***September 8, 2020 Business Meeting Minutes Approved by Commission Vote on October 6, 2020***

The Maine Charter School Commission held a regular Business Meeting via Zoom on **Tuesday, September 8, 2020**

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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, Nichi Farnham, at 1:09pm and a quorum was declared.  Commission members present were: Nichi Farnham, John Bird, Shelley Reed, Dr. Fern Desjardins, Jana Lapoint and Jim Rier.  Also present were Bob Kautz, Gina Post, Amy Allen and Jasmine Canwell. |
| **2** | **Reminders** |
| 2a | This meeting is being held as a Zoom webinar and protocol will be followed. A brief presentation of how the meeting will be conducted will be shared. |
| 2b | Definition of a Commission Discussion with Sarah Forster – 1:30pm  Sarah Forster (Assistant Attorney General) was asked to review the definition of a Commission (Title 5) as well as the Commission’s role as an authorizer as outlined in Title 20-A §2405. This discussion was an important step in ensuring that members had a common understanding of its role as it prepares to hire a new Executive Director, review its mission and plans for the future. |
| **3** | **Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda** |
|  | None |
| **4** | **Requires Approval by the Commission** |
| 4a | Minutes from the August 11, 2020 Business Meeting  No discussion.  **Moved by Jim Rier; seconded by Shelley Reed and voted by roll call as follows: John Bird - yea; Dr. Fern Desjardins – yea; Nichi Farnham – yea; Jana Lapoint – yea; Shelley Reed – yea; Jim Rier – yea** to approve as printed the minutes of the August 11, 2020 Business Meeting. |
| 4b | Minutes from the August 26, 2020 Special Meeting  No discussion.  **Moved by John Bird; seconded by Jim Rier and voted unanimously by roll call as follows: John Bird – yea; Dr. Fern Desjardins – yea; Nichi Farnham – yea; Jana Lapoint – yea; Shelley Reed – yea; Jim Rier – yea** to approve as printed the minutes of the August 26, 2020 Special Meeting. |
| 4c | FY21 Budget vs. Actual – September Report  Tabled until October 6, 2020 Business Meeting.  **Moved by Jim Rier; seconded by Shelley Reed and voted by roll call as follows: John Bird – yea; Dr. Fern Desjardins – yea; Nichi Farnham – yea; Jana Lapoint – yea; Shelley Reed – yea; Jim Rier – yea** to table the FY21 Budget vs. Actual – September Report until October 6, 2020 Business Meeting. |
| 4d | To Consider and Approve Maine Connections Academy’s Request to Amend Enrollment  A copy of Maine Connections Academy’s Request to Amend Enrollment was distributed for review and consideration.  On August 10, 2020, Maine Connections Academy submitted an amendment request to the Maine Charter School Commission to increase its enrollment. This request was withdrawn, and a new submission was received on August 17, 2020. The amendment request is for an increase in students. Maine Connections Academy requests to increase from its current enrollment allowed, 390 students (+/- 10%) in grades 7-12, to 500 students in grades 7-12 beginning in the current school year, 2020-2021.  Commission staff, consultants and the school’s Commission liaison held a virtual meeting to discuss the application and supporting materials, which included data in the areas of academic achievement, academic growth, staffing, budget, wait list numbers, and other details.  In order to ask clarifying questions and request additional data, the Review Team met virtually with Maine Connections Academy’s Principal and Dean of Students. Additional information was presented at the meeting and additional data were provided to the Review Team via email after the meeting  The Review Team recommends Maine Connections Academy be approved to enroll 450 students with +/- 5% allowance, for a maximum enrollment of 473 students, and a minimum enrollment of 427 students beginning immediately in the current school year, 2020-2021.  **Moved by Nichi Farnham; seconded by Jana Lapoint and voted by roll call as follows: John Bird – yea; Dr. Fern Desjardins – yea; Nichi Farnham – yea; Jana Lapoint – yea; Shelley Reed – yea; Jim Rier – yea** to allow Maine Connections Academy to enroll 450 students with +/- 5% allowance, for a maximum enrollment of 473 students, and a minimum enrollment of 427 students beginning immediately in the current school year, 2020-2021. |
| 4e | To Consider and Approve Harpswell Coastal Academy’s 5th Grade Pre-Opening Report  A copy of Harpswell Coastal Academy’s 5th Grade Pre-Opening Report was distributed for review and discussion.  On July 13, 2020, the Maine Charter School Commission (MCSC) review team met via Zoom with members of the Harpswell Coastal Academy (HCA) governing board and administrative team to review the school’s pre-opening requirements for the new grade five.  After a discussion of enrollment, educational programming, staffing, facility, and budget, the MCSC Review Team believes the school is prepared to open for grade five.  **Moved by Shelley Reed; seconded by Jana Lapoint and voted by roll call as follows: John Bird – yea; Dr. Fern Desjardins – yea; Nichi Farnham – yea; Jana Lapoint – yea; Shelley Reed – yea; Jim Rier – yea** to approve Harpswell Coastal Academy’s 5th Grade Pre-Opening Report. |
| 4f | To Consider and Approve Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences’ 7th Grade Pre-Opening Report  A copy of Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences’ 7th Grade Pre-Opening Report was distributed for review and discussion.  On August 18, 2020, Maine Charter School Commission (MCSC) staff met via Zoom with members of the Fiddlehead School of Arts and Sciences’ (FSAS) governing board, the Head of School, and staff members to review the school’s pre-opening requirements for the new grade seven.  After a discussion of enrollment, educational programming, staffing, facility, and budget, MCSC staff believe the school is prepared to open for grade seven.  **Moved by Dr. Fern Desjardins; seconded by Jana Lapoint and voted by roll call as follows: John Bird – yea; Dr. Fern Desjardins – yea; Nichi Farnham – yea; Jana Lapoint – yea; Shelley Reed – yea; Jim Rier – yea** to approve Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences’ 7th Grade Pre-Opening Report. |
| **5** | **Requires Notification to and Acceptance by the Commission** |
| 5a | To Consider and Accept Notification of the Hiring of Lori Towle as Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences’ Coordinator of Teaching and Learning  A copy of Lori’s resume and cover letter was distributed for review and discussion.  **Moved by Dr. Fern Desjardins; seconded by Jana Lapoint and voted by roll call as follows: John Bird – yea; Dr. Fern Desjardins – yea; Nichi Farnham – yea; Jana Lapoint – yea; Shelley Reed – yea; Jim Rier –** **yea** to accept notification of the Hiring of Lori Towle as Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences’ Coordinator of Teaching and Learning. |
| 5b | To Consider and Accept Notification of the Hiring of Angela Hesketh as Maine Academy of Natural Sciences’ Business Manager  Notification of the hiring of Angela Hesketh as Maine Academy of Natural Sciences’ Business Manager was distributed for review and discussion.  **Moved by John Bird; seconded by Jana Lapoint and voted by roll call as follows: John Bird – yea; Dr. Fern Desjardins – yea; Nichi Farnham – yea; Jana Lapoint – yea; Shelley Reed – yea; Jim Rier –** **yea** to accept notification of the Hiring of Angela Hesketh as Maine Academy of Natural Sciences’ Business Manager. |
| **6** | **Monthly School Portfolio/Data Report** |
| 6a | Exit Interview Project and Results  In July 2020, Maine Charter School Commission staff conducted exit surveys via phone with families who had a student who unenrolled from a charter school during the 2019-2020 school year.  A copy of the exit survey results was distributed for review and discussion. |
| 6b | Enrollment Update  Gina briefly shared the following regarding enrollment:   * The 2019 -2020 Oct. 1 count was 2497 for the 9-school portfolio. * A total of 331 students graduated from Maine’s public charter schools during the 2019-20 school year. *These data are not yet certified by MDOE.* * A total of 348 students unenrolled from Maine’s public charter schools during the 2019-20 school year. (13% of Oct. 1 enrollment) |
| **7** | **Executive Director/Commission Staff Report** |
|  | ***School-Related Items:*** |
|  | None |
|  | ***Commission-Related Items:*** |
|  | None |
| **8** | **Comments from Commission Members** |
| 8a | Chair – Nichi Farnham  None |
| 8b | Vice Chair – Dr. Fern Desjardins  None |
| 8c | School Liaisons  Dr. Fern Desjardins shared that she has been attending Fiddlehead’s governing board meetings and has been very impressed. Fiddlehead’s board met on August 15th to discuss their Reopening Plan and would be meeting again on September 2nd to finalize it. The board is currently in the process of applying for a USDA Loan to purchase the building they are currently in. Fern also shared that the school is hiring for many positions.  Shelley Reed shared that the Ecology Learning Center held their grand opening and achieved their enrollment target of 48 students.  Jim Rier shared that he had received confirmation from the Department of Education that the Ecology Learning Center would be eligible to receive Special Education funding during the first year of operation. |
| 8d | Search Committee Update  Dr. Fern Desjardins provided a brief update from the Search Committee. The search committee’s progress on a job description and search procedure was reviewed. No action was taken. |
| **9** | **Announcements** |
| 9a | Submission of Travel and Expense Vouchers  Nichi Farnham shared that submissions will need to be signed and returned to the office. |
| 9b | Next Regular Business Meeting – October 13, 2020 *(Location to Be Determined)*  Bob commented that this year’s virtual NACSA Leadership Conference begins on Tuesday, October 13th, 2020 and suggested moving the date of the next regularly scheduled Business Meeting to Tuesday, October 6th, 2020. All members of the Commission agreed. |
| **10** | **Public Comment\*** |
|  | Judith Jones from Education Action Forum of Maine commented that Lēza Packard, Head of School for the Ecology Learning Center shared with her several positive comments that she had received from parents since the opening of the school on September 1st. |
| **11** | **Adjourn** |
|  | The meeting was adjourned at 3:55pm.  **Moved by Dr. Fern Desjardins; seconded by Jim Rier and voted by roll call as follows: John Bird – yea; Dr. Fern Desjardins – yea; Nichi Farnham – yea; Jana Lapoint – yea; Shelley Reed – yea; Jim Rier – yea** to adjourn. |