APPROVED

# Maine Charter School Commission

# Minutes

## Monthly Commission Meeting

**Date and Time**
Wednesday May 13, 2026 at 1:00 PM

**Location**
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 sue@mainecharterschoolcommission.org*

**Directors Present**

Brian Langley (remote), James Ford (remote), Jim Handy (remote), Leigh Albert (remote), Tom Keller (remote)

**Directors Absent**
*None*

**Directors who arrived after the meeting opened**
James Ford

**Guests Present**
Amy Allen (remote), Jeremy Ray (remote), Lana Ewing (remote), Susan Whipkey (remote), Victoria Cohen (remote)

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## I. Opening Items

### A. Record Attendance

James Ford arrived at 1:50 PM.

### B. Call the Meeting to Order

Leigh Albert called a meeting of the board of directors of Maine Charter School Commission to order on Wednesday May 13, 2026 at 1:00 PM.

### C. To Consider the Approval of the 4/8/26 Commission Meeting Minutes

Jim Handy made a motion to approve the minutes from Monthly Commission Meeting on 04-08-26.
Tom Keller seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

| | |
|---|---|
| Brian Langley | Aye |
| Leigh Albert | Aye |
| James Ford | Absent |
| Jim Handy | Aye |
| Tom Keller | Aye |

## II. Comments From Commission Chair

### A. Comments

Leigh announced she is stepping down from the Commission at the end of June.
She appointed James Ford and Jim Handy to the ad-hoc nominating committee for future officers of the Commission.

## III. Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda

### A. Additions/Adjustments

- None

## IV. Committee Reports

### A. School Performance Committee

Tom reported the School Performance Committee discussed the following:

- Three applications for the Innovation Grant Funds, two from Maine Academy of Natural Sciences and one from Baxter Academy for Technology and Science.
- The Commission's FY27 Budget draft.
- The intervention plans for Fiddlehead School of Arts and Sciences and the Community Regional Charter School.
- Possible Commissioner member attendance at the NACSA Conference in Nashville this year.

### B. Finance Committee

Brian reported the Finance and Executive Committee discussed the following:

- The Commission's YTD Financials as of 3/31/2026.
- The Commission's FY27 Draft Budget - The Finance Committee supports advancement to the full Commission for vote.
- 7 Internal draft policies for approval by Commission. Both Committees support advancement to the full Commission for vote.
- The ACADIA Academy Standby Line of Credit Request for payroll coverage when State subsidy is delayed. The Finance Committee recommends approval of the $100,000 Line of Credit request.
- Innovation Fund Proposals -
  - Baxter Academy - $10,000 request to support its Launch Lab summer program. The Committee supports advancement to the full Commission for vote.
  - Maine Academy of Natural Science - The Finance Committee supported the School Performance Committee's recommendation to request more information on the following proposals from the school.
    - Stipend position for Chronic Absenteeism
    - Upgrades to woodshop for year-round use.

- Governance - With Leigh's departure, a succession plan and committee structures were discussed.

### C. Executive Committee

- See notes within the Finance Committee section above.

## V. Public Comment*

### A. Public Comment

Heather King from Maine Arts Academy thanked Jim Handy for his attendance at the school's recent Gala and reported a a great turnout. Meghan Rivard, the Maine Poetry Out Loud champion was featured on Maine Public Radio. The school has signed a new contract with a new auditor.

Jana Lapointe shared a remembrance for Jim Rier, a former Commissioner who recently passed away.

Anna Klein-Christie from Baxter Academy reported the school has selected a new audit firm. Students are working on a science project tied to the Smithsonian. Another student is featured in Start -up week for a trading algorithm he has developed.

## VI. Presentation(s)

### A. Moxie Public Schools

Beth Rabbitt, Chief Executive of MOXIE Public Schools provided an overview of the school's start up progress and readiness to open in the fall.

She explained that the core thesis for the school is that every student can thrive when learning is personal, connected, and purposeful and noted the school is a competency based academic school with focus on developing durable workforce skills. Students will graduate with an early college degree and a credential of value in the world of work. MOXIE also will strive to support community connected innovation and develop partnerships with other nonprofits and workforces and will be focused on providing evidence and data about the impact of the school model so that it can be shared. They envision one school with five connected learning sites throughout Central Maine.
They are currently readying their South Portland location for a fall 2026 opening and are actively enrolling students, aiming for 120 students in grades 6-9.
The school has raised $1.3M with another $900K in submitted proposals since approval and project cash on hand of just over $500K by the end of the first year. The school has made 6 hires with 5 positions remaining.

## VII. Executive Director/Commission Staff Report

### A. School Updates

Lana noted that Maine Connection Academy held it's National Honor Society induction ceremony. Walter Adams from MCA added the NHS students participate in fundraising for charity by holding and art auction and hold events where free movies from the National Archives are viewed.

### B. Organizational Updates

Lana welcomed new Commission members Superintendent Jeremy Ray and State Board member Vickie Cohen.

Lana reported the following:

- Lana and Amy attended a Carrabasset Valley public school committee meeting to share information about charter public schools.
- The transistion to public instrumentality is going well - Staff E-mail addresses will be changing to "name"@mainecharterschoolcommission.org.
- Community Regional Charter School and Maine Academy of Natural Sciences will be going through their 5-year contract renewal process. Work is kicking off this spring to prepare for an October 2026 vote. External experts will be used to support the Commission with quantitative and qualitative analysis.

### C. Media Updates

## VIII. New Business Requiring Approval and/or Acceptance

### A. To Consider the Approval of Baxter Academy for Technology and Sciences' Request of Innovation Funds for its Baxter Launch Lab Summer Program

Jim Handy made a motion to approve Baxter Academy for Technology and Sciences' request of Innovation Funds for its Baxter Launch Lab Summer Program.
Brian Langley seconded the motion.
Lana noted that Baxter is asking for $10K for its Launch Lab, a summer acceleration program to target intervention for incoming 9th grade math students.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

| | |
|---|---|
| James Ford | Aye |
| Leigh Albert | Aye |
| Jim Handy | Aye |
| Tom Keller | Aye |
| Brian Langley | Aye |

### B.

**To Consider the Approval of the Commission's Accounting and Capitalization Policy**

Jim Handy made a motion to approve the Commission's Accounting and Capitalization Policy.
Tom Keller seconded the motion.
Lana explained the staff is submitting seven internal policies for approval. As the Commission is now operating as a Public Instrumentality of the State, these policies are needed to guide internal operations. Staff received and incorporated feedback from Joe Drago, Finance Consultant and Sarah Forster, Maine's Assistant Attorney General. The Executive Committee reviewed each policy and the Finance Committee reviewed the four related to finance.
This policy establishes principles and procedures for recording, classifying and reporting the financial activities of the Commission.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

| **Roll Call** | |
|---|---|
| Leigh Albert | Aye |
| Tom Keller | Aye |
| Jim Handy | Aye |
| James Ford | Aye |
| Brian Langley | Aye |

**C. To Consider the Approval of the Commission's Audit and Financial Review Policy**

Jim Handy made a motion to approve the Commission's Audit and Financial Review Policy.
Tom Keller seconded the motion.
Lana explained this policy establishes the framework for the Commission's independent audit and internal financial review to ensure ongoing oversight and compliance with statute.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

| **Roll Call** | |
|---|---|
| James Ford | Aye |
| Tom Keller | Aye |
| Jim Handy | Aye |
| Leigh Albert | Aye |
| Brian Langley | Aye |

**D. To Consider the Approval of a Revision to the Commission's Paid Parental Leave Policy**

Jim Handy made a motion to approve a Revision to the Commission's Paid Parental Leave Policy.
Tom Keller seconded the motion.

This is a revision to the 2022 approved policy. The update incorporates changes related to the new Maine Paid Family and Medical Leave program which went into effect as of May 1st, 2026.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

| **Roll Call** | |
|---|---|
| Brian Langley | Aye |
| James Ford | Absent |
| Leigh Albert | Aye |
| Jim Handy | Aye |
| Tom Keller | Aye |

## E. To Consider the Approval of the Commission's Procurement and Purchasing Policy

Jim Handy made a motion to approve the Commission's Procurement and Purchasing Policy.
Brian Langley seconded the motion.
Lana explained this policy establishes the Commission's procurement process, aligns with the payment and signatory policy and establishes authority thresholds and procedures for purchasing goods and services.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

| **Roll Call** | |
|---|---|
| Tom Keller | Aye |
| James Ford | Aye |
| Brian Langley | Aye |
| Leigh Albert | Aye |
| Jim Handy | Aye |

## F. To Consider the Approval of the Commission's Technology Acceptable Use Policy

Jim Handy made a motion to approve the Commission's Technology Acceptable Use Policy.
Brian Langley seconded the motion.
Lana explained the policy establishes standards, expectations and staff responsibilities regarding the use of Commission technology. It is designed to protect the confidentiality, availability and integrity of Commission information and systems while supporting a fully remote work environment. This policy was drafted by the Commission's IT Management Company, TechResolv with changes incorporated by Sarah Forster, Maine Assistant AG.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

| **Roll Call** | |
|---|---|
| Brian Langley | Aye |
| Jim Handy | Aye |
| Tom Keller | Aye |
| Leigh Albert | Aye |
| James Ford | Aye |

## G. To Consider the Approval of a Revision to the Commission's Travel and Expense Reimbursement Policy

Jim Handy made a motion to accept the Commission's Travel and Expense Reimbursement Policy.
Brian Langley seconded the motion.
Lana explained that per recommendation of Sarah Forster, Maine Assistant AG, the policy now cites the U.S. General Services Administration's per diem lodging and meals rates.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

| **Roll Call** | |
|---|---|
| Tom Keller | Aye |
| James Ford | Aye |
| Brian Langley | Aye |
| Jim Handy | Aye |
| Leigh Albert | Aye |

## H. To Consider the Approval of the Commission Employee Handbook Policies

Jim Handy made a motion to approve the Commission Employee Handbook Policies.
Brian Langley seconded the motion.
Lana explained this incorporates a number of individual of policies and covers how employees are paid, benefits, whistleblower policies, etc. all included in an Employee Handbook.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

| **Roll Call** | |
|---|---|
| Brian Langley | Aye |
| Jim Handy | Aye |
| Leigh Albert | Aye |
| Tom Keller | Aye |
| James Ford | Aye |

## I. To Consider the Approval of ACADIA Academy's Request to Establish a Line of Credit

Brian Langley made a motion to approve ACADIA Academy's Request to Establish a Line of Credit.
Jim Handy seconded the motion.
Lana provided a brief summary of ACADIA Academy's request to secure a line of credit to enable them to fund payroll.  The draw can only be used if the MDOE monthly subsidy payment is delayed and the borrowed funds must be paid off as soon as the monthly payment is received.
Leigh flagged that the bank is Maine Community Bank, rather than Maine Communities Bank noted in the application.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

| | |
|---|---|
| Jim Handy | Aye |
| Brian Langley | Aye |
| James Ford | Aye |
| Tom Keller | Aye |
| Leigh Albert | Aye |

### J. To Consider the Approval of the Commission's FY27 Budget Proposal

Jim Handy made a motion to approve the Commission's FY27 Budget Proposal.
Brian Langley seconded the motion.
Lana provided a summary of the FY27 Budget proposal. She noted the School Performance, Finance and Executive Committees each reviewed and offered notes and feedback which were discussed and incorporated. The budget reflects $972,434 anticipated revenue and $923,852 anticipated expenses resulting in an anticipated increase in carryforward funds of $48,582. Revenue is higher this year mostly due to increased enrollments with the addition of MOXIE Public School. Overall expenses are consistent with last year, but reflect higher contracted services offset by a reduction in personnel and general operating costs. The budget emphasizes investment in professional development for school leaders, extra school technology costs to accommodate additional students at MOXIE Public Schools, and IT costs as the Commission completes its transition to a fully independent IT infrastructure.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

| | |
|---|---|
| Brian Langley | Aye |
| Leigh Albert | Aye |
| Tom Keller | Aye |
| Jim Handy | Aye |
| James Ford | Aye |

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

### A. New Governing Board Members

- *None*

### B. Board Member Resignations/Left the Board

- *Maine Arts Academy (John Neal)*

### C. Board Member Term Outs

- *None*

## X. Future Topics

### A. Future Topics

June

- Innovation Fund Proposals
- Annual Calendar

July

- No Meeting

## XI. Announcements

### A. Important Dates

**Graduation**

- *Saturday, May 30th at 11:00am - Baxter Academy for Technology and Science (Merrill Auditorium, Portland)*
- *Sunday, May 31st at 12:00pm - Maine Arts Academy (Augusta Civic Center)*
- *Thursday, June 4th at 5:00pm - Ecology Learning Center (MOFGA, 294 Crosby Brook Road, Unity)*
- *Friday, June 5th at 2:00pm - Maine Connections Academy (Merrill Auditorium, Portland)*
- *Friday, June 5th at 2:00pm - Maine Virtual Academy (Zoom)*
- *Friday, June 12th at 5:00pm - Fiddlehead School of Arts and Sciences (Norumbega Cidery, New Gloucester)*
- *Friday, June 12th at 6:00pm - Overman Academy (Skowhegan Opera House, 225 Water Street, Skowhegan)*
- *Friday, July 10th at 6:00pm - Maine Academy of Natural Sciences/Campus (13 Easler Road, Hinckley)*
- *Friday, July 17th at 6:00pm - Maine Academy of Natural Sciences/Threshold (13 Easler Road, Hinckley)*

**Professional Development**

- *Tuesday, May 19 (9:30-11:30am) - Planning for the Summer/Making the Most of the Summer Months - Zoom Only*
- *Wednesday, May 20 (1:00-30pm) - NWEA MAP Growth PD for Teachers - Zoom Only*

### B. Upcoming Business Meeting(s)

- *June 10, 2026 - Maine Academy of Natural Sciences, 13 Easler Road, Hinckley or Zoom*
- *July - No Meeting*

## XII. Closing Items

### A. Adjourn Meeting

Jim Handy made a motion to adjourn.
Brian Langley seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

| | |
|---|---|
| Brian Langley | Aye |
| Leigh Albert | Aye |
| Jim Handy | Aye |
| James Ford | Aye |
| Tom Keller | Aye |

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 2:55 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Leigh Albert

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**Documents used during the meeting**

- Election_of_Chair_and_Vice-Chair_of_the_Maine_Charter_School_Commission_-_Approved_8.13.24 (2).pdf
- Baxter Academy Summer Fund Request .docx.pdf
- DRAFT Accounting and Capitalization Policy (1).pdf
- DRAFT Audit and Financial Review Policy (1).pdf
- DRAFT Paid Parental Leave Policy.pdf
- DRAFT Procurement and Purchasing Policy (1).pdf
- DRAFT Technology and Acceptable Use Policy.docx.pdf
- DRAFT Travel & Expense Reimbursement Policy.docx (1).pdf
- DRAFT Commission Employee Handbook (1).pdf
- MCSC_Amendment_to_Incur_Debt_-_Acadia_Academy_-_04.08.26.pdf
- FY_MCSC_Budget_Proposal_Notes_04_29_2026.docx.pdf
- FY27_Budget_Draft.pdf

* 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.