

# Maine Charter School Commission

## **December 4, 2018 Business Meeting Minutes Approved by Commission Vote on February 5, 2019**

The Maine Charter School Commission held a regular Business Meeting at the **Burton M. Cross Office Building**, Room #103A, on **Tuesday, December 4, 2018**

### **1. Call to Order and Declare a Quorum**

The meeting was called to order by Commission Chair, Dr. Mike Wilhelm, at 9:32am and a quorum was declared.

Commission members present were: Dr. Mike Wilhelm, Chair; John Bird, Vice Chair; Dr. Fern Desjardins; Shelley Reed; Jim Rier; Jana Lapoint and Laurie Pendleton.

Also present were Bob Kautz, Gina Post, and Amy Allen.

### **2. Members of the Public Are Asked to Sign In**

Dr. Mike Wilhelm reminded those present to sign-in if they had not already done so.

Members of the public present were: Tonya Arnold (*Maine Academy of Natural Sciences*); Roger Brainerd (*MACS*); Judith Jones (*MACS*); Nathan Cloutier (*Eaton Peabody*); Chase Jackson (*PretiFlaherty*); Tom Tracy (*Umbrella Preschool*); Vicki Wallack (*Maine School Management Association*); Dan Allen (*Maine Education Association*); Kelli Pryor – 9:42am (*Baxter Academy for Technology and Science*); Carrie Branson – 9:46am (*Harpswell Coastal Academy*); Travis Works – 9:53am (*Cornville Regional Charter School*); and Cheryl Clukey – 10:51am (*MACS*).

### **3. Reminders:**

- ✓ **This meeting is being recorded.**
- ✓ **Please turn your cellphones to silent or vibrate.**
- ✓ **Private conversations should be held in the hallway and not during the meeting.**

### **4. To Consider Action Relative to Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda**

None

### **5. To Act Relative to Accepting as Printed the Minutes of the November 6, 2018 Business Meeting.**

No discussion.

**Moved by Shelley Reed; seconded by John Bird and voted unanimously by those present** to accept as printed the minutes of the November 6, 2018 Business Meeting.

### **6. To Accept FY19 Budget vs. Actual – December Report**

A copy of the November report was distributed for review.

**Moved by Shelley Reed; seconded by Jim Rier and voted unanimously as follows** to accept the FY19 Budget vs. Actual – December Report.

**7. OLD BUSINESS**

**7a. To Consider and Approve Office Support Proposal**

A copy of the proposal was distributed for review and consideration. Staff will seek assistance from staffing agency in finding a candidate to fill Office Assistant I position for 25 hours per week, up to \$14.55 hourly. If efforts are unsuccessful a proposal for Office Assistant II with additional duties and higher rate of pay will be brought to the Commission for consideration.

**Moved by Shelley Reed; seconded by Jim Rier and voted unanimously by those present to** approve office support proposal.

**7b. To Consider and Approve Graduation Study Proposal**

A copy of the Graduation Study proposal submitted by Lisa Plimpton was distributed for review and consideration.

**Moved by Jim Rier; seconded by Shelley Reed and voted unanimously by those present to** approve graduation study proposal.

**7c. To Consider and Approve Finance Analyst Proposal**

A copy of the Finance proposals submitted by Joe Drago were distributed for review and consideration. Jana Lapoint indicated that the Commission should consider an outside financial audit at renewal.

**Moved by Laurie Pendleton; seconded by John Bird and voted unanimously by those present to** approve finance analyst proposal.

**8. NEW BUSINESS**

**8a. To Consider and Accept First Reading of New Performance Framework**

A copy of the new Performance Framework was distributed for review and discussion.

**Moved by Laurie Pendleton; seconded by John Bird and voted unanimously by those present to** accept first reading of new performance framework.

**8b. To Consider and Approve Cornville Regional Charter School's Work at Home Days Proposal**

A copy of the Request to Amend School Schedule was distributed for review and consideration. Motion to allow 5 days which includes one retroactive day from early October when facilities had to be moved.

**Moved by Shelley Reed; seconded by John Bird and voted as follows: 6 – Yes; 1 – Abstain (Dr. Fern Desjardins)** approve Cornville Regional Charter School's Work at Home Days Proposal.

**8c. To Consider and Approve Maine Academy of Natural Sciences' Work at Home Days Proposal**

A copy of the Request to Amend School Schedule was distributed for review and consideration.

**Moved by Laurie Pendleton; seconded by John Bird and voted as follows: 6 – Yes; 1 – Abstain (Dr. Fern Desjardins)** to approve Maine Academy of Natural Sciences' Work at Home Days Proposal.

MeANS request read as follows – "MeANS is requesting authorization to use remote learning plans on extreme weather days when we anticipate school cancelation and have alternate learning plans in place for students to complete remotely from home." Motion to amend the approval to include a 5-day limit on the number of allowable days.

**Moved by Laurie Pendleton; seconded by John Bird and voted unanimously by those present to** approve Maine Academy of Natural Sciences' Work at Home Days Proposal with a limit of 5 allowable days.

**8d. To Consider and Approve ACADIA Academy's 2017-2018 Annual Monitoring Report**

A copy of the Annual Monitoring Report was distributed for review and consideration. Laurie Pendleton, ACADIA Academy Commission Liaison, shared the following commendations and concerns from the report:

Commendations

- Pursuing food service options
- Pursuing additional outdoor space
- Beginning final phase of construction on facility
- Strong use of data to inform and support instruction
- Strong focus on mission and vision

Concerns

- Resignation of both administrators at the end of the 2017-18 school year
- Student academic growth

**Moved by Jim Rier; seconded by John Bird and voted unanimously by those present to** approve ACADIA Academy's 2017-2018 Annual Monitoring Report.

**8e. To Consider and Approve Baxter Academy for Technology and Sciences' 2017-2018 Annual Monitoring Report**

A copy of the Annual Monitoring Report was distributed for review and consideration. Jana Lapoint, Baxter Academy for Technology and Sciences Commission Liaison, shared the following commendations and concerns from the report:

Commendations

- Increased survey participation
- Successful transition into new school facility

Concerns

- Restructuring of administration
- Transition to new leadership

**Moved by Jana Lapoint; seconded by Jim Rier and voted unanimously by those present to** approve Baxter Academy for Technology and Sciences' 2017-2018 Annual Monitoring Report.

**8f. To Consider and Approve Cornville Regional Charter School's 2017-2018 Annual Monitoring Report**

A copy of the Annual Monitoring Report was distributed for review and consideration. Shelley Reed, Cornville Regional Charter School Commission Liaison, shared the following commendations and concerns from the report:

Commendations

- Opening of two additional facilities and addition of grade levels
- Active governing board
- Safety- safety plans, cameras, teacher awareness, drills and meeting with sheriff

Concerns

- Rate of teacher and staff turnover
- Chronic absenteeism
- Lack of appropriate reporting of behavior incidents in state reporting system
- Timely completion of new facility renovations
- Small governing board

- Clarity of leadership team- roles, responsibilities, skill development, at building level, curriculum level and district level
- Follow through of Strategic Design
- Follow through of IEP development and staff to carry out appropriate plans
- Consistency of RTI process across all levels

**Moved by Shelley Reed; seconded by John Bird and voted unanimously by those present to approve Cornville Regional Charter School's 2017-2018 Annual Monitoring Report.**

**8g. To Consider and Approve Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences' 2017-2018 Annual Monitoring Report**

A copy of the Annual Monitoring Report was distributed for review and consideration. Shelley Reed, former Review Team Chair for Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences, shared the following commendations and concerns from the report:

Commendations

- Active board subcommittees
- Smooth transition to new board chair
- Dedication to mission is evident in the hiring of an integrative arts and science teacher
- Plan to increase hours of math specialist support
- Increased arts experiences
- Clear Education Board Committee Goals
- Diversity Committee is addressing tough issues
- School has invoked many strategies to improve math achievement and growth such as professional development, RTI, instructional time moved up and implementation of a new curriculum
- School has identified attendance issues such as distance, family issues, previous school attendance and are formulating policies
- Special Ed moving from reactive to proactive with PBIS
- Working on increasing teacher benefits to be competitive with district schools
- Getting clear on branding message directed to enrolling families
- Addition of school counselor

Concerns

- Low attendance rate/chronic absenteeism
- Ongoing need to plan for space utilization
- Student Academic Growth

**Moved by Shelley Reed; seconded by John Bird and voted unanimously by those present to approve Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences' 2017-2018 Annual Monitoring Report.**

**8h. To Consider and Approve Harpswell Coastal Academy's 2017-2018 Annual Monitoring Report**

A copy of the Annual Monitoring Report was distributed for review and consideration. Laurie Pendleton, Commission Liaison for Harpswell Coastal Academy, shared the following commendations and concerns from the report:

Commendations

- Dedication to project-based learning
- Meeting students' needs with standards-based education

Concerns

- Chronic absenteeism
- Low participation in MEA at some grade levels
- Student Academic Proficiency

**Moved by Shelley Reed; seconded by Jana Lapoint and voted unanimously by those present to approve Harpswell Coastal Academy's 2017-2018 Annual Monitoring Report.**

**8i. To Consider and Approve Maine Academy of Natural Sciences' 2017-2018 Annual Monitoring Report**

A copy of the Annual Monitoring Report was distributed for review and consideration. John Bird, Commission Liaison for Maine Academy of Natural Sciences, shared the following commendations and concerns from the report:

Commendations

- Implementation of the new Threshold program
- Increased emphasis on agriculture and forestry

Concerns

- Achievement gaps among subgroups
- Student academic proficiency

**Moved by Dr. Fern Desjardins; seconded by Laurie Pendleton and voted unanimously by those present to approve Maine Academy of Natural Sciences' 2017-2018 Annual Monitoring Report.**

**8j. To Consider and Approve Maine Virtual Academy's 2017-2018 Annual Monitoring Report**

A copy of the Annual Monitoring Report was distributed for review and consideration. Dr. Mike Wilhelm, Commission Liaison for Maine Virtual Academy, shared the following commendations and concerns from the report:

Commendations

- 50% decrease in student unenrollment during the school year from previous school year
- Dedication to increasing student attendance and engagement

Concerns

- Chronic absenteeism
- Student retention

**Moved by Dr. Mike Wilhelm; seconded by Shelley Reed and voted unanimously by those present to approve Maine Virtual Academy's 2017-2018 Annual Monitoring Report.**

**8k. To Consider and Approve Snow Pond Arts Academy's 2017-2018 Annual Monitoring Report**

A copy of the Annual Monitoring Report was distributed for review and consideration. John Bird, Commission Liaison for Snow Pond Arts Academy, shared the following commendations and concerns from the report:

Commendations

- After a challenging first year, Snow Pond Arts Academy successfully completed its second year.
- Strong leadership
- Engaged governing board

Concerns

- Attendance/Chronic absenteeism
- Student academic growth

**Moved by John Bird; seconded by Shelley Reed and voted unanimously by those present to approve Snow Pond Arts Academy's 2017-2018 Annual Monitoring Report.**

**8l. To Consider and Approve 2017-2018 Annual Report to the Commissioner**

A copy of the report was distributed for review and consideration.

On page 9, the following edits will be made prior to distribution - Essential Program S should read Essential Programs and Services and \$7,920 for per diem should read \$333,515 as it includes per diem, professional development and other costs to oversee public charter schools.

**Moved by John Bird; seconded by Jana Lapoint and voted unanimously by those present to** approve the 2017-2018 Annual Report to the Commissioner with noted edits.

**9. REPORTS**

**9a. Chair – Dr. Mike Wilhelm**

Dr. Wilhelm commended the Maine Association for Charter Schools for their recently hosted luncheon.

**9b. Vice Chair – John Bird**

John commended the Maine Association for Charter Schools for their recently hosted luncheon commenting that this was the first one he had been able to attend.

**9c. Executive Director – Bob Kautz**

Update on ACADIA Academy Administration

Bob reported that Brittiny-Rae Perron has been hired as permanent Executive Director and Principal and that Joe Mattos will continue consultation services. Consultation services are expected to continue throughout the school year.

Update on Baxter Academy for Technology and Science Administration

Bob shared that Rich Abramson has been hired as Senior Administrator and that the school is looking at its administrative structure going forward and expects that details will be available to share with the Commission in the immediate future.

**9d. Director of Program Management – Gina Post**

Update on Cornville Regional Charter School's Facilities

Move in to the Downtown building will begin the week of December 14<sup>th</sup> with the hope that move in will be complete on January 7<sup>th</sup>.

Cornville has hired a new Business Manager. Linda Belanger will replace Heather Neal who resigned last month.

Update on Next Steps for Maine Connections Academy's Renewal

The next step in the renewal process is completing the contract. Gina will be working on it in January. It is not expected that there will be many negotiations to the contract as Performance Framework isn't being created by the school.

Update on Maine Academy of Natural Sciences' Threshold Program

MeANS is considering increasing the size of Threshold for school year 20-21. The school was awarded a substantial grant that will help the school and would help the Threshold program expand. Staff is currently working with the school so it is prepared to submit an expansion proposal in the future.

Update on NACSA Technical Assistance Project

NACSA has selected MCSC for its last technical project for 2018. Gina is working with Heather Wendling of NACSA to prepare a site visit protocol. The second step of the project will likely be working to develop training materials for reviewers.

**10. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**10a. Turn in Expense Vouchers at the End of the Meeting**

**10b. Next Business Meeting Date – January 8, 2019**

**11. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Vicki Wallack from the Maine School Management Association asked why only one of the two virtual schools had an Annual Monitoring Report presented at the meeting. It was explained that this is the renewal year for Maine Connections Academy and that their Year 4 Performance Report was written and presented at an earlier meeting.

Roger Brainerd thanked those that were able to attend the Maine Association for Charter Schools recent luncheon. He also shared that he will be exhibiting at the Educate Maine Symposium which will be held in Portland on December 7<sup>th</sup>. Finally, he announced that the Hall of Flags event as part of National School Choice Week will be held on January 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Judith Jones commended the work done on the Performance Framework. She also shared the title of a recent report – “Opportunity Myth” - that is a good follow-up to the graduation study proposal. Judith also indicated that we need to be thinking about “advocacy in special ways”. She suggests that as a group a summary statement can be developed and made available to upcoming inquiries. Finally, she shared that cloture for bill titles is the middle of December and wonders if any bills will be proposed.

**12. ADJOURN – Meeting was adjourned at 11:36am.**

**Moved by Dr. Fern Desjardins; seconded by Shelley Reed and voted unanimously by those present to adjourn.**