

**Holyoke Community Charter School  
2200 Northampton Street  
Holyoke, MA 01040  
Board of Trustees**

**Minutes of HCCS Board of Trustees Meeting – August 24, 2022**

In Attendance: Jay Breines, Cynthia Dennis, Leona Florek, Li-Jun Ma, Lina Rivera

Guests: Sonia Correa Pope, Mahdi Kansou, Tom Paquin, Vanessa Pileggi, Maria Rodriguez, Robert Todisco, Bettina Toner

Not Present: Janine Kent, Rafael Rodriguez, Jean Swinney

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I. Meeting called to order at 5:04 p.m. by Leona Florek.  
Public comments/none.

II. **Approval of Minutes**  
**Li-Jun Ma moved to approve the minutes of the July 27, 2022 regular meeting. Seconded by Lina Rivera. Each member voted by roll call. Breines – Aye, Dennis – Aye, Florek – Abstain, Ma – Aye, Rivera – Aye. The motion passed.**

Leona Florek explained that she would have the Facilities Report and New Business placed at the top of the meeting, to allow the guest presenters to go first.

III. **Facilities**  
Rob Todisco updated the board on the gymnasium project. He reported that the steel structure of building has been erected and showed the board members a picture of the progress; construction of the structure for the classroom spaces will be next. He reviewed the budget with the board, noting a request for a change order for underground storm water systems, which have old/failing catch basins. He recommended to repair seven of the catch basins at a cost of \$13,522. The board discussed the need. Rob also reported that the fire protection contractor found a more efficient way to tap into the main building supply lines near the gym which would result in a \$10,254 credit although it was not yet approved.

**Cynthia Dennis motioned to approve change order for catch basin repair up to \$13,522 amount. Seconded by Li-Jun Ma. Each member voted by roll call. Breines – Aye, Dennis – Aye, Florek – Aye, Ma – Aye, Rivera – Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

Rob Todisco exited the meeting at 5:16 pm

IV. **New Business**

- Contract documents from Krokidas & Bluestein, LLC

Bettina Toner introduced herself as a lawyer with Krokidas & Bluestein, LLC. She gave background on the process by which the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) reviews management agreements with charter schools and outside management organizations and the role of Krokidas & Bluestein in bringing the management agreement into

compliance with the law and DESE expectations. Krokidas & Bluestein have revised the existing agreement between HCCS and SABIS to incorporate DESE comments and that encompass best practices. A clean version and a red line version draft were created, as this needs to be a revision and DESE will want to track the changes made. Both versions of the draft were provided to the board members to review and give feedback. She explained that the next step will be for Krokidas & Bluestein to incorporate the feedback and then provide SABIS and their legal representation with the draft; once the parties agree, it will then be sent to DESE, who may provide more feedback. The board will vote to approve the final agreement.

Bettina then asked the board for any questions/feedback. The board provided feedback and discussed the following areas: section 4 referring to high school data, levels of oversight and duties of the board of trustees, and procurement vs. ownership of insurance policies.

**Cynthia Dennis motioned to approve the management agreement as presented by Krokidas & Bluestein, LLC and allow them to move forward in providing the draft to SABIS legal counsel. Seconded by Jay Breines. Each member voted by roll call. Breines – Aye, Dennis – Aye, Florek – Aye, Ma – Aye, Rivera – Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

Bettina stated that she will make the changes and then provide to Leona Florek for final review. She will then provide to Raphier Pellegrino (SABIS legal counsel) and Mahdi Kansou. Bettina left the meeting at 5:42 pm.

V. **Board Reports**

**Board Mail/Folder**

None

**Finances**

Cynthia Dennis and board members reviewed the financial reports for July and found no issues. Maria Rodriguez reported financial audit is taking place this week. **Cynthia Dennis motioned to approve the financial report for July. Seconded by Lina Rivera. Each member voted by roll call. Breines – Aye, Dennis – Aye, Florek – Aye, Ma – Aye, Rivera – Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

VI. **Old Business**

N/A

VII. **New Business (continued)**

- **Vote to approve updated Promotion/Retention Policy**  
Dr. Sonia Correa Pope presented the updated policy to the board. The board discussed the policy, it's implications for student retention, the school's steps for communicating with students/parents of academic progress throughout the year, and supports and opportunities for students to improve their grades along the way (tutoring, SL study groups, etc.). The board further discussed the school's retention policies. Li-Jun Ma requested the data for the 100 students who attended summer school displaying their average before

summer school compared to their average after summer school. Jay Breines asked that the title be changed to "HCCS Promotion/Retention Policy".

**Cynthia Dennis motioned to adopt the new promotion/retention policy. Seconded by Lina Rivera. Each member voted by roll call. Breines – Aye, Dennis – Aye, Florek – Aye, Ma – Abstain, Rivera – Aye. The motion passed.**

- Discussion of Parent Connection Liaison position

Dr. Sonia Correa Pope reiterated that the current Parent Connection liaison is leaving after 17 years. A new parent who is interested and interviewed for the position has been recruited and is now being trained by the exiting staff member. She explained that this is a board appointed position as the point person for the parent connection (10 hours a week for \$15/hour). The board discussed a need to create an evaluation/set of goals for this position in order to assess performance and asked Sonia to create a written list of job expectations with a focused framework to enable the board to perform an annual review of the liaison. The board also discussed an increase in the compensation for the position.

**Jay Breines motioned to increase the compensation for the Parent Liaison position to \$20/hour. Seconded by Cynthia Dennis. Each member voted by roll call. Breines – Aye, Dennis – Aye, Florek – Aye, Ma – Aye, Rivera – Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

Sonia stated that she would bring the new Parent Connection Liaison to the September meeting to introduce her to the board members.

VI. **Administrative Reports/School Director**

Director's Report - Dr. Sonia Correa Pope, reported:

- Enrollment is on target at 705; reviewed summer recruitment efforts; marketing firm created promotional videos and will be creating a first day of school video
- Academic Update: retention numbers reviewed; parent communication
- Administrative Update: reviewed staff vacancies
- Facilities: paving will be done in September and walls on new building will be constructed soon
- Upcoming events reviewed

Leona Florek asked about the status of masking at the school. Dr. Sonia Correa Pope reported that the Commission of Education has announced it is optional; except in the case of testing positive, which requires five days of quarantine with mask wearing until negative result.

**Lina Rivera motioned to adjourn the meeting. Cynthia Dennis seconded. Each member voted by roll call. Breines – Aye, Dennis – Aye, Florek – Aye, Ma – Aye, Rivera – Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

**The meeting adjourned at 6:41 p.m.**

*As prepared by Elizabeth Pawlowski*  
Respectfully submitted,  
Jean Swinney  
Holyoke Community Charter School Board of Trustees

MEETING ATTACHMENTS  
July 24, 2022 Meeting Minutes  
Monthly Financial Report