*July 21, 2022 Business Meeting Minutes Approved by Commission Vote on August 9, 2022*

**The Maine Charter School Commission held a Regular Meeting on**

**Thursday, July 21, 2022**

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| **Item Number** | **Person Responsible** | **Agenda Item** |
| **1** | ***Wilson*** | **Call to Order and Declare a Quorum** |
|  |  | The meeting, held in person and via Zoom in accordance with the Commission’s remote meeting policy, was called to order by Commission Chair, Wilson Hess, at 1:00pm and a quorum was declared.Commission members present were Wilson Hess, Nichi Farnham, Tom Keller, Shelley Reed, Tori Kornfield, and Jim Rier *(via Zoom).*Also present were Jeremy Jones *(via Zoom)*, Gina Post, Lana Ewing, and Amy Allen.***Commission member, Nichi Farnham, read the Commission’s Vision Statement.*** |
| **2** | ***Wilson*** | **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. |
| 2c |  | When speaking, state your name and speak slowly and clearly and loudly enough for the captioner to pick up your comments. Gina will interrupt if the captioner is having a difficult time hearing what is being said. |
| **3** | *Wilson* | **Comments from Commission Chair, Committee Reports and Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda** |
| 3a |  | Comments from Commission ChairChair Hess welcomed a new Commission member, Tom Keller, who was appointed by the State Board of Education at its June 13th meeting. He will replace Dr. Fern Desjardins who resigned at the end of her term on 6/30/22.Chair Hess shared that Executive Director, Jeremy Jones, is leaving to become the Executive Director of EAGLE Prep Schools in Phoenix, AZ. His last day as the Commission’s Executive Director will be on July 22, 2022.Shelley Reed and Nichi Farnham shared farewell comments to Jeremy. |
| 3b |  | **Committee Reports*** Shelley Reed - Ad-Hoc Nomination Committee member - reported on the work done by the Committee.
* Shelley Reed - Chair, School Performance Committee - reported on the work being done by the Committee.
* Nichi Farnham - Chair, Finance Committee - reported on the work being done by the Committee.
* Wilson Hess - Chair, Executive Committee - reported on the work being done by the Commission.
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| 3c |  | **Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda**Motion to table Item #11a until the next meeting. **Moved by Nichi Farnham; seconded by Shelley Reed and voted unanimously by those present** to table Item #11a until the next meeting. |
| 4 | *Wilson* | **Meeting Minutes Approval** |
| 4a |  | To Consider the Minutes from the June 23, 2022 Business MeetingA copy of the draft minutes was distributed for review and consideration.**Moved by Shelley Reed; seconded by Jim Rier and voted as follows by those present – Nichi Farnham (yes); Wilson Hess (yes); Tom Keller (abstain); Tori Kornfield (yes); Shelley Reed (yes); and Jim Rier (yes).** |
| **5** | *Wilson* | **Public Comment\*** |
|  |  | Jana Lapoint, former Maine Charter School Commission member and current governing board member at Baxter Academy for Technology and Science and Maine Connections Academy, shared best wishes to Jeremy on his departure.Dick Durost, Vice Chair of the Maine Arts Academy’s governing board, expressed concerns about reporting requirements and encouraged Commission staff to work with MDOE personnel to determine if the requirements can be streamlined stating that “it feels like we are beholden to two masters”.Matt Newberg, Head of School at Maine Academy of Natural Sciences, shared his appreciation for Jeremy and how he challenged the school while also being supportive and wishes him good luck in his next endeavor. He also shared his appreciation of the work done with the Commission over the past year and encouraged the Commission to approve the 5-year charter contract being presented for approval later in the meeting.  |
| **6** | *Jeremy* | **Presentations** |
|  |  | *None* |
| **7** | *Wilson* | **Unfinished Business** |
|  |  | *None* |
| **8** |  | **New Business Requiring Approval** |
| 8a | *Shelley, Ad Hoc Nomination Committee* | To Consider and Approve the Nomination of Wilson Hess as Chair of the Maine Charter School Commission for a Period of One (1) Year **Moved by Shelley Reed; seconded by Nichi Farnham and voted as follows to** appoint Wilson Hess as Chair of the Maine Charter School Commission for a period of one (1) year – Nichi Farnham (yes); Wilson Hess (abstain); Tom Keller (yes); Tori Kornfield (yes); Shelley Reed (yes); and Jim Rier (yes). |
| 8b | *Shelley, Ad Hoc Nomination Committee* | To Consider and Approve the Nomination of Nichi Farnham as Vice Chair of the Maine Charter School Commission for a Period of One (1) Year**Moved by Shelley Reed; seconded by Jim Rier and voted unanimously by those present** to appoint Nichi Farnham as Vice Chair of the Maine Charter School Commission for a period of one (1) year. |
| 8c | *Nichi, Finance Committee Chair* | To Consider the Approval of Ecology Learning Center’s Request for Funding to Facilitate Board TrainingA copy of the request ($2,500) was distributed for review and consideration. **Moved by Nichi Farnham; seconded by Shelley Reed and voted unanimously by those present** to approve Ecology Learning Center’s request for funding in the amount of $2,500 to facilitate board training. These funds will come from the Commission’s current carryover fund balance. |
| 8d | *Nichi, Finance Committee Chair* | To Consider the Approval of Community Regional Charter School’s Request for Funding to Assist with Annual Cost of BoardOnTrackA copy of the request ($8,000) was distributed for review and consideration. After the request was submitted for consideration, Commission staff spoke with Danielle Denis, CRCS Board Chair, and determined that the school is able to fund half of the cost of the program. Gina shared that the request is consistent with the Commission’s renewal condition surrounding board development.**Moved by Nichi Farnham; seconded by Shelley Reed and voted unanimously by those present** to approve $4,000 toward Community Regional Charter School’s funding request to assist with the annual cost of BoardOnTrack. |
| 8e | *Shelley, School Performance Committee Chair* | To Consider the Approval of ACADIA Academy’s Request to Amend School ScheduleA copy of the request was distributed for review and consideration. This request changes the summer session program in the original school application from five weeks of three days to four weeks of four days beginning in the summer of 2023. The school’s ESY programming will continue without any impact.**Moved by Shelley Reed; seconded by Tori Kornfield and voted unanimously by those present** to approve ACADIA Academy’s request to amend the school schedule. |
| 8f | *Jeremy* | To Consider the Approval of the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences’ New Charter Contract (September 1, 2022 through August 31, 2027)A copy of the charter contract was distributed for review and consideration. Jeremy commended the work done by the board and school leadership to strengthen the future of MeANS and commended them for the hard work throughout the last 12 months leading up to the signing of a new 5-year charter contract.Chair Hess asked for a motion to approve which was **moved by Shelley Reed and seconded by Jim Rier**. Tori opened the discussion by expressing her concerns about the school and “would like to see improvement before giving them five more years”. She shared that she’s “pleased with the Performance Framework” but is curious to know what will happen if the school doesn’t meet the targets. Jim stated that there was a motion on the floor and asked for a vote. Wilson reminded members that a “yes” vote would mean moving immediately to vote on the issue and a “no” vote would return to further discussion. A roll call vote was taken as follows – Tori Kornfield (no); Tom Keller (no); Shelley Reed (no); Nichi Farnham (no); Wilson Hess (no); and Jim Rier (yes).Discussion continued. Nichi asked if the Commission had ever voted to renew with a probationary year and Gina shared that statute doesn’t allow for a renewal of less than 5 years.Dr. Keller shared concerns with the latest Annual Monitoring Report that shows the school not meeting 40% of its Performance Indicators. Tori asked if there were other options that could be considered and Gina shared that the Commission has the authority to vote on revoking a charter contract at any time. She also reminded Commission members that there is an approved Intervention Protocol in place that can also be used for oversight. Nichi asked for a reminder on the next “touchpoints” with the school. Gina shared that typically a site visit isn’t required the year after renewal, but that the Commission can choose to visit at any time.Nichi then asked what steps would be taken if it’s determined that the school isn’t performing as expected. Gina shared that even though not on cycle for a site visit, Commission staff felt it was important to meet this year and will sit down with the board and school leadership on August 8th. The next touchpoint would be the mid-year meeting which will happen in March. This is when we’ll learn more about how the school is progressing toward things like chronic absenteeism and when protocols could be put into place. Wilson shared that “the Interventional Protocol is a very important thing to flag” and that renewal conditions mean that there are “things that need to be attended to”. He encouraged staff to ensure that protocols are in place and that progress is shared with the Commission at least at the Committee level.Chair Hess asked for the roll to be called on the original motion and the vote was as follows – Tori Kornfield (no); Tom Keller (abstain); Shelley Reed (yes); Nichi Farnham (yes); Wilson Hess (yes); and Jim Rier (yes) - to approve the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences’ new charter contract from September 1, 2022 to August 31, 2027. |
| **9** |  | **New Business Requiring Notification and Acceptance** |
| 9a | *Jeremy* | The following new governing board member appointments were announced:* Tristin Oldmixon to the Baxter Academy for Technology and Science Governing Board
* Tonya Arnold to the Community Regional Charter School Governing Board
* Charlie-Marie Hansen to the Community Regional Charter School Governing Board
* Kata Ritenburg to the Harpswell Coastal Academy Governing Board
* Connie Ronco to the Maine Connections Academy Governing Board

There were no resignations to report.The following term outs were announced:* Patti Oldmixon from the Baxter Academy for Technology and Science Governing Board
* Ed Harris from the Harpswell Coastal Academy Governing Board
* Peggy Muir from the Harpswell Coastal Academy Governing Board
* Cheryl Bulmer from the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences Governing Board
* Scott Byrd from the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences Governing Board
* Cheryl Mercier from the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences Governing Board

**Moved by Shelley Reed; seconded by Nichi Farnham and voted as follows** to accept notifications as presented – Nichi Farnham (yes); Wilson Hess (yes); Tom Keller (yes); Tori Kornfield (absent); Shelley Reed (yes); and Jim Rier (yes).  |
| 9b | *Nichi, Chair of Finance Committee* | To Consider and Accept FY22 Budget vs. Actual YTD - July Report Dated 6-30-22A copy of the budget report was distributed for review and discussion.**Moved by Nichi Farnham; seconded by Jim Rier and voted unanimously by those present** to accept the FY22 Budget vs. Actual YTD - July Report Dated 6-30-22. |
| **10** |  | **Executive Director/Commission Staff Report** |
| 10a | *Jeremy* | Progress on HCA Charter RenewalA copy of the tracker was presented for review. Gina shared that the Pre-Opening Visit is scheduled in Harpswell on August 9th from 9-11am. |
| 10b | *Jeremy* | Strategic Plan Update - 1 Year AnniversaryA copy of the strategic plan progress tracker was presented for review. Jeremy shared the following:Where are we proud?* Board development and board training
* Sustained Excellence - a performance framework that “we can all be proud of”
* Financial processes that have been put in place by staff and Finance Committee
* Committee structure

What are we excited about?* Innovation - Charter schools in Maine are incredibly unique
* Modern Classrooms Project - dozens of teachers trained in a new way of teaching (Gina shared details of MCP)
* Collaboration with school leaders and board chairs
* Plan re-grounds us in the work we’re doing

Where do we need to start and resource areas?* New legislative session begins in January. How do we engage in political matters that don't violate our code of ethics?
* Continued need for communications support and how do we want to interact and engage with the public.

Both Wilson and Nichi commended staff for the development of the Strategic Plan. Wilson stated the importance of “continuing to work toward becoming a model Commission” and asked the Executive Committee to be prepared to discuss ways that the Commission can “step up their game”.Staff will continue to update the Commission on the progress of the Plan and will bring it to Committee Meetings as appropriate. |
| 10c | *Jeremy* | School Leadership ChangesKelli Pryor is stepping down as the Executive Director at Baxter Academy. The board conducted an extensive search for her replacement and the finalist withdrew at the last minute. Kelli will continue in the Executive Director role until the end of September and Patti Oldmixon, even though termed off the board, will continue to assist with the search.Heather King, Head of School at Maine Arts Academy had submitted her intent to resign from her position, but the board encouraged her to stay and the resignation was withdrawn.  |
| 10d | *Jeremy* | Media Update* [Former science teacher to steer Harpswell charter school through tumultuous year](https://www.pressherald.com/2022/07/05/former-science-teacher-to-steer-harpswell-charter-school-through-tumultuous-year/)
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| 10e | *Jeremy* | Legislative Update - *None* |
| **11** |  | **Monthly School Portfolio/Data Report** |
| 11a | *Jeremy* | Charter Public School Enrollment/Unenrollment*Tabled until the next meeting.* |
| **12** |  | **Other** |
| 12a | *Jeremy* | Executive Director CommentsJeremy had an opportunity to make a few remarks as he steps down as the Commission’s Executive Director and shared the following:* Departure is “bittersweet”
* The work has been “really important”
* Connections have been “invaluable” and hopes that they’ll “last forever”
* Mainers “are salt of the earth people”
* His Next opportunity is a “tremendous one” and schools in Arizona are “in desperate need of leadership”
* Charter Commission “is in really good hands” and staff are “a gift”
* Charter schools in Maine “are capable of great things” and Commission needs to “keep expectations high”
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| 12b | *Wilson* | Confirm Appointment of Interim Executive DirectorWilson shared that the process in selecting Gina Post as the Commission’s Interim Executive Director has been “extremely collaborative” and indicated that the appointment will begin on July 25, 2022 and end on June 30, 2023. **Moved by Nichi Farnham; seconded by Tori Kornfield and voted unanimously by those present** to confirm the appointment of Gina Post as Interim Executive Director of the Maine Charter School Commission until June 30, 2023. |
| **13** |  | **Future Topics** |
| 13a | *Gina* | August:* Changes to MCSC Election of Officers Policy
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| **14** |  | **Announcements** |
| 14a | *Gina* | This Month’s Celebrations |
| 14b | *Gina* | Important Dates* Harpswell Coastal Academy Pre-Opening Visit/August 9th (9-11am)
* Public Hearing for Renewal, Harpswell Coastal Academy/September 29th (4:30-6:00pm) 9 Ash Point Road, Harpswell
* July 25th - Gina’s official first day as Interim Executive Director
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| 14c | *Gina* | Portfolio Calendar Items |
| 14d | *Gina* | Next Regular Business Meeting – August, 9, 2022 *(Community Room at Brunswick Landing, 8 Venture Avenue, Brunswick and Zoom)* |
| **15** | *Wilson* | **Adjourn** |
|  |  | Chair Hess declared adjournment at 3:19pm with no objections. |

**\*** *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.*