***September 14, 2021 Business Meeting Minutes Approved by Commission Vote on***

***October 14, 2021***

The Maine Charter School Commission held a Regular Meeting in person and via Zoom on

**Tuesday, September 14, 2021**

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| **Item Number** | **Agenda Item** |
| **1** | **Call to Order and Declare a Quorum** |
|  | The meeting was called to order by Commission Chair, Wilson Hess, at 1:02pm and a quorum was declared.  Commission members present were Wilson Hess, Nichi Farnham, Shelley Reed, Cynthia Murray-Beliveau, Dr. Fern Desjardins, and Jim Rier (via Zoom)  Also present were Jeremy Jones (via Zoom), Gina Post, Mackenzie Wagner (via Zoom) and Amy Allen (via Zoom) |
| **2** | **Reminders** |
| 2a | This meeting is being recorded via Zoom. |
| 2b | We ask members of the public to hold comments until public comments are being heard. |
| **3** | **Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda** |
|  | The Manpower presentation has been rescheduled to a future agenda. |
| **4** | **Public Comment\*** |
|  | Chair Hess welcomed Cynthia Murray-Beliveau to the Commission. Cynthia also serves on the State Board of Education.  Jana Lapoint shared that MEPRI has presented the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee with its list of studies that will be conducted and reported on and nothing related to LD 604 has been included in their work. She also asked about the Commission’s approved Strategic Plan and wondered which of the priority issues would be looked at before others, understanding that there are 5 listed priorities and they can’t all be tackled at once. Wilson shared that more information regarding the Strategic Plan would be shared later in the meeting. |
| **5** | **Presentations** |
|  | None |
| **6** | **Old Business** |
|  | None |
| **7** | **Requires Notification to and Acceptance by the Commission** |
| 7a | Appointment of Jana Lapoint to the Baxter Academy for Technology and Science’s Governing Board  **Moved by Shelley Reed; seconded by Dr. Fern Desjardins and voted unanimously by those present** to accept notification of the appointment of Jana Lapoint to the Baxter Governing Board.  Appointment of Whitney King to the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences’ Governing Board  **Moved by Shelley Reed; seconded by Dr. Fern Desjardins and voted unanimously by those present** to accept notification of the appointment of Whitney King to the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences’ Governing Board.  Appointment of Nicholas Gannon to the Maine Virtual Academy Governing Board  **Moved by Shelley Reed; seconded by Cynthia Murray-Beliveau and voted unanimously by those present** to accept notification of the appointment of Nicholas Gannon to the Maine Virtual Academy Governing Board.  Appointment of Anna Perkins to the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences’ Governing Board  **Moved by Shelley Reed; seconded by Cynthia Murray-Beliveau and voted unanimously by those present** to accept notification of the appointment of Anna Perkins to the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences’ Governing Board.  Resignation of Kim Whitman from the Maine Virtual Academy Governing Board  **Moved by Cynthia Murray-Beliveau; seconded by Shelley Reed and voted unanimously by those present** to accept notification of the resignation of Kim Whitman from the Maine Virtual Academy Governing Board. |
| 7b | To Consider and Accept FY21 Budget vs. Actual – End of Year Report   * FY21 results were a surplus of $74k, versus a budgeted $46k deficit. The largest saving was $50k in contingency. * The FY22 budgeted deficit is $151k, which will be funded by carryover. * The projected balance of carryover remaining at the end of FY22 is $257k.   **Moved by Shelley Reed; seconded by Cynthia Murray-Beliveau and voted unanimously by those present** to accept the FY21 Budget vs. Actual – End of Year Report. |
| **8** | **Requires Approval by the Commission** |
| 8a | To Consider and Approve Minutes from the July 13, 2021 Business Meeting  No discussion.  **Moved by Dr. Fern Desjardins; seconded by Shelley Reed and voted unanimously by those present** to approve the minutes from the July 13, 2021 Business Meeting. |
| 8b | To Consider and Approve Second Reading Remote Meeting Policy  A copy of the Remote Meeting Policy was distributed for review and discussion.  **Moved by Shelley Reed; seconded by Nichi Farnham and voted unanimously by those present** to approve the second reading of the Remote Meeting Policy with the policy going into effect immediately (September 14, 2021 at 1:30pm).  ***Note: Chair Hess declared that with the new policy now in effect, the meeting is being held under emergency conditions related to COVID and remote participation by Commission members is now allowed.*** |
| 8c | To Consider and Approve Moving the Date of the October Business Meeting  Jeremy introduced the Maine Charter School Commission Calendar that staff have been working on and shared that he and Gina will be traveling and participating in the National Charter Schools Institute A-GAME Convening from October 11-13. Given the October 11th holiday and prep time needed to complete required renewal documents, staff have requested moving the Business Meeting date from October 12th to October 14th which is still within the legally required window to take action on Renewal Applications.  **Moved by Nichi Farnham; seconded by Cynthia Murray-Beliveau and voted unanimously by those present and via roll call – Jim Rier (yes)** to approve moving the date of the October Business Meeting from October 12th to October 14th. |
| **9** | **Monthly School Portfolio/Data Report** |
| 9a | 2021-22 Preliminary School Enrollment  Amy shared that enrollment as of today, from the schools who have reported, is as follows:  ACADIA Academy – 253 students  Community Regional Charter School – 350 students  Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences – 187 students  Harpswell Coastal Academy – 181 students  Maine Academy of Natural Sciences – 173 students (115 on campus/58 Threshold)  Maine Connections Academy – 454 students (with over 200 on the wait list)  Maine Virtual Academy – 429 students  Amy reminded Commission members that October student enrollment counts must be certified by schools by October 15th so hopes to have those counts available to share at the November Business Meeting. |
| **10** | **Executive Director/Commission Staff Report** |
| 10a | Media Update   * [Maine Academy of Natural Sciences graduates 21 in Threshold program Friday](https://www.centralmaine.com/2021/07/23/maine-academy-of-natural-sciences-graduates-21-in-threshold-program-friday/) * [‘Sweet’ music in Lewiston: Acadia Academy students rehearse for “Willy Wonka The Musical”](https://www.sunjournal.com/2021/07/29/sweet-musical-in-lewiston/) * [Maine DOE Announces Over $2M in First Round of Innovative RREV Pilot Awards](https://mailchi.mp/maine/media-release-maine-doe-celebrates-april-as-the-month-of-the-military-child-1323648?e=4c60d2fd4a)   Jeremy shared his hope that Commission members have read the articles and will continue to celebrate the good work that’s being done in the charter schools. |
| 10b | Legislative Update  None |
| 10c | Renewal Update  Jeremy shared that renewal visits took place on September 8th and 9th and included meetings with the following focus groups – school leadership, governing board members, parents and families, students, and teachers and staff from both Community Regional Charter School and Maine Academy of Natural Sciences.  Staff is working on formal Site Visit Reports from those meetings and those reports will be shared with Commission members as renewal discussions begin. |
| 10d | School Opening Updates/COVID Protocols  Jeremy shared that staff called all schools together to discuss COVID protocols to begin the 2021-22 school year as well as to provide clarity on remote learning and what they should do if schools have close down.  Gina created a table that outlines the differences and similarities between how schools are handling these protocols and will share it with Commission members. A few highlights are as follows:   * All of the charter schools are requiring masking for students and staff; * Most are allowing guests or visitors/volunteers who are masked; * A few are providing synchronous or asynchronous learning to students who are out sick or quarantining; and * Most of the brick and mortar schools are participating in the “pool testing”. |
| 10e | Office Changes  Amy shared a few important updates to the office:   * Both the main phone line and the fax line have been eliminated resulting in an annual savings of $677.04 annually. * The Kyocera office machine which will save $1,443.36 annually. * The Commission no longer has cubicle space on the 5th floor of the Cross Office Building. The MDOE has made the decision to take that space in a different direction and will be repurposing to allow for more flexibility for teleworking and reducing the carbon footprint. * We maintain our 182 State House Station mailing address and mail will be forwarded on a regular basis.   Dr. Fern Desjardins shared her concerns about the Commission not having a physical presence in the building. Wilson acknowledged that this was a very recent change and that further discussions would continue as necessary. |
| 10f | Update on SY21 Graduation Rates  Jeremy shared that certified graduation rates will not be available from the MDOE until sometime in October and will be presented to the Commission once received. |
| 10g | Employee Handbook  Jeremy shared that Amy has worked in coordination with Manpower to have an Employee Handbook available for staff and is a step toward professionalizing the organization. The draft is currently being reviewed by Sarah Forster and her Team and will be shared with the Commission as soon as it’s available. |
| 10h | Carryover Fund Proposal  Amy shared that the Carryover Fund Proposal was submitted as a Financial Order from the Budget Office to the Governor in early August. The proposal requested funds in the amount of $150,774 which will be used to enhance the Strategic Plan as follows – Infinite Campus, Lotterease, Epicenter enhancements and website updates. The proposal was approved and funds will be available in September. |
| 10i | Update on Strategic Plan  Jeremy shared that staff have been meeting and having ongoing discussions regarding the adopted strategic plan and are in the process of prioritizing what will be accomplished throughout the course of this year. Goals and specific measures are being broken down quarterly and staff will meet regularly to measure progress being made.  Wilson suggested that the goals and metrics be presented to the Commission quarterly. |
| 10j | Update on Modern Classrooms Project  Jeremy shared that we’re partnering with Modern Classrooms Project which is a professional development organization who supports teachers to personalize instruction for students. Teachers will go through a 13-week course with a direct mentor who is going to help them understand the methods and practices of personalized learning instruction. It decenters the teacher and really puts the power of learning in students’ hands. Many of our schools already have the approach of personalization so dovetails nicely with the educational programs of the charter schools.  Gina reported that applications are currently being accepted and teachers are applying to get one of fourteen spots that the Charter Commission is funding. Initial reports are that there’s a great deal of interest to participate. |
| 10k | Update on Infinite Campus  Jeremy reminded Commission members that staff are trying to unify the charter schools onto a unified student information system. The contract is finally in place and the implementation phase has begun.  Mackenzie is the project manager and shared that staff reached out to the four schools who will be transitioning to Infinite Campus to ask if they wanted to go live as soon as possible or wait until January 1st. ACADIA Academy and Ecology Learning Center will be going live immediately and Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences and Maine Virtual Academy will go live on January 1st. |
| 10l | Website Update  Mackenzie shared that some time has been spent on a vision of what the website should look like keeping in mind that it should reflect the mission, vision, and values of the Charter School Commission. She shared that both she and Amy had an initial kickoff meeting with InforME to discuss what will be needed to accomplish the goals that have been set for the redesign and initial reports are that the changes will be done by Thanksgiving. |
| 10m | Board Development Plan and Meetings  Jeremy shared that staff have been working diligently and in partnership with NACSA and the National Charter Schools Institute on board development protocols and are hopeful to have an initial training plan in front of the Commission for discussion in November.  Resources and documents are being gathered that will eventually be posted on the Commission’s website that board members will be able to access for their own development. Some protocol questions to be answered:   * Which classes are priority classes? * What is the timeframe from when somebody gets appointed to when they have to complete their training? * What training should be made mandatory?   Jeremy also shared that staff will be meeting quarterly with board leaders and the first “Board President Summit” is scheduled for next week and will include the following topics -- the Commission’s strategic plan; performance framework; and the board developmental protocols that are currently being worked on. |
| 10n | NACSA Participation   * Mackenzie is attending NACSA Authorizer Bootcamp * Jeremy has been accepted into the current NACSA Leaders Program as a member of its 9th cohort |
| **11** | **Future Topics** |
| 11a | October   * Consideration of Renewal Applications * Approval of Annual Commissioner’s Report * Approval of Annual Monitoring Reports   November   * Performance Framework Revisions * Introduce Training Requirements for Board Members |
| **12** | **Announcements** |
| 12a | This Month’s Celebrations |
| 12b | Next Regular Business Meeting – October 14, 2021 |
| 12c | Important School Renewal Dates   * September 29, 2021 CRCS Public Hearing for Renewal * September 30, 2021 MeANS Public Hearing for Renewal |
| **13** | **Adjourn** |
|  | The meeting was adjourned at 2:30pm.  **Chair Hess declared adjournment at 2:30pm with no objections.** |

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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.*