

Maine Charter School Commission

April 4, 2017 Business Meeting Minutes as Written by Commission Vote on May 2, 2017

The Maine Charter School Commission held a regular Business Meeting at the **Burton M. Cross Office Building**, Room #103B, on **Tuesday, April 4, 2017**.

1. Call to Order and Declare a Quorum

The meeting was called to order by Commission Chair, Laurie Pendleton at 9:38am and a quorum was declared.

Commission Members present were: Laurie Pendleton, Chair; Dr. Mike Wilhelm, Vice Chair; Jana Lapoint; Shelley Reed; Nichi Farnham; Jim Rier; and John Bird.

Also present were Bob Kautz, Gina Post and Amy Allen.

Members of the public present included Zoe Lewin (MACS); Judith Jones (MACS); Roger Brainerd (MACS); Noel Gallagher (Portland Press Herald); Lisa Packard; Jacinda Cotton-Castro (Fiddlehead School of Arts & Science); Travis Works (Cornville Regional Charter School); Dan Amory (9:58am); Kelli Pryor (Baxter Academy for Technology & Science - 9:58am); Tonya Arnold (Maine Academy of Natural Sciences - 10:05am); Heather Neal (11:19am); and William Fernald (Eaton Peabody - 11:40am).

2. Members of the Public Are Asked to Sign In

Laurie Pendleton reminded those present to sign-in if they had not already done so.

3. To Consider Action Relative to Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda

The following items were added to the agenda:

- New Business – Item #7C (Fiddlehead School of Arts & Science’s Request to Amend Performance Indicators)
- Bob Kautz will share two additional LDs – LD 1228 & LD 1234
- Bob Kautz will share the cancellation of the OPEGA Review
- Gina Post will share constituent correspondence regarding Snow Day Learning and extracurricular activities
- Gina Post will give an update to the Commission regarding Enrollment and Attendance meetings held with Maine Connections Academy, Maine Virtual Academy and Snow Pond Arts Academy.

4. To Take Action Relative to Accepting as Printed the Minutes of the March 7, 2017 Business Meeting

No changes to the written minutes.

Moved by John Bird; seconded by Shelley Reed to accept the February 7, 2017 Business Meeting minutes as written.
Vote – 6 Yes/1 Abstained (Jana Lapoint)

5. To Accept FY17 Budget vs. Actual – March 1 Report

No discussion.

Moved by John Bird; seconded by Shelley Reed and voted unanimously by those present to accept the FY17 Budget vs. Actual – April 1 Report

6. OLD BUSINESS

6a. Update on Strategic Planning Sub-Committees:

Renewal Process

Sub-committee met by phone on March 16, 2017 to discuss year-end monitoring visits for schools that were just renewed. The thought is that the end of year monitoring visits the year after renewal will consist of just one visit instead of two and this visit will be with Board, staff and administration. Renewal schools may not be asked to do a complete self-assessment as part of this monitoring. Item will be placed on next month's Business Meeting agenda for further discussion.

RFP Policy

First reading of the draft policy. Second reading and possible adoption of the policy will be placed on next month's Business Meeting agenda.

Per Diem Policy

Draft Per Diem policy was presented to the group. The policy is still a work in progress. The Policy Subcommittee will be meeting as a group to continue working on the policy and to think about how to have open meetings, what types of meetings are eligible for per diem, and to begin looking at the overall tasks of Commission members. Are there tasks that are being performed that can be done by office staff instead?

6b. To Consider and Approve Monitoring Plan For Second Charter Term

Due date for Reporting on Targets in Performance Indicators changed from "June 30" to "June 30 or as soon as available".

Moved by Dr. Mike Wilhelm; seconded by John Bird and voted unanimously by those present to approve the Monitoring Plan for Second Charter Term.

6c. To Consider and Approve Proposal for Finance Analyst Alternatives

Proposal was presented to the Commission. The Finance Subcommittee will meet to discuss the proposal and make a recommendation to the full Commission at a later date.

Moved by John Bird; seconded by Dr. Mike Wilhelm and voted unanimously by those present to approve the concept contingent upon Finance Subcommittee review and recommendation.

6d. To Consider and Approve Baxter Academy for Technology & Science's Application to Approve Additional Financing for New School Facility

Baxter is requesting that the Commission approve its use of NMTC funding for the project and the revised amortization of the NFF Loan, and authorize it to take such actions as may be necessary or appropriate in that regard, including restructuring the NFF Loan and Lease to comply with NMTC requirements; provided that (a) the net effect of such restructuring on Baxter shall not materially and adversely alter the business terms approved by the Commission for the NFF Loan and the Lease, and (b) the use of NMTC funding shall reduce the NFF Loan and subordinated loan, and reduce the annual debt service resulting from the Project from the levels shown in the projections attached to the request. The Commission's approval would be subject to Baxter's obtaining all necessary approvals from FAME. This will result in a 20 year amortization instead of the 25 year amortization previously approved by the Commission.

Moved by Dr. Mike Wilhelm; seconded by Shelley Reed and voted unanimously by those present to approve additional financing for Baxter Academy's new school facility.

7. NEW BUSINESS

7a. To Consider and Approve Fiddlehead School of Arts & Science's Request to Increase Enrollment for Year 5 (2017/2018) from 128 Students to 141 Students

The Review Team moved to approve the request of Fiddlehead to amend enrollment to 141 students for the 2017/2018 school year. This brings Fiddlehead to the original contracted student amount and removes the cap of 128 students which the Commission placed on the school after a one-time student allotment request. The student count will allow revenue needed for special education costs, teacher salary and benefits, and maintain a student-teacher ratio of 10 to 1.

Moved by Shelley Reed; seconded by John Bird and voted unanimously by those present to approve Fiddlehead School of Arts & Science's request to increase enrollment for Year 5 (2017/2018) from 128 students to 141 students.

7b. To Consider and Receive Baxter Academy's Official Response to Complaint Received by the Maine Charter School Commission on January 30, 2017

No vote required; minutes will reflect that a copy of the complaint was received by the Commission.

7c. To Consider and Approve Fiddlehead School of Arts & Science's Request to Amend Performance Indicators

The Review Team moved to approve the adjustment to the Performance Measure regarding the use of IOWA. The Review Team approves the Fiddlehead request to write goals for the ITBS based on the previous year's data by grade. Yearly goals would be written that reflect the individual class cohorts and their National Percentage Rank of Average Standard Score on the ITBS from the previous year.

Moved by Shelley Reed; seconded by Jana Lapoint and voted unanimously by those present to approve Fiddlehead School of Arts & Science's request to amend performance indicators.

8. REPORTS

8a. Chair Report – Laurie Pendleton

Laurie shared that she and Gina Post met with Cornville Regional Charter School on March 23, 2017 to work on Performance Indicators. Cornville reported that the meeting was valuable and supportive and shared that the Panorama Surveys will capture SEL in a very good way going forward.

8b. Vice Chair Report – Dr. Mike Wilhelm

No report given.

8c. Executive Director – Bob Kautz

Commissioner of the Department of Education

Bob shared that Dr. Bob Hasson was confirmed as the Commission of the Department of Education on March 29, 2017.

Update on MCA Governing Board Review of Bill Nave’s Recommendations

Draft minutes from MCA’s Governing Board meeting on March 10, 2017 were distributed to members of the Commission. These minutes reflect that Bill Nave was in attendance and shared his report with the Board.

ESSA Update

Bob reported that he reached out to NACSA to ask for their assistance/recommendations with the ESSA report. He wanted to ensure it was written in such a way that the Charter Commission authority overrules DOE recommendations.

Legislative Updates

Bob gave an overview of current LDs that may impact public charter schools. To date, there are 14 bills that are with the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee.

MACS Grant Update

An announcement on grant award winners is expected 4/4/17 at 12:15pm.

Update on Dick Barnes/David Silvernail Monitoring Process Observations & Next Steps

Process is still being worked on with Purchases. No further update at this time.

Report on Letter Received Regarding Enrolling Students in Virtual Schools Before Seventh Grade

Bob shared a copy of an email from a parent asking why Maine’s virtual schools enroll students beginning in the 7th grade and not sooner.

8d. Program Manager – Gina Post

School Binders – Additional Materials

Gina reminded Review Team members for each school that they were given binders last year that contained several pieces of information pertaining to the school – charter, performance indicators, and any reports that had been written and approved by the Commission. She asked members to let Amy Allen know if they needed a binder or hard copies of any missing materials from the binders themselves. Many Commission members expressed their desire to have copies sent and available electronically rather than in binders. Others like the hard copies. Amy will work with each member on an individual basis to provide materials in a format that works for them.

Panorama Update

Gina reported that the survey window at all schools except for MeANS will be April 26th thru May 12th and that MeANS will be open for a two and a half week period in June.

Fluid Review Update

Gina shared that May 8th has been targeted as the launch date for Fluid Review. This will give staff a few weeks to work with it and smooth out any kinks before it goes live on May 31st when the RFP is issued.

Epicenter Update

Gina reported that we are on track with the purchase of Epicenter. Amy Allen is currently working with Purchases on the process.

Professional Development

Gina will create a Request for Professional Development form and discuss with the Policy Subcommittee during their next conference call. Once approved, schools will be reminded that there are funds available for professional development and the process for requesting sponsorship from the Commission.

Lottery Updates

Gina gave a brief update on the lotteries that were held this year.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS

9a. Turn in Expense Account Vouchers at the End of the Meeting

9b. Next Business Meeting Date – May 2, 2017

10. PUBLIC COMMENT

Roger Brainerd shared that National Charter School Week is scheduled for May 1-May 5. He also shared that the Maine Charter School Celebration will be held on May 4th at the Senator Inn in Augusta.

11. ADJOURN - Meeting was adjourned at 11:57am.

Moved by Jana Lapoint; seconded by Shelley Reed and voted unanimously by those present to adjourn.