APPROVED

Maine Charter School Commission

Minutes

Monthly Commission Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday August 12, 2025 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, Jim Handy, Norm Higgins, Tom Keller, Tori Kornfield

Directors Absent
Leigh Albert

Guests Present
Amy Allen, Lana Ewing, Susan Whipkey

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

James Ford joined at 1:10

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 Aug 12, 2025 at 1:05 PM.
Jim Handy read the Commission's Mission and Vision Statements.

C. To Consider the Approval of the 6/10/25 Commission Meeting Minutes

Jim Handy made a motion to approve the minutes from the Monthly Commission Meeting on 06-10-25.
Tori Kornfield seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

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

II. Comments from Commission Chair

A. Comments

Norm will chair the Commission today on interim basis.

III. Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda

A. Additions/Adjustments

- *None*

IV. Committee Reports

A. School Performance Committee

Tori reported the Committee discussed the following:

- The criteria and process guide for the Moxie Public Schools expansion.
- The Community Regional Charter School proposed facility move.
- The proposed calendar for the upcoming year.
- The Maine Arts Academy amendment to their mission statement due to the addition of the middle school.
- The proposed Professional Development opportunities for the upcoming year.
- The graduation requirements for Charter Schools and Public Schools.

B. Finance Committee

- No meeting in August

C. Executive Committee

- No Meeting in August

V. Public Comment*

A. Public Comment

- None

VI. Executive Director/Commission Staff Report

A. School Updates

Lana reported that the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences has hired Ryan Anthony as the new Head of School.

B. Organizational Updates

- Lana shared an end of year priorities reflection from the Commission staff and reported that the three major goals for SY24-25 were completed.
    - A new charter school was approved, Moxie Public Schools.
    - A new Commission strategic plan was finalized and implemented.

- The Commission structure to become a public instrumentality of the state was approved through legislation.
- Presenting the "Annual Report to the Commissioner" to the Education Committee was the only goal not realized during the year as the Committee wasn't able to fit it into their calendar. Tom suggested drawing on the legislative experience of several Commission members to determine topics the Education Committee should hear when the Commission gets a chance to present to them again. Tori responded that providing transparent, factual information about charter schools would go a long way. The more the Committee knows, the better.
- Lana reported that Moxie Public Schools has signed their contract. The School Performance Criteria reviewed and approved the process criteria the Commission will use to evaluate their expansion to additional campuses. Tori clarified the process will be used for any school seeking to expand.

- Amy provided a status update on the Commission's restructuring as a public instrumentality of the State. She informed that an EIN # has been obtained and the staff is in the process of choosing a bank. September 25th is the effective date to operate under the new structure.
- Lana gave an overview of upcoming Professional Development opportunities planned throughout the year with the following partners:
  - Board on Track will hold topical sessions for School Boards live and virtually.
  - PLT Strategies will hold session with Schools & School Boards on communication strategies and will also hold one for the Commission.
  - NWEA will hold 3 training sessions for school leadership on testing results analysis.
  - Naomi-Rubin Deveaux will hold a session for School Boards to check in on their short-term goals planning and another session for the Commission to review the progress on its strategic plan progress.
- Lana provided an update on the Community Regional Charter School facility location search. They are looking at a proposed location in Waterville to take the place of their buildings which are in need of replacing and will present data to address concerns in September. They have offered to host the September Commission meeting at their campus.
- Lana and Norm met with the new chair of the State Board of Education.
- Lana proposed the September Commission meeting will be held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month but starting in October, the meetings will be held on the 2nd Wednesday each month to align with the new State Board of Education meeting schedule.
- End of Year meetings with all the schools are being held to review the performance outcome submissions. The conversations will inform the writing of the annual reports.

C.

Media Updates

VII. New Business Requiring Approval and/or Acceptance

A. To Consider the Appointment of Leigh Weisenburger-Albert as Chair of the Maine Charter School Commission

Tori Kornfield made a motion to appoint Leigh Weisenburger-Albert as Chair of the Maine Charter School Commission.
Jim Handy seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

B. To Consider the Appointment of Tom Keller as Vice Chair of the Maine Charter School Commission

Jim Handy made a motion to appoint Tom Keller as Vice Chair of the Maine Charter School Commission.
Tori Kornfield seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

C. To Receive and Place on File Addendums to the SY2023-24 Annual Monitoring Reports Financial Management & Viability Outcomes

Jim Handy made a motion to to receive and place on file addendums to the SY2023-24 Annual Monitoring Reports Financial Management & Viability Outcomes.
Tori Kornfield seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Tori Kornfield	Aye
Leigh Albert	Absent

Roll Call

Norm Higgins	Aye
Jim Handy	Aye
James Ford	Absent
Brian Langley	Aye
Tom Keller	Aye

D. To Consider the Approval of the Proposed Calendar of Meetings for the Year

Tori Kornfield made a motion to approve the proposed calendar of meetings for the year.
Jim Handy seconded the motion.
Lana presented a Commission meeting calendar proposal as follows:

- The September meeting at Community Regional Charter School.
- In Person meetings in October, November, February, April, May and June.
- Virtual meetings in January and May.
- No scheduled meetings in July, December and March.

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

Roll Call

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

E. To Consider the Approval of Maine Arts Academy's Request to Amend the School's Mission

Jim Handy made a motion to approve Maine Arts Academy's request to amend the School's Mission.
Tori Kornfield seconded the motion.
Lana noted the school has a slight change to its mission to add the middle school. The School Performance Committee reviewed this request during their meeting.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

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

A. New Governing Board Members

B. Board Member Resignations

- *Ecology Learning Center (Justin MacDonald)*

C. Board Member Term Outs

- *Ecology Learning Center (Beth Alma)*
- *Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences (Susan Doughty)*

IX. Future Topics

A. Future Topics

September

- Spring 2025 Panorama Survey Results Presentation
- FY25 Year End Reconciled Financials
- SY25-26 Commission Priorities
- Community Regional Charter School Presentation

October

- To Consider the Approval of ACADIA Academy's Renewal Application
- To Consider the Approval of Maine Arts Academy's Renewal Application

November

- To Receive and Place on File SY2024-25 Annual Monitoring Reports
- To Consider the Approval of the SY2024-25 Annual Report to the Commissioner

X. Announcements

A. Important Dates

The Maine Arts Academy Ribbon Cutting Ceremony will be hosted in May.

B. Upcoming Business Meeting(s)

XI. 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 2:02 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Norm Higgins

Documents used during the meeting

- SY 2024-2025 EOY Priorities Progress Report.pdf
- Central Maine charter school wins state competition.pdf
- From Screens to Streams_ Maine Connecti...pdf
- SY2023-24 Addendum - All.pdf
- SY 25-26 Commission Calendar (1).pdf
- MeAA Request to Amend the School's Mission Statement.pdf

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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.