APPROVED

Maine Charter School Commission

Minutes

Monthly Commission Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday October 10, 2023 at 1:00 PM

Location
Room #103, Cross Office Building, 111 Sewall Street, Augusta OR Zoom

The **Vision** of the Maine Charter School Commission is that "***All of Maine's children will have access to a vibrant ecosystem of diverse schools so that all of them can become happy, healthy and thriving citizens***."

The **Mission** of the Maine Charter School Commission is "***To authorize, monitor and develop unique public charter schools that provide a dynamic, superlative education for every student.***"

Reminders:

- This meeting is being recorded via Zoom.
- We ask members of the public to hold comments until public comments are heard.

Directors Present
Brian Langley (remote), James Ford (remote), Jim Handy, Leigh Albert (remote), Norm Higgins, Tom Keller, Tori Kornfield

Directors Absent
None

Directors who arrived after the meeting opened
James Ford

Directors who left before the meeting adjourned
Leigh Albert

Guests Present
Amy Allen (remote), Lana Ewing, Rachel Spell

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Norm Higgins called a meeting of the board of directors of Maine Charter School Commission to order on Tuesday Oct 10, 2023 at 1:06 PM.

C. To Consider the Approval of the 9/12/23 Commission Meeting Minutes

Jim Handy made a motion to approve the minutes from the Monthly Commission Meeting on 09-12-23.
Tori Kornfield seconded the motion.
A copy of the minutes was distributed for review and consideration.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Brian Langley	Aye
James Ford	Absent
Tom Keller	Aye
Norm Higgins	Aye
Tori Kornfield	Aye
Leigh Albert	Aye
Jim Handy	Aye

II. Comments from Commission Chair

A. Comments

Chair Higgins recognized the passing of Shelley Reid Bax and observed a moment of silence.

> "I can't think of anyone that I've worked with over the last 25 years that more exemplifies that commitment to youth. We always like to say people will be missed; she really will be missed."

The funeral will be held at 10am at the Wayne Community Church on Saturday.

III. Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda

A. Additions/Adjustments

Jim Handy made a motion to move Item 10a - To Consider the Approval of Maine Connections Academy's Renewal Application - to the top of the agenda.
Tori Kornfield seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Tom Keller	Aye
Norm Higgins	Aye
Leigh Albert	Aye
Tori Kornfield	Aye
James Ford	Absent
Jim Handy	Aye
Brian Langley	Aye

IV. New Business Requiring Approval and/or Acceptance

A. To Consider the Approval of Maine Connections Academy's Renewal Application

Tori Kornfield made a motion to approve Maine Connections Academy's Renewal as requested in the application submitted by the school.
Jim Handy seconded the motion.

- Lana stated that the commission was able to hear the testimony of staff, families, and students from the public hearing as well as read written emails that had been submitted in favor of the school.
- Staff recommendation was given for the approval.
- Tori shared that she is aware of the gains the school has made and stated that the school has done very well in improving.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Tori Kornfield	Aye
Norm Higgins	Aye
James Ford	Absent
Jim Handy	Aye
Tom Keller	Aye
Brian Langley	Aye
Leigh Albert	Aye

V. Committee Reports

A. School Performance Committee

Tori Kornfield - Chair, School Performance Committee - reported on the work being done by the Committee.

B. Finance Committee

Leigh Weisenburger Albert - Chair, Finance Committee - reported on the work being done by the Committee.

Leigh Albert left at 12:35 PM.

C. Executive Committee

Norm Higgins - Chair, Executive Committee - reported on the work being done by the Committee.

VI. Public Comment*

A. Public Comment

Joe Mattos, representing the Maine Alliance of Public Charter Schools, talked about Section 6 of the Performance Framework. This is the section that allows schools to create their own customized targets based on their mission and vision. The Alliance plans to work with schools to make these customized targets "rigorous" and wonders what the Commission's thoughts are on the rigor across the portfolio.

VII. Presentations

A. Maine Virtual Academy

Dr. Melinda Brown, Head of Maine Virtual Academy

- Constantly referring to school mission and vision, want to win students/families over to their mission/vision by providing excellent service for them with constant communication and offering of resources.
- 96% retention rate last year, trying to improve. Communication is main tool.
- Individualized, continuous cycle of assessment, instruction, and remediation.
- Students receive on demand tutoring in any subject.
- Offer of mix of activities and clubs.

James Ford arrived at 1:48 PM.

VIII. Executive Director/Commission Staff Report

A. School Updates

- Harpswell Coastal Academy - As previously noted, the school closed on 6/30/23. They are in the final stages of their FY23 audit and anticipate excess funds around $160,000. Currently the challenge is determining who the funds should be sent to. Lana is working with the MDOE for clarification and will continue to keep the Commission updated.
- Maine Connections Academy - Held an in person Open House for students and families at their location in Scarborough. The school reports a "great turnout" for the event and shared that a student traveled from Millinocket to attend.
- ACADIA Academy - Spent some time over the summer redesigning certain areas of the school to make it more functional for students and staff. They are also engaged in the Building Assets Reducing Risks (BARR) program. Commission staff are anxious to hear more about the program and will share with the Commission as updates become available.
- Maine Arts Academy - Started the school year in its new facility and reports that the opening "has been smoother than it's ever been". They are hosting a college fair later this month and their ribbon cutting ceremony is scheduled for 10/11/23 at 2:00pm.

B. Organizational Updates

- We are on track to release the new charter school application in mid-November. NACSA reviewed the existing application and provided feedback. There are no major content overhauls and the application was described as "comprehensive and rigorous". Lana will take the feedback, incorporate it, and share the final version with Commission members before it's released.
- The SY2022-23 Annual Monitoring Reports are on track to be presented to the Commission for review in November. The reports will not include academic outcomes as the MDOE has not yet released the results of the Spring Through Year Assessment.
- Staff are working behind the scenes to move all Commission and Committee-related documents to the BoardOnTrack platform.
- Lana will be traveling to Oakland, California later this month to attend the annual NACSA Leadership Conference. While there she will be co-presenting about "Values Based Authorizing" with Naomi Deveaux from the National Charter Schools Institute (NCSI). Lana will share a copy of the PowerPoint presentation when it's available.
- Due to the delayed release of Spring state assessment data, the School Performance Committee agreed to extend the NWEA MAP Assessment testing waiver for an additional school year. The schools that requested the waiver are ACADIA Academy, Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences, and Maine Connections Academy. Staff will revisit the waiver after looking at the data in the Spring of 2024.

- Staff is working with NCSI to design a self-evaluation for Commission members. This evaluation will take 15-20 minutes to complete. NCSI will compile the results and present them to the Commission. These results will help drive further Professional Development as well as the Strategic Plan.

C. Media Updates

None

IX. Monthly School Portfolio/Data Report

A. Monthly School Portfolio/Data Report

None

X. Unfinished Business

A. Unfinished Business

None

XI. New Business Requiring Notification to the Commission (No formal action to be taken by Commission)

A. New Governing Board Members

Baxter Academy for Technology and Science - Daniel Mickool
Ecology Learning Center - Randy Fox

B. Board Member Resignations

Community Regional Charter School - Seth Noonkester

Two long-time members of the Maine Virtual Academy Governing Board resigned in September -- Amy Carlisle and Peter Mills. Chair Higgins shared the following and thanked them for their many years of service to students and families in Maine:

"Amy Carlisle's vision of MeVA endures. Over the past ten years, Amy was most concerned about all the people: students, families, teachers, and staff. Amy was instrumental in setting the priorities that helped MeVA grow and thrive."

"Peter Mills' guidance was instrumental to MeVA's academic success. The school will remember the Board Meeting in winter of 2020 in which he gave clear direction to maintain the school's commitment to the assessment calendar, specifically administering the NWEA MAP Growth three times during the school year. The school has never regretted following his advice!"

C.

Board Member Term Outs

None.

XII. Next Month's Topics

A. Next Month's Topics

- To Receive and Place on File the 2022-23 Annual Monitoring Reports
- To Consider the Approval of Maine Virtual Academy's Request to Increase Enrollment

XIII. Announcements

A. Important Dates

- 10-11-23 at 2:00pm/Maine Arts Academy Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

B. Next Regular Business Meeting

- November 14th at 1:00pm/Maine Academy of Natural Sciences, 13 Easler Road, Hinckley and by Zoom

XIV. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 2:34 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Norm Higgins

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* The Charter School Commission does not allow airing of complaints in public meetings regarding Commission and charter school employees or school employment matters, in order to protect employee privacy, to comply with Maine law and pursuant to our contractual relation with the schools. To the extent that the Commission receives complaints and concerns relating to school employees in writing, those concerns will be reviewed and addressed by the Commission and its staff outside of a public meeting. This meeting is not the appropriate forum for such comments. You are free to direct your concerns in writing to the Commission's Executive Director, if you have not done so already.