

**FINAL APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR ANNUAL MEETING 20 MAY 2021**  
**APPROVED 30 SEPTEMBER 2021**

**Minutes**  
**May 20, 2021 Annual Meeting**  
**UChicago Charter School Board of Directors**

May 20, 2021 at 5:03 pm  
The University of Chicago Charter School  
Via ZOOM

**Attendees**

Board of Directors Members in attendance: D. Abebe (presiding), K. Callow-Wright, D. Gorman-Smith, T. Island-Childress, I. Samstein, S. Vasquez, P. Ziegler

Board of Directors Members absent: None

Also in attendance: UCCS Staff (T. Barnett, K. Gehring, T. Pajakowski, C. Scott) and UEI staff (C. Epstein, A. Hull, U. Mardyla)

**President's Opening Remarks**

President Abebe recognized the difficulty of this year and shared his appreciation for the commitment of the UCCS students, families, and caregivers who persisted in seeking a quality education in the midst of a pandemic. He expressed appreciation for UCCS' teachers, staff, administrators and senior leadership who supported the families in providing education under these most difficult circumstances.

**Review of May 6, 2021 Advisory Council Meeting**

Vice-President Gorman-Smith joined President Abebe in congratulating and thanking all the stakeholders in the UCCS community. Vice President Dean Gorman-Smith shared with the Board that at the Advisory Council Meeting two weeks ago, Council members discussed ways to show additional support to the teachers, staff, and leadership team. One idea already in motion: to send a thank you. Some Advisory Council members also contributed towards gift cards to be given to teachers and staff. Member Callow-Wright asked if members of the Board could also participate in a show of appreciation and Vice-President Gorman-Smith responded that she would follow up on this request.

**Approval of February 25, 2021 Minutes of Board of Directors Meeting**

President Abebe asked for a Motion to approve the Feb. 25, 2021 minutes. Member Callow-Wright made the Motion to approve the Feb. 25, 2021 minutes, and Vice-President Gorman-Smith seconded the Motion. All members voted in favor of approval.

**Approval of March 18, 2021 Minutes of Board of Directors Special Meeting**

President Abebe asked for a Motion to approve the March 18, 2021 minutes. Member Callow-Wright made the Motion to approve the Mar. 18, 2021 minutes, and Member Vasquez seconded the Motion. All members voted in favor of approval.

**Public Participation**

The Agenda for the Meeting of the Board of Directors with a Zoom link was published on the UChicago Charter's website and at its campuses. However, no member of the public came forward to speak during the Public Participation section of the meeting.

## **Enrollment Update for 2021-2022**

Director of Admissions Scott presented statistics on the enrollment levels thus far for Donoghue, NKO, and Woodlawn as set forth in Exhibit A. In summary, the Director stated that the Donoghue and NKO campuses had reached the enrollment target for Pre-K at both campuses. However, Donoghue has lost a few students between Pre-K and Kindergarten over the past few years and received fewer applications for Kindergarten this year. Since Donoghue has openings for new students and NKO has a waitlist, Director Scott emailed parents on the NKO waitlist offering admission to Donoghue. Such students would then remain at Donoghue after Kindergarten. She has also reached out to other organizations to recruit students. This admission year was the first year that we did not have a waitlist for the Donoghue campus.

Regarding the Woodlawn Campus, UCCS did not offer a lottery for 6<sup>th</sup> grade because UCCS has more students matriculating from the 5<sup>th</sup> graders at Donoghue and NKO than in prior years. UCCS has waitlists for 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, but open seats for 9<sup>th</sup> grade. UCCS has met its enrollment target for 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grades. CTO Pajakowski expressed concern over managing the total enrollment of 704 for Woodlawn because the ideal number for that building is 635-640. Director Scott shared a list of schools that 9<sup>th</sup> graders are coming from: Ariel, Beasley, Burnside, Carnegie, Carter, Chicago Collegiate, Dixon, Fisk, Fulton, Madison, Marquette, Noble Comer, O'Toole, Revere, South Shore, Till, and Wadsworth. Director of Community Affairs Barnett stated that we may have the opportunity to hold in-person Open Houses since now the City is opening up somewhat for Phase 5 of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Report on Phase II Hybrid Instruction**

CEO Island-Childress began by thanking the Board members for their guidance and support during the COVID-19 pandemic. She then informed the Board of three instances in which classes or students had to be quarantined due to exposure to COVID-19. As soon as the school leaders learned about these instances, they contacted the University's Contact Tracing Office and followed the required next steps.

As set forth in Exhibit B, CEO Island-Childress reviewed the number of students who returned remotely and in person to UCCS campuses during UCCS' hybrid return in Phase I and Phase II. At Donoghue, the network's largest elementary campus, 275 students returned in person and 244 remained remote. President Abebe commented that more of the older students (2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> graders) chose to learn remotely. CEO Island-Childress explained that parents had concerns about sending these older children back to the campus during the pandemic. NKO has 2 classes per grade, except at the Pre-K level which has one class. At NKO, 197 students returned in person while 154 chose remote learning. At the Woodlawn Middle School, a different situation existed because only 6<sup>th</sup> graders were invited to return in Phase I. In Phase II, 110 students over all returned in person while 140 students learned remotely. At Woodlawn High School, education continued to be offered remotely, but in person support was offered to all high school students and provided on an "as requested" basis.

Member Callow-Wright inquired about the students and families' response to the return to in-person. CEO Island-Childress responded that they were very happy in the beginning, but concerns did arise among parents, and teachers, as COVID cases increased. UCCS leaders reassured the families regarding UCCS' COVID-19 protocols. Director Barnett added that there a real sense of collaboration with UCCS and its families was developed through numerous Zoom Town Halls. Director Barnett also credited the tech work of CTO Piatkowski and his team in stabilizing UCCS during the pandemic. Director Barnett shared that other schools in the neighborhood did not have as many students returning in person as UCCS has had. Some of these other neighborhood schools experienced less than a 30% return rate for

in-person learning. CEO Island-Childress noted that UCCS' device distribution has been so extensive this current year that UCCS will likely not need to replace devices this fall. CTO Pajakowski recognized that parents were frustrated at the beginning of remote learning because only two tech staff were available to handle phone calls for the 1,000 parents calling in for support. In retrospect, the CTO noted that, could he have done it differently, he would have hired two more staff members to manage demand. This spring, UCCS students are scheduled to return their devices between June 2-17 so the UCCS tech team will have time to prep them for the fall re-opening of UCCS schools.

### **Plan for 2021 In Person Learning**

CEO Island-Childress stated that UCCS plans for all students to return in person for fall term, following all state, university, and CPS guidelines. UCCS will have an extended school year, with students returning August 16, which is 2 weeks earlier than CPS. Fall Break will also be shorter than usual.

### **Special Announcement**

CEO Island-Childress announced that Chief Academic Officer Jerrold Washington is transitioning out of UCCS at the end of this academic year. A celebration of his time with UCCS will be held in June, to which the Board will be invited. The CEO shared that UCCS does not intend to fill the CAO position at this time.

### **Quarterly Finance Report on FY21 Budget to Actuals and Proposed FY22 UCCS Budget**

CFO Mardyla presented the Quarterly Report on UCCS FY21 Budget to Actuals. The Report is included as Exhibit C. UCCS will have a balanced budget for FY21 by June 30. A profit is shown of \$1.1 million dollars, but these funds are planned for expenditures on technology this spring. These funds became available in part due to savings from not being physically in UCCS buildings and, secondarily, from not filling some positions. The CFO shared that UCCS expects to receive more funding for special education services but will likely continue to have expenditures for special education services in excess of this increase. The CFO noted that UCCS is receiving less philanthropic support than in prior years.

Regarding the Proposed FY22 Budget, and reviewing revenue on an individual campus basis, UCCS received less for Donoghue than expected due to a drop in enrollment. NKO's revenues dropped, but because NKO does not pay a facilities fee to CPS, the decline is smaller. The Woodlawn Campus is in a better financial position because UCCS received more funding for this campus than planned, due both to higher enrollment, and CPS' method of off-setting costs for independently owned facilities. Woodlawn is almost completely self-sufficient. UCCS' budgeted revenues for FY22 allowed UCCS to provide 2% raises to all UCCS staff.

Upon questioning, Accounting Manager Hull stated that the in-person return to UCCS campuses in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters led to certain expenses that UCCS normally does not experience, such as additional substitute teachers in the COVID-19 landscape and extra cleaning for COVID-19 protection. Member Vasquez asked if UCCS has taken into consideration the departure of three top leaders in CPS, especially regarding whether this change might affect UCCS' budget allocations. CFO Mardyla responded that the Illinois Network of Charter Schools has stated that the current Chicago Public School Board is not favorable towards charter schools in general, and Director Barnett agreed. Chief Operating Officer Epstein pointed out that families and students have left the city so neighborhood and charter schools may be competing for the remaining students.

### **Approve UChicago Charter Budget for FY22**

President Abebe asked for a Motion to approve the FY22 Budget as presented. Member Callow-Wright made a Motion to approve the FY22 Budget as presented and Member Samstein seconded the Motion. The Board members voted unanimously in favor of the FY22 Budget as presented.

#### **Annual Election of Officers**

President Abebe asked for a Motion to approve the Slate of Officers and Terms, as included in the Board Materials, which provided the following Slate: President Abebe, Vice President Gorman-Smith, Treasurer Samstein and Secretary Vasquez. Member Callow-Wright made a Motion to approve the Slate as presented, and Member Vasquez seconded the Motion. The Board members voted unanimously in favor of the Slate of Officers as presented.

#### **Approve Annual Calendar of Meetings for 2021-2022 School Year**

President Abebe asked for a Motion to approve the Annual Calendar of Board and Council Meetings for the 2021-2022 School Year. , Member Callow-Wright made a Motion to approve the Annual Calendar as presented, and Vice-President Gorman-Smith seconded the Motion. The Board members voted unanimously in favor of the Annual Calendar as presented.

#### **Schedule of End of Year Events at UCCS**

CEO Island-Childress referred Board members to the schedule of graduations and other end of year events included in the materials, and invited all Board Members to attend where possible, or to seek additional information about attending.

#### **Annual Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair of the Advisory Council**

Due to the press of time, the Board deferred the Annual Appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Advisory Council to its next regular meeting.

**New Business & Adjournment.** President Abebe asked for any new business, but hearing none, asked for a motion for adjournment. On a voice vote of acclimation, the Board adjourned the Annual Meeting at 6:31 p.m.

FINAL APPROVED MINUTES OF 20 MAY 2021 REGULAR ANNUAL MEETING  
APPROVED 30 SEPTEMBER 2021