***November 8, 2022 Commission Meeting Minutes Approved by Commission Vote on***

***December 13, 2022***

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

**Tuesday, November 8, 2022**

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| **Item Number** | **Agenda Item** |
| **1** | **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 at 1:03pm and a quorum was declared.  Commission members present were Wilson Hess, Tori Kornfield, Norm Higgins, Nichi Farnham, Jim Handy, and Leigh Weisenburger Albert.  Commission members absent were Tom Keller.  Also present were David Hartman *(via Zoom),* Amy Allen *(via Zoom)*, and Dania Heard *(via Zoom).*  *A Commission member read the Commission’s Vision Statement.* |
| **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. |
| 2c | When speaking, state your name and speak slowly and clearly and loudly enough for the captioner to pick up your comments. Amy will interrupt if the captioner is having a difficult time hearing what is being said. |
| **3** | **Comments from Commission Chair, Committee Reports and Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda** |
| 3a | Chair Hess introduced David Hartman who began working as the Commission’s Acting Executive Director in mid-October under a service contract that the Commission has with NACSA. David will provide “bridge leadership” to the Commission through the end of December. |
| 3b | **Committee Reports**   * Tori Kornfield - 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 Committee |
| 3c | **Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda**  *None* |
| 4 | **Meeting Minutes Approval** |
| 4a | To Consider the Minutes from the October 11, 2022 Business Meeting  *Tabled until the December 13th Commission Meeting* |
| **5** | **Public Comment\*** |
|  | *None* |
| **6** | **Presentations** |
|  | Matt Newberg, Head of School, and Evan Coleman, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, at Maine Academy of Natural Sciences presented on the school’s RREV Grant Award and plans for a new agricultural/project barn sharing the following:   * Intensives at MeANS are collaborative, interdisciplinary, and focused on natural sciences and outdoor learning. These take place 4 times per year and last 2 weeks each as follows:   + Fall (farming, apples, rivers, environment)   + Winter (survival, forestry, aquaculture, ice)   + Spring (maple sugaring, alternative energy, animal husbandry, oceanography)   + Summer (invasive species, bees, farm to table, capstone project) * Construction of the barn is underway:   + Wing 1 - agriculture classroom   + Wing 2 - Blacksmithing space (being dedicated to Dick Tesseir)   + Wings 3&4 - Kitchen and Woodshop * The grant currently covers an Agriculture Assistant Support and Facilitation position and the school is looking into options to continue this role on a volunteer basis; * This has been in the planning stages for several years. * Estimated completion - sometime late spring (so ready for use this school year) |
| **7** | **Executive Director/Commission Staff Report** |
| 7a | Update on HCA Non-Renewal and Closure  David shared that he has been engaged with the school regarding the Closure Plan and will be focused on the closure process as the school and Commission work together to close down the school.  A “Transition Team” is working together to establish completion dates for the various items in the Closure Plan. This team will meet regularly to ensure that the school is complying with all of the operational steps (i.e., distribution of student records, inventory etc.) |
| 7b | Update on Maine Connections Academy’s Amendment Request to Increase Enrollment  School was deemed eligible to complete the Amendment Request to Increase Enrollment; full application is due no later than January 15th |
| 7c | Proposal from Dr. Mary Madden and Associates to Conduct Maine Virtual Academy’s 2022-23 Independent Third Party Evaluation  Staff has received a proposal and will recommend the Commission give its approval at the December meeting. |
| 7d | Media Update   * 7d.1 Maine Arts Academy in Sidney looks to relocate to former Maine Veterans’ Home in Augusta * 7d.2 Harpswell charter school hunts for ways to reopen even as it plans its closure |
| **8** | **Unfinished Business** |
| 8a | To Consider the Approval of the Commission’s Staff Retirement Benefit *(Tabled Until Recalled)* |
| **9** | **New Business Requiring Approval** |
| 9a | To Consider the Approval of ACADIA Academy’s 2021-22 Annual Monitoring Report  A copy of the draft report was distributed for review and consideration.  **Moved by Tori Kornfield; seconded by Jim Handy and voted unanimously by those present** to approve ACADIA Academy’s 2021-22 Annual Monitoring Report. |
| 9b | To Consider the Approval of Maine Virtual Academy’s 2021-22 Annual Monitoring Report  A copy of the draft report was distributed for review and consideration.  **Moved by Jim Handy; seconded by Tori Kornfield and voted unanimously by those present** to approve Maine Virtual Academy’s 2021-22 Annual Monitoring Report. |
| 9c | To Consider the Approval of Maine Arts Academy’s Request to Incur Debt to Finance a New Facility  General Financial Plan:   * Purchase price $3,250,000 - funding split into 2 long-term loans, half each from Kennebec Savings Bank (KSB) and USDA * Renovation Cost - $500,000 - funded by bank term loan * A down payment of $162,500 and bank required capital reserve fund will be funded by Maine Arts Academy designated cash on hand. * By December 31, 2022, Maine Arts Academy will purchase the building and commence a 6-month renovation period. Kennebec Savings will finance the purchase and renovation via a short-term interest only bridge loan. After the renovation period - approximately June 30, 2023 - the building purchase will be split into 2-mortgage backed long-term loans, one each KBS and USDA. Any outstanding borrowings on the renovation loan will be termed out by KSB.   Based on the projections and expected loan terms, Maine Arts Academy has the capacity to make the projected debt payments on loans totaling $3,587,500 through net operating results that provide more than one-times the debt service amount as required by the Financial Performance Measures.  Approval contingencies:   * Satisfactory architect and engineering reports * Confirmation of student capacity * Satisfactory results of October 11th Augusta Planning Board Meeting * Confirmation of renovation costs consistent with plan * Bank commitments with final term consistent with plan * Maine Arts Academy confirmation of enrollment growth plans   **Moved by Nichi Farnham; seconded by Norm Higgins and voted unanimously by those present** to approve Maine Arts Academy’s request to borrow $3,587,500 as outlined. *School will report back to the Finance Committee on a regular basis.* |
| 9d | To Consider the Approval of Maine Arts Academy’s Request to Move to a New Facility  A copy of the amendment request was distributed for review and consideration.  Maine Arts Academy is requesting to relocate the school from its current location (11 Goldenrod Lane, Sidney) to 310 Cony Road, Augusta (Maine Veterans Home). The target date for relocation would be June 2023. The building has 69,615+/- square feet of finished space and is situated on 8.9 acres. Maine Arts Academy would utilize the current pace with some minor interior changes.   * The school, in its current location, is unable to grow. A new building will allow them to grow with a goal of 250 students in FY24 and 300 students in FY25. * A survey was sent to families asking if they would return to the school if the school moved to a new location. Of the 98 responses they received, 96% responded with yes. * Currently, the school does not have access to any of its facilities after 3:15pm, on weekends, or during the summer (unless booked well in advance of a planned event). * There is interest in running arts summer camps for middle school students and hosting more enrollment events. A new facility will allow them to do both of those things and will allow for enough space for summer school. * Transportation services are not expected to change. There is a safe place for the bus to drop off students in the front of the building, parking in the front for visitors, and parking in the back for staff and student drivers (a total of 120 parking spaces). * Students will have more space to practice, perform, and immerse themselves in arts and academics. * The new facility will provide safety and security that the school does not have at its current location. * Being in Augusta will strengthen existing relationships the school has with entities in the capital region and will offer many opportunities to foster more.   **Moved by Tori Kornfield; seconded by Jim Handy and voted unanimously by those present** to approve Maine Arts Academy’s request to move to a new facility. |
| **10** | **New Business Requiring Notification and Acceptance** |
| 10a | New Governing Board Members: *None*  Resignations: *None*  Term Outs: *None* |
| 10b | FY23 Budget vs. Actual Report  A copy of the dashboard was presented for review and consideration.  **Moved by Nichi Farnham; seconded by Norm Higgins and voted unanimously by those present** to accept the FY23 budget vs. actual report as presented. |
| **11** | **Monthly School Portfolio/Data Report** |
| 11a | Preliminary 2022-23 Enrollment  Amy shared that the 10/1 student enrollment hasn’t been completely finalized by the MDOE at this point, but is hopeful that final numbers can be shared during the December meeting. |
| **12** | **Executive Session** |
|  | At 2:47pm Nichi Farnham moved to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters. This was seconded by Jim Handy and voted unanimously by those present to enter into executive session.  Returned from Executive Session at 3:37pm with no action to take. |
| **13** | **Future Topics** |
| 13a | December:   * Maine Connections Academy’s Independent Third-Party Evaluation Presentation * Maine Virtual Academy’s Independent Third-Party Evaluation Presentation * Consider the Approval of Dr. Mary Madden and Associates’ Proposal for Maine Virtual Academy’s 2022-23 Independent Third Party Evaluation * Consider the Approval of the following 2021-22 Annual Monitoring Reports   + Baxter Academy for Technology and Science   + Community Regional Charter School   + Ecology Learning Center   + Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences   + Harpswell Coastal Academy   + Maine Academy of Natural Sciences   + Maine Arts Academy   + Maine Connections Academy * ELC Request for Additional Space   January   * To Consider the Approval of the 2021-22 Annual Report to the Commissioner |
| **14** | **Announcements** |
| 14a | This Month’s Celebrations |
| 14b | Important Dates |
| 14c | Portfolio Calendar Items  *(None Reported)* |
| 14d | Next Regular Business Meeting – December 13, 2022 *(Maine Academy of Natural Sciences, 13 Easler Drive, Hinckley)* |
| **15** | **Adjourn** |
|  | Chair Hess declared adjournment at 3:40pm 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.*