of Lowell
1857 Middlesex Street, Lowell, MA 01851

Meeting Notice
The Collegiate Charter School of Lowell, 1857 Middlesex Street, Lowell, MA will hold a Board of Trustees monthly meeting on May 20, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. in room 1223.

Posted to The Lowell Sun 5/18/2025.

Trustees Present
A. Miller, B. Chapman, D. Tucker, E. Nelson, K. McCarthy, P. Patel

Trustees Absent
None

Guests Present
A. Bakr, C. Connors, C. Crane, C. Nystrom, Dr. Dan Hanniken, H. Rossbach, Jen Mahon, T. Cameron

I. Opening Items

A. Call the Meeting to Order

K. McCarthy called a meeting of the board of trustees of Collegiate Charter School of Lowell to order on Tuesday May 20, 2025 at 5:45 PM.

B. Record Attendance

C. School Mission

The board has recited the School Mission to continue reinforcement and understanding of our purpose.
Discussion held regarding resignation of Board President Walter McGrail. Resignation unexpectedly due to extensive work involved. Healthy, but must step away due to demands required.

The Vice President, per the by-laws, will step into the role of President temporarily. Kathleen McCarthy has accepted that role until the time of the annual meeting when all officers will be voted upon.
D. Tucker made a motion to appoint Brian Chapman to the role of Vice President until the time of the annual meeting when all officers will be voted upon.
A. Miller seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

D. Approve Agenda

E. Nelson made a motion to approve the agenda as written.
B. Chapman seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

E. Approve Minutes - April 2025

A. Miller made a motion to approve the minutes from Regular Board Meeting on 04-15-25.
D. Tucker seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Public Comment

A. Floor Open to the Public

No public present at this time.

III. Committee Reports

A.

Governance

Guest Ms. Bopha Malone, candidate for Board Member.

- CEO of Girls Inc. of Lowell.
- Alumnus of Girls Inc.
- Previous VP of Enterprise Bank.
- Community activist
- Board member at Middlesex Community College, and Their Home
- Select Board Member in Bedford, MA
- Previously member of Tufts Medicine Board

Spent a year returning on Cambodia to rediscover her culture, language, and heritage. Opened an "informal" school in Cambodia. Immigrated to U.S. as a child.

Previous candidate for Congress.

The board will vote to accept the application of Ms. Malone. Mr. Bakr will submit th necessary paperwork to DESE for approvals.
B. Chapman made a motion to accept the application of Ms. Bopha Malone for the role of board of trustees.
D. Tucker seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

D. Tucker	Aye
B. Chapman	Aye
E. Nelson	Aye
K. McCarthy	Aye
P. Patel	Aye
A. Miller	Aye

Discussion regarding 3 new potential board members.

- Maria Porto
- Erin Rourke
- David Leighton

Review of the resumes of the candidates.
Discussion to move candidates through the process.
Process will continue for the three candidates.

B. Finance

Discussion of the Finance sub-committee meeting held prior to this board meeting.

Summary review of the current budget vs. actual through April 2025. Accepated as presented and reviewed by the sub-committee.
B. Chapman made a motion to accept the report as submitted for April 2025.
P. Patel seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.
Discussion of the draft budget for Budget FY2025-26 as reviewed and discussed during Finance Sub-committee meeting on May 20th.

- Bond holder requirements
  - Finance committee reviewed in April
  - Files provided as required
  - Historical debt service ratio
    - 2.7 for 2023-24
    - projected 2 for 2024-25
    - budgeted 1.7 for 2025-26
  - Cash balance of at least 45 days.
    - Projected 202 days for 2024-25
    - Budgeted 177 days for 2025-26
- Review of proposed per-pupil funding
- Review of Excess Debt Service Fund requirement
  - Proposed 2024-25 expected to be $1,900,000
  - Budgeted 2025-26 is $665,000

Discussion from committee of proposed budget and budget surplus. Well within standards and expectations. Planned average increase of 4.6%. Will review should state funding calculations change.

Questions:

- E. Nelson - question regarding revised budget to proposed budget figure to confirm understanding. Confirmed by C. Nystrom that understanding was correct.
- E. Nelson - Pupil Services Salaries doesn't appear to match increases elsewhere. C. Nystrom shared that it incorporates the new Director of Pupil Services position that was added during the current school year. Also, addition of School Nurse to ensure compliance to meet the needs of the students. Review of new positions to be added. Request from E. Nelson to distinguish in comments of what the difference is due to - increased number of employees vs. salary increases. Further review of health insurance cost increases. Possibility of reviewing providers for 2026-27 FY. Increase to FICA costs budgeted for 2025-26 to ensure MTRS eligible employees that was under-budgeted for the 2024-25 FY. Review of Broker of Record for the 2026-27 FY.

- E. Nelson - On expense side, could we see the percentages of actual expenses? C. Nystrom will adjust future reports to show this requested information. C. Nystrom will review Financial Dashboard from DESE to review and share comparison percentages.
- E. Nelson - Gross Surplus drops, why? Capital outlay was cause. Future capital outlay will come from capital reserve fund.

A. Miller - money was put aside in Capital Reserve Fund to account for Capital Outlay items as reported in report requested by Board of third part review of facilities. Report results were analyzed and accounted for in Capital Reserve Fund.
E. Nelson made a motion to approve the proposed 2025-26 FY budget as presented.
B. Chapman seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.
Introduction of Dina Muldoon as the Business Manager in preparation for C. Nystrom's retirement in 2025-26.

C. Academic Excellence

No update. School update upcoming in this board meeting.

D. Board Development (Fundraising)

B. Chapman will reach out to Lowell Five about end-of-year donation.

A. Miller asked about the fees of the field and other facility rentals to be included into the Scholarship Fund. This is being reviewed to ensure funds received for facility rental will be included in this fund.

P. Patel asked about ability to use rental fees for school purposes. C. Nystrom clarified that yes, as long as it is not federal funding and is money raised via fundraising, it can be used. Salaries of employees involved is deducted to ensure coverage of any federal funds used.

K. McCarthy asked about the use of parent's involvement in parent organization.

E. Facilities Committee

B. Chapman discussed Capital Review highlights.

- Garage - architect is putting together plans to review
- Roofing - small section that requires replacement during the summer
- Shed - install pending this summer for concessions and storage
- Field - swing gate being installed for further egress and access.
- Rourke Bridge - MA DOT requests to hold event here to present plan to the community in July

F. Executive Director Support and Evaluation Committee

Discussion to schedule next sub-committee meeting. Will be scheduled for June.

IV. Director's Report

A. School Updates

Introduction of

- Jen Mahon - Director of Special Education
  - Over 25 years of educational leadership. Melrose and Wilmington Public Schools
  - Advocate for families for past 8 years.
  - *Jen commended Interim Director (Assistant Director) Paula Sullivan for her excellent work in keeping school in complete compliance*
- Dr. Dan Hanneken - Director of Student Support Services and Assistant Executive Director
  - Over 25 years of leadership at various districts/schools in MA
  - Military trainer in the Air Force
  - Lead underperforming schools in MA

Upcoming Events:

- Art Festival - 5/23
- Spring Musical - 5/23 and 5/24
- STEM Showcase - 5/29
- PROM - 5/30
- Senior Graduation - 6/5
- International Fair - 6/6
- KG Graduation - 6/12
- Gr. 8 Semi- Formal - 6/12
- Gr. 8 Celebration - 6/13
- Last Day of School - 6/16
- Board Meeting 6/17

K. McCarthy - Request for calendar invites or monthly notifications to Board of events.
C. Connors update -

- Week after April Vacation was Bounce Back Week to get everyone back in the learning/engaging mindset for teambuilding activities. Coincided with end of Quarter 3.
    - Gr. 2 did a Geometry Unit. Garden work in another Gr. 2 class.
    - Gr. 5 did an American Revolution project bases unit.
    - Gr. 4 wrapped up their Industrial Revolution projects.
    - Gr. 3 did a project on Native American explorers.
    - Gr. 1 examined symbols that represented America.
    - KG reviewed national holidays.
- English - project on how to improve safety in playground
- Science - garden activates with Mill City Grows
- HS Business/Science class field trip to Microsoft office in Burlington
- National Honor Society held fundraiser carwash and Bakesale
- Gr. 12 visit to Middlesex Community College - students attending are registered and choose their classes.
- NHS induction ceremony held on 5/16 with 12 new students
- Commitment Day held today for seniors celebrating their plans for next school year

Yonder pouches

- Pouches have been received and inventoried.
- Discussions held with Innovation and a school in New Bedford about implementation.
- Parent events to be held to discuss phones, social media, etc.
- Informal discussions have been held with some students.
- Further discussion and implementation with students planned

Academic Dashboard

- Review of goals set forth for AY
- Review of current standings
    - All goals being met, with exception of HS math, but expect correction with Q4 having just started and data entry being made.
- Snapshot of current Senior Class
    - 49 seniors, 48 will be graduating, 1 pursuing HISET
    - College-bound = 35, 72.9%
    - Other Pathways - 6 (trades), 2 (military), 3 (workforce), 2 (relocating
    - 19 students to 4-year colleges
    - 16 students to 2-year colleges
- College Access Matrix
    - 58.3% completion of FAFSA/MAFSA
    - 100% applied to college

- SAT - 62 junior tested. Reading - 486 (438 PSAT), Math - 450 (424 PSAT) averages.
- Review of comparison of Class of 2024 to the Class of 2025
- Review of Guidance Dept.'s plan to track graduates' post-graduation.
- Overall Daily Attendance increasing. Result of our addition of Attendance Officer and Assistant Principals. Growth in K-5 and 6-8. Slight increase in HS and work continues on improvement.
- Suspension rates have drastically decreased from month-to-month. Contributed to implementation of PBIS, Bounce Back activities post-April break.

B. Chapman recommends as data is accumulated, share it with our families, especially those in the elementary school.

C. Connors hosted the final New Teacher Orientation meeting in April. Celebrated successes and discussed areas to continue to work in during future years. Last PD Day of the school year was held on 5/2 - end-of-year reflection. Reviewed priorities and goals and plan for next year - co-teaching, UDL implementation, MTSS support to at-risk students, reduce chronic absenteeism, and PBIS promotion. Goal to become more data-driven in the new year.

MCAS testing has been completed in prior weeks. Math, ELA and Science completed. Gr. 8 Civics and Gr. 9 Biology are scheduled yet this school year.

Review of Gr. 9 Science MAP data that was recently completed. Saw growth from 24th percentile in Fall 2024 to 41st percentile in Spring 2025. In the 58th percentile in growth.

Project Lead the Way - grants received to cover costs for next three years. Middle School STEM program. Adding a STEM special for middle school in 2025-26 to continue what is being done currently in K-5. More information to be shared in June post PD session.

NEWSELA implementation for 2025-26 for K-12 Social Studies. Focus on news articles and informational texts in the classroom. Aligns perfectly with our curriculum.
Strategic Partnerships

- Local Weatherman visiting 5/21 at 10:00 for presentation to Gr. 3
- Open House for summer school programs on 5/29 during STEM night
- Girls Inc. summer programming update to be hosted at Collegiate
- Election Commissioner coming to speak with students. Job opportunities. Election process.
- Donation strategies. Monthly events planned for 2025-26.

B. Items for Board Discussion

DESE Site Visit report summary.

- Every 5 years is a renewal process
- Evaluated against criterion
- Site revisit mid-charter reviews some areas
    - Faithfulness of the Charter
        - Translation of materials
        - Enrollment must remain at 1200
        - Teacher qualifications/certifications
        - Board Open Meeting Law - minutes keeping, including documents
    - Student Sucess
        - 27 out of 34 classes had strong instruction viewed
        - 30 out of 34 classes showed learning
    - School Climate
    - Organizational Viability
    - Governance

C. Items for Board Action

B. Chapman made a motion to approve the 2025-26 School Calendar as presented.
D. Tucker seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

V. Closing Items

A. Next Board Meeting

Next meeting June 17th @ 5:30.

B. Adjourn Meeting

B. Chapman made a motion to adjourn.
D. Tucker seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.
There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:27 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
T. Cameron