

**FINAL**

**Minutes**

**Sept. 30, 2021 Annual Meeting**

**UChicago Charter School Board of Directors**

Sept. 30, 2021 at 5:01 p.m.

The University of Chicago Charter School

At Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice

**Attendees**

Board of Directors Members in attendance in person: D. Abebe (presiding), D. Gorman-Smith, T. Island-Childress, P. Ziegler

Board of Directors Members present via remote per vote of the Board: K. Callow-Wright; S. Vasquez (joining mid-meeting); I. Samstein (joining mid-meeting)

Also in attendance in person: UCCS Staff (T. Barnett) and UEI staff (C. Epstein, J. Nowaczewski)

UEI Staff joining remotely: U. Mardyla

**President's Opening Remarks & Vote to Allow Remote Participation**

President Abebe welcomed everyone to the meeting and noting that a quorum was present of four members, he asked for a motion to allow Members Callow-Wright, Vasquez and Samstein to participate via remote means. Vice President Gorman-Smith so moved, Ms. Ziegler seconded the motion, and all Board members present voted to allow remote participation. Ms. Callow-Wright joined immediately, and Ms. Vasquez and Mr. Samstein joined later during the meeting.

President Abebe acknowledged the difficulties of returning to school while the pandemic persisted, noting that everyone had hoped that by this time there would be different circumstances in place. The President shared the traumatic events that the Charter School had encountered in the beginning of the school year, including the death of a 6<sup>th</sup> grade student, an NKO alum, who had attended NKO from pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup> grade, who was allegedly shot by his mother, as well as the injury of a High School student at the end of a Woodlawn football game which resulted in hospitalization. He said he knew the UCCS staff was experiencing grief and trauma from these situations, and appreciated even more how UCCS' teachers, staff, administrators, and senior leadership could still work together in providing education under so many difficult conditions.

**Review of September 23, 2021 Advisory Council Meeting**

Vice-President Gorman-Smith provided a summary of the Advisory Council Meeting of September 23, 2021. Vice President Dean Gorman-Smith shared her own reflections on the death of the NKO alum, and the hospitalization of a UCCS football player, and joined with the President in thanking UCCS staff for their perseverance in difficult times. Dean Gorman-Smith shared that in addition to these events, Council members also discussed the recent article in the press which had spotlighted the fact that some UCCS students took jobs during the remote learning period of the pandemic. The Dean indicated that the Council was considering extra meetings, and other ways to show support for the staff and families of UCCS.

**Approval of May 21, 2021 Minutes of the Annual Board of Directors Meeting**

President Abebe asked for a Motion to approve the May 21, 2021 minutes of the Annual Meeting. Vice President Gorman-Smith made a Motion to approve the May 21, 2021 minutes, and Ms. Ziegler seconded the Motion. All members present voted in favor of approval.

### **Approval of July 6, 2021 Minutes of Board of Directors Special Meeting**

President Abebe asked for a Motion to approve the July 6, 2021 minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Directors. Vice President Gorman-Smith made the Motion to approve the July 6, 2021 minutes, and Ms. Ziegler seconded the Motion. All members present voted in favor of approval.

### **Public Participation**

The Agenda for the Meeting of the Board of Directors noting the meeting was in person at the Crown School of Social Work, Policy and Practice 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.

### **CEO's Report: Return to In-Person Learning (5:10 p.m.)**

CEO Tanika Island Childress summarized the return to in-person learning at UCCS, which had begun for staff on August 9, 2021, and for students on August 16, 2021. She noted that it was wonderful to welcome everyone back in person, but that the pandemic was still taking its toll. She noted that many layered mitigations had been put in place, including ordering a significant amount of new furniture to allow for social distancing at 3 feet in the elementary classrooms. The CEO noted that quarantines had been imposed, including for elementary students who were testing positive for COVID-19. President Abebe asked about the number of quarantines, and the use of seating charts in the middle and high school. The CEO indicated that the Woodlawn Campus Directors were working on re-organizing to accommodate seating charts, which could reduce the number of students who would be quarantined. The CEO noted that the Charter School had opened earlier than CPS and was working daily to be in alignment with the Governor's Executive Orders, and guidance from the Illinois State Board of Education, CPS and, of course, the University.

The CEO provided a brief update regarding attendance and enrollment, in light of CPS' issues with fewer students returning. She noted that the Middle School was at or above its targeted enrollment, and the other campuses were just under, but close: NKO was 11 short and Donoghue was 4 students short. The CEO noted that attendance was at 89% at the Middle and High School and at 92% in the elementary schools, which was lower than past years but not surprising given the pandemic.

### **Quarterly Finance Report on First Quarter FY22 Budget**

CFO Mardyla presented both an update on Fiscal Year 21 and on the First Quarter for UCCS FY22. The Finance Report is included in the Board Book, attached, at page 9. In terms of FY21, the Charter School is undergoing an audit now, with a due date to finalize on November 1, 2021. The Charter School ended the year better than expected, in large part due to federal title funding of approximately \$500,000 sent to UCCS by CPS in late May 2021. This presented a difficulty in terms of observing a profit not expected due to this late distribution. UCCS carried over certain restricted gifts, and delayed spending endowment payments as a result. Additionally, UCCS' expenses were lower in several categories, such as in personnel, due to some positions not being filled and the difficulty in obtaining substitute teachers. Ms. Ziegler asked whether the open positions were in the current budget, and the CEO indicated that there were approximately 20 open positions, primarily for aides and/or building substitute teachers for pandemic related needs.

Regarding the FY22 Budget, CFO Mardyla indicated that CPS was awarding additional funding in the amount of \$750 per student, again as a distribution of COVID-related funds, which resulted in additional revenue in the approximate amount of \$1,000,000. The CFO stated that CPS had indicated there might be additional funding, but no amount or timing was yet known. President Abebe noted that additional budget concerns would be addressed at future meetings.

**CEO Report: UCCS Suspensions and Expulsions FY21**

CEO Island Childress referred the Board to the Annual Report on Suspensions and Expulsions at UCCS which was submitted to CPS per UCCS' Renewal Contract in July 2021 and included in the Board Book at page 10-11, noting that there were very few suspensions and no expulsions in FY21.

**Special Report: Woodlawn Campus Athletic Field Development (5:46 p.m.)**

Board Vice President Dean Gorman-Smith introduced Krystal McDoom of the University of Chicago Capital Projects Team and Leigh Breslau, University Architect who presented an overview of possible scope of work and potential designs for the proposed Woodlawn Athletic Field. The presentation is included in the Board Book at pages 12 to 33, attached. The proposal includes an artificial turf multi-use outdoor field, suitable for football, soccer, field hockey and lacrosse, with a surrounding jogging path and free-standing exercise equipment. Bleachers, a storage shed and a scoreboard are included in the proposal. The Board discussed the soil conditions, the range of surface types, field lighting and the possibility of shot-put and long jump accommodations. Mr. Breslau emphasized that the Field, by design, would not be a locked down facility, but would be open to the community. Ms. McDoom reviewed the timeline for the stages of schematic design, base scope and extras pricing exercise and the future development of more detailed drawings once design elements settled. A construction date of Fall 2022 was discussed. The Redevelopment Agreement was extended from the original opening date to Feb. 2021 to Feb 2024. The Board discussed the possibility of rentals of the field by AYSO and similar entities but conceded that such revenue activities might be precluded by the RDA. The Board also discuss fundraising efforts, and that the project's groundbreaking will not occur until certain funds are in hand. Discussion of multiple concepts which could enhance the project to funders were discussed.

**VI. a. Action Item: Approve Advisory Council Slate Appointing Chair and Vice Chair (6:05 p.m.)**

Vice President Dean Gorman-Smith advised the Board that the slate of Officers, scheduled for the May Annual Meeting had been moved to the September Meeting, and that she was recommending that she be appointed Chair of the Council, with Patrice Ziegler appointed as Vice Chair. Ms. Callow-Wright made a motion to adopt the slate as presented, Ms. Vasquez seconded the motion, and all seven Board members present voted in favor.

**VI. b. Action Item: Approve Amended Student Code of Conduct (6:08 p.m.)**

CEO Island Childress advised the Board that the UCCS Student Code of Conduct had required an amendment to align with new Illinois law protecting students from discipline related to hairstyles traditionally associated with certain ethnicities, and allowing reinstatement of expelled or suspended students to occur timely even if parents did not attend the reinstatement meetings. Ms. Callow-Wright moved to adopt the Amended Student Code of Conduct as presented in the Board Book at pages 35 to 75, and Vice President Dean Gorman-Smith seconded the motion. All seven Board members present voted in favor of the amendment to the Student Code of Conduct.

**Executive Session**

At approximately 6:10 p.m. Ms. Callow-Wright moved to enter executive session to discuss a personnel matter as allowed by the Open Meetings Act exceptions clause, and Ms. Ziegler seconded the motion.

All Board members present in person and via zoom voted in favor, and the Board entered into Executive Session.

**Return to Open Session and Motion**

At approximately 6:45 p.m. the Board returned to Open Session. Ms. Callow-Wright made a motion to approve a restructuring of certain positions at the Woodlawn Campus, and Ms. Ziegler seconded the motion. All seven Board Members present voted in favor of the motion.

**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 Sept. 30 Meeting at 6:49 p.m.

FINAL Minutes 30 Sept. 2021 Regular Meeting FINAL APPROVED 18 NOV 2021