APPROVED

Maine Charter School Commission

Minutes

Monthly Commission Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday October 8, 2024 at 1:00 PM

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

The **Vision** of the Maine Charter School Commission is that ***"Innovative public charter schools will provide Maine students with an equitable opportunity for an excellent education where students are valued, supported and challenged."***

The **Mission** of the Maine Charter School Commission is ***"To authorize, monitor and support innovative public charter schools that provide a dynamic, high-quality 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.

Any person seeking special accommodation for the public meeting should contact Sue Whipkey at (207)816-2187 or susan.whipkey@maine.gov.

Directors Present

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

Directors Absent
Leigh Albert

Guests Present
Amy Allen (remote), Lana Ewing, Susan Whipkey (remote)

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 8, 2024 at 1:03 PM.
Tom read the Commission's Mission and Vision statements.

C. To Consider the Approval of the 9/10/24 Commission Meeting Minutes

Jim Handy made a motion to approve the 9/10/24 Commission Meeting Minutes.
Tori Kornfield seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

II. Comments from Commission Chair

A. Comments

Lana and Norm met with the Maine Alliance of Charter Schools. The discussion focused on the effective marketing of Charter Schools.

III. Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda

A. Additions/Adjustments

None

IV. Committee Reports

A. School Performance Committee

Tori reported that the Committee reviewed and discussed the following:

- Renewal applications for Ecology Learning Center (ELC) and Maine Virtual Acadamy (MeVA). The Committee recommends renewal for both schools.
- SY23-24 Enrollment/Unenrollment data.

B. Finance Committee

Lana reported the Finance Committee reviewed the following:

- The financial portions of the ELC and MeVA renewal applications. The Committee supports renewal.
- Joe Drago's report on 4th Quarter Financials.
- Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (MEANS) budget gaps and concerns around enrollment.
- Post Covid Analysis of Non-subsidy funding. On average schools are retaining about 80% of funds received during the Covid years.

C. Executive Committee

Norm reported the Committee discussed the following:

- MEANS financial situation and possible solutions and opportunities the school might pursue.
- Marketing opportunities and effective communication with the Legislature.

V. Public Comment*

A. Public Comment

Nicki Reinholdt and Travis Works from Community Regional Charter Schools (CRCS) provided a status report on their work exploring options for a new facility. They have contracted with Raymond James to review financing options, Highmark for project development and Ben Lund for legal advice. They have determined they need a 45K square foot building to house all students with 25 acres and public water/sewer. Raymond James is completing feasibility studies.

VI. Executive Director/Commission Staff Report

A. School Updates

Lana provided the following school updates:

- Maine Connections Academy has moved to their new location in South Portland.
- MEANS has completed fall intensives, project based academic programming including outdoor activities and field trips.
- Maine Arts Academy held their first art show of the year at Blanchard Art Gallery in Hallowell.
- The work for closure of Harpswell Coastal Academy is nearing completion.

B. Organizational Updates

Lana reported the following:

- MCSC is on track to receive the New School Applications in February. There are currently seven Letters of Intent as one organization withdrew.
- Norm and Lana met with David Hartman of Venn Education LLC to discuss Norm's role in the New School Application process. Norm will ensure an unbiased review by the Committee who will perform the same review steps for each applicant.
- Lana attended the Edunomics course at Georgetown.
- The staff is working on the Annual Monitoring Reports to present at the November Commission Meeting.
- Lana will be on temporary leave in November.

C. Media Updates

VII. Monthly School Portfolio/Data Report

A. SY2023-24 Year End Unenrollment/Enrollment Data

Lana presented the Enrollment/Unenrollment data with the following takeaways:

- Overall, 485 (18%) students unenrolled which is comparable to the prior year.
- 5 schools retained more students, 4 lost more than previous year.
- Summer retention was higher than prior year.
- Students who enroll stay longer.

VIII. New Business Requiring Approval and/or Acceptance

A.

To Consider the Approval of Ecology Learning Center's Renewal Application

Tori Kornfield made a motion to approve Ecology Learning Center's Charter Renewal Application.
Jim Handy seconded the motion.
Leza Packard and Beth Alma spoke on behalf of the Ecology Learning Center's application. Lana gave a summary of the Renewal Package and provided the Staff recommendation for renewal.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

B. To Consider the Approval of Maine Virtual Academy's Renewal Application

Tori Kornfield made a motion to approve Maine Virtual Academy's Charter Renewal Application.
Jim Handy seconded the motion.
Melinda Browne and Donna Pelletier spoke on behalf of Maine Virtual Academy's application. Lana gave a summary of the Renewal Package and provided the Staff recommendation for renewal.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

IX. 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 2:54 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Norm Higgins

* 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.