APPROVED

Maine Charter School Commission

Minutes

Business Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday October 13, 2026 at 10:00 AM

Location
Randall Student Center Fireside Lounge, University of Maine Augusta, 46 University Drive, Augusta

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 Amy Allen at (207)592-6364 or amy@mainecharterschoolcommission.org

Directors Present

Brian Langley, James Ford (remote), Jeremy Ray, Jim Handy, Tom Keller, Victoria Cohen

Directors Absent
None

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

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Brian Langley called a meeting of the board of directors of Maine Charter School Commission to order on Tuesday Oct 13, 2026 at 10:03 AM.
Moment of Silence: The Chair noted the recent passing of Norm Higgins, a former member of the Commission who served two terms as Chair. The Commission observed a moment of silence in his memory.

C. To Consider the Approval of the 9/8/26 Commission Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes from Business Meeting on 09-08-26.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Brian Langley	Aye
James Ford	Aye
Jim Handy	Aye
Victoria Cohen	Aye
Tom Keller	Aye
Jeremy Ray	Aye

II. Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda

A. Additions/Adjustments

None were proposed.

III. Committee Reports

A. School Performance Committee

The School Performance Committee met via Zoom on Monday, October 5, 2026, at 9:00 a.m., with Tom Keller presiding. The Committee considered approval of the minutes from its September 1, 2026 meeting and staff led discussion of the renewal recommendations for Community Regional Charter School and Maine Academy of Natural Sciences.

B. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee met via Zoom on Tuesday, October 6, 2026, at 11:00 a.m., with Jim Handy presiding. The Committee considered approval of the minutes from its September 1, 2026 meeting. Staff presented the FY27 Financial Report Packet for year-to-date through August 2026. The packet included a summary, budget-to-actual spending, carryforward funds, the balance sheet, and statements and reconciliations for the operating and investment bank accounts. It also included the credit card statement dated August 25, 2026. Staff also reviewed the renewal recommendations for Community Regional Charter School and Maine Academy of Natural Sciences.

C. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee met via Zoom on Tuesday, October 6, 2026, at 1:00 p.m., with Brian Langley presiding. The Committee received reports from Tom Keller on the School Performance Committee and Jim Handy on the Finance Committee. The Committee considered approval of the minutes from its September 1, 2026 meeting. Staff led discussion of the renewal recommendations for Community Regional Charter School and Maine Academy of Natural Sciences.

IV. Public Comment*

A. Public Comment

Emanuel Pariser, a founder of the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (MeANS) and a current member of its Board, addressed the Commission. Mr. Pariser expressed his gratitude to the Commission and Commission staff for the thoughtfulness and support they showed throughout the school's renewal process.

V. Executive Director/Commission Staff Report

A. School Updates

There were no individual school updates this month.

B. Organizational Updates

Staff gave an overview of recent staff professional development. This included a September 23 session with Panorama on analyzing and using survey results, a September 30 meeting with the Maine DOE Finance and Federal teams, and an October 7 Leadership Cohort with Accelerate Education, a full-day, in-person training in Portland in which seven schools took part.

Lana will present on the Commission's Performance Framework at the MSMA Conference on October 30, and recognized the Maine Alliance for Public Charter Schools for hosting its first annual conference which will be held on October 23.

C. Media Updates

Two articles - "51 Maine Students Named National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists" and "County residents among Maine Connections Academy graduates" - were included in the packet for informational purposes. No discussion was held.

VI. New Business Requiring Approval and/or Acceptance

A. To Consider the Approval of Community Regional Charter School's Renewal Application

Jim Handy made a motion to renew the charter of Community Regional Charter School for a five-year term commencing July 1, 2027 and concluding June 30, 2032, subject to the two conditions set forth in Section 6 of the Renewal Recommendation; that the conditions take effect upon this vote and be incorporated into the renewed charter contract to be reviewed and signed no later than June 30, 2027.
Tom Keller seconded the motion.
Staff presented the Renewal Review Team's recommendation to renew the charter of Community Regional Charter School for a five-year term, July 1, 2027 through June 30, 2032, with two conditions.

The recommendation draws on the school's four-year Performance Framework record, the results of its Level 2 Intervention Plan, an independent analysis by Momentum Strategy & Research, the renewal application, the September 10 site visit, and testimony from the September 24 public hearing.

The Team noted strengths in reading proficiency and growth, graduation rates, school climate and family engagement, improving attendance, sound financial management, and mission fidelity. The Team noted concerns about mathematics, which has been rated Not Meeting throughout the charter term. Other concerns were growth that does not close proficiency gaps, chronic absenteeism (particularly at Overman), enrollment and student persistence, inconsistent classroom implementation of the school's ungraded model, instructional support capacity, and leadership sustainability.

The recommended conditions are (1) heightened oversight through quarterly Performance Framework meetings with school leaders and board representatives, including a mid-year site visit and two rounds of classroom observations at all three campuses each year, and (2) annual Performance Framework milestones over five years, leading to Meeting or better on all indicators of concern by Year 5.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call
Brian Langley Aye
Victoria Cohen Aye

Roll Call

James Ford	Aye
Tom Keller	Aye
Jim Handy	Aye
Jeremy Ray	Aye

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

Jim Handy made a motion to renew the charter of the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences for a five-year term commencing September 1, 2027 and concluding August 31, 2032, without conditions; and that the renewed charter contract be reviewed and signed no later than June 30, 2027.
Tom Keller seconded the motion.
Staff presented the Renewal Review Team's recommendation to renew the charter of the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences for a five-year term, July 1, 2027 through June 30, 2032, without conditions.

The recommendation draws on the school's four-year Performance Framework record, the renewal application, the school's FY25 surplus plan and enrollment strategy, the September 9 site visit, and testimony from the September 23 public hearing.

The Team noted strengths in mission fidelity, school climate and family engagement, student persistence and re-enrollment, post-secondary readiness, the Threshold Program, governance, and financial management. It also noted that the school outperformed its enrollment-recovery financial plan in FY25 and FY26. Areas where performance has not yet met expectations include chronic absenteeism, which has improved substantially but remains above target; Grade 10 mathematics; year-to-year inconsistency in state proficiency results; the state-reported graduation rate; and some financial sustainability measures. The Team found that the school had already identified each of these areas itself and has plans in place to address them, so conditions were not warranted.

The report sets out four advisory areas of continued focus: mathematics; chronic absenteeism; financial sustainability and enrollment growth; and visibility, marketing, and brand differentiation. These are not conditions of the renewed charter and will be tracked through the existing Performance Framework.

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

Roll Call

Jim Handy	Aye
James Ford	Aye
Tom Keller	Aye
Brian Langley	Aye
Victoria Cohen	Aye

Roll Call

Jeremy Ray Aye

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

A. New Governing Board Members

The Commission received notice that Maine Virtual Academy has appointed Erin Shanahan to its board of directors.

B. Board Member Resignations/Left the Board

None reported.

C. Board Member Term Outs

None reported.

VIII. Future Topics

A. Future Topics

The following future topics were included in the agenda for reference. No discussion was held.

November

- Presentation of Maine Connections Academy's Independent 3rd Party Evaluation
- Presentation by Unity Environmental University
- To Receive and Place on File SY2025-26 Annual Monitoring Reports
- To Receive and Place on File SY2025-26 Annual Charter School Report

December

- NO MEETING

IX. Announcements

A. Important Dates

The following events were included in the agenda for reference. No discussion was held:

- *Monday, January 25th (8:00am-12:00pm) - Charter Public School Day at the Hall of Flags*

The following professional development opportunities were included in the agenda for reference. No discussion was held:

- *Thursday, October 22nd (10:00-11:30am)/BoardOnTrack PD - "Governance and Fiduciary Duties"/Zoom*
- *Thursday, November 5th (10:00-11:30am)/PLT Strategies - "Communications and Advocacy 101"/Zoom*

B. Upcoming Business Meeting(s)

The following upcoming Business Meeting dates were included in the agenda for reference. No discussion was held:

- *Tuesday, November 10th (10:00am-12:00pm)*
- *Tuesday, January 12th (10:00am-12:00pm)*

X. 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 11:15 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amy Allen

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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.

As of September 24, 2025, state law reclassified the Maine Charter School Commission as "a public body corporate and politic and an incorporated public instrumentality of the State." This means the Commission is now its own legal entity within state government. It can act in its own name — entering into contracts, managing state, federal, and private funds, and employing its own staff — while remaining a public body that performs essential government functions and stays accountable to the State.