



STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
MAINE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES  
152 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333



JANET T. MILLS  
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL SAUSCHUCK  
COMMISSIONER

WILLIAM D. O'NEAL  
DIRECTOR

**Education Committee**

Wednesday  
8 May 2024  
0900-1130

Virtual via ZOOM: <https://mainestate.zoom.us/j/82789080665>

**Minutes**

**Members Present:** Amy Drinkwater, Paul Froman, Leah Mitchell, Stephen Smith, Dennis Russell, Joanne Lebrun, Mike Drinkwater, Ben Zetterman, Aiden Koplovsky, Cathy Gosselin

**Members Absent:** AJ Gagnon, Stephanie Cordwell, Brian Chamberlin,

**Staff:** Chris Azevedo, Marc Minkler, Jason Oko

**Stakeholders:** Rob McGraw, Theresa Cousins, Fred Porter, John Lennon

*“The mission of Maine EMS is to promote and provide for a comprehensive and effective Emergency Medical Services system to ensure optimum patient care with standards for all providers. All members of this board/committee should strive to promote the core values of excellence, support, collaboration, and integrity. In serving on this Board/Committee, we commit to serve the respective providers, communities, and residents of the jurisdictions that we represent.”*

**I. Call to Order:**

- a. Introductions
  - i. Aiden Koplovsky makes introductions and calls roll.

**II. Approval of Minutes:**

- a. Approval of March 2024 minutes
- b. Approval of April 2024 minutes
  - i. Motion to approve both the March 2024 and April 2024 minutes made by Paul Froman and seconded by Joanne Lebrun. No discussion. Motion carried.

**III. Additions/Deletions to Agenda:**

- a. None

**IV. State Update:**

- a. Maine EMS Update to the Board was distributed with the meeting agenda prior to today's meeting.

## V. Old Business:

- a. Candidate interviews for the At-Large committee vacancy
  - i. Motion by Dennis Russel and seconded by Paul Froman to go into executive session to conduct interviews. Group goes into executive session.
  - ii. Group exits executive session at 0921 hrs.
  - iii. **Motion by Paul Froman to select Thomas Williamson for the At-Large position. Motion seconded by Ben Zetterman. No discussion. Motion is carried.**
  - iv. Joanne Lebrun adds that she hopes that those selected for positions will attend meetings and participate in activities. This supports the committee and education in the state. The group is in agreement.
- b. PIFT
  - i. Aiden Koplovsky reports that the IFT committee did not meet last month. IFT/PIFT was an item on the MDPB agenda for April, which they did discuss at their meeting. This is also on the agenda for the May meeting and will hopefully be discussed as well.
  - ii. Joanne Lebrun appreciates Amy Drinkwater bringing up the issue of IFT/PIFT consistently getting bumped from the MDPB agenda at last month's EMS Board meeting. The lack of direction regarding PIFT is becoming a struggle for services in the Regions.
  - iii. Joanne Lebrun also brings up that there will be a conflict between the June MDPB meeting and the Juneteenth holiday and asks if the MDPB will reschedule their meeting.
    1. Chris Azevedo advises that the topic was brought up at MDPB and they will be discussing the meeting conflict at the May meeting and making a plan regarding alternate meeting dates.

## VI. New Business

- a. Addition of a standard designated period for public comment during the monthly committee meeting.
  - i. Aiden Koplovsky discusses that there has been a desire among the group to designate a time in the meeting for public comment. This is done in other committees and some members have asked that we do the same.
  - ii. Discussion among the group.
  - iii. **Motion made by Dennis Russell to add a public comment period to the agenda – after call to order, prior to approval of minutes. Motion is seconded by Ben Zetterman. No further discussion. Motion is carried.**
- b. Training center leadership resignations.
  - i. The Training Center Directors for the EMS programs at both Southern Maine Community College and Kennebec Valley Community College have resigned their positions and are leaving their respective colleges. Also, the faculty AEMT lead instructor for Kennebec Valley Community College also resigned his position. The Training Center Directors also functioned as the Program Directors for all three of their respective licensure programs.
  - ii. Chris Azevedo wrote a letter to the EMS Board discussing the impact to the EMS education system and the issues that led to the resignations and discusses the letter with the group.

- iii. Aiden Koplovsky discusses that the Kennebec Valley administration reached out to Maine EMS for guidance and any assistance. They also reached out to APEMS to contract with them for assistance with some stop gap measures to ensure current students can complete their programs. Long-term solutions are still being fleshed out.
- iv. Aiden Koplovsky discusses succession planning and the lack of a mechanism to train education system leaders. Succession planning by training centers may be something we may want to consider in the future as the training center standards are reviewed and revised.
- v. Joanne Lebrun discusses the consistent lack of resources and staffing in the licensing education programs. How are we going to address those who can bring the resources to the programs?
- vi. Leah Mitchell
  - 1. Thank you, Joanne! We have built our system on a small number of people that do a lot of work. Until we invest in our educational infrastructure none of this will change.
- vii. Aiden discusses that education is the foundation of our EMS system and that an unstable EMS education system will not do anything to help resolve recruitment and retention issues. The Maine EMS office is aware of the situation and very supportive of efforts to mitigate issues. It was disappointing to see the lack of acknowledgement and sense of urgency from the members of the Board, and the problem that this is causing already. These issues are only going to get worse. It is important that we find a way to communicate this to the Board and stakeholders.
- viii. Steve Smith discusses that it may help to paint the picture to show how many EMS providers were coming out of the affected programs and then show what's not going to come out for the next year, at least. If we can paint that picture, we may be able to get some attention.
- ix. Chris Azevedo discusses that the numbers data are not reflective of the work involved to produce those graduate numbers, the effect of which is really the root cause of these resignations.
- x. Leah Mitchell adds that it's important to also consider that these issues are not limited to paramedic programs. AEMT, EMT and EMR programs also have the same or similar issues. Part of the problem lies in the institutions hosting these programs. They are only going to invest so much into EMS programs because they are expensive. We have a systemic problem within our education system, and then we have a systemic EMS problem that includes education. Education is often looked at to solve many problems in the EMS system and we cannot do that. We need to be part of the system but not the solution for all issues. That is part of the reason people are leaving . We cannot be expected to fix issues with minimal resources, minimal funding, and minimal ability to get things done. We have built our education system on the backs of hard-working people and not on a system that is functional and sustainable.
- xi. Leah Mitchell discusses that while there is data out there, having data doesn't address the dysfunction that causes instability in the education system.
- xii. Joanne Lebrun asks regarding what states have the most successful education systems. Success could be defined as faculty/adjunct faculty not working over capacity. Can we talk with them about what they have for resources. It also seems that various summits have been in silos. Perhaps there may be a way for leaders to

meet and determine what a successful education system looks like? What would it take to build that from the ground up?

- xiii. Mark Minkler discusses that in Vermont and New York, the environment is similar to what Leah Mitchell had described. Pay in many places is also a significant issue for recruiting and retaining program directors and instructors. This is something Maine EMS has no control over.
  - xiv. Joanne Lebrun asks if it might be possible to find salary ranges for instructors in other states? Also, culturally, education itself is taking a hit everywhere, including public schools.
  - xv. Discussion among the group regarding organizations that provide education and resources and costs.
- c. Review and discussion of current committee objectives
- i. Aiden Koplovsky discusses that the document distributed to the committee highlights objectives and asks if there are any change suggestions. There are none.
  - ii. Amy Drinkwater advises that PIFT will be kept on the front burner at the Board level. This should remain a committee priority as well.
  - iii. Paul Froman suggests scope of practice impacts on education. If there are significant scope of practice changes coming, and knowing that would add to the load, we may want to consider the effects of those coming down the pike.
    - 1. Aiden relates that MDPB has been advised that the changes they make do, in fact, impact education and that they should not be discussed in a silo.
  - iv. Aiden Koplovsky discusses the need to discuss and prioritize Instructor Coordinator issues and licensure.

**VII. Next Meeting**

- a. Date and time: Wednesday 12 June 2024, at 0900 hrs.
- b. No agenda items suggested.

**VIII. Adjournment:**

- IX. Motion to adjourn is made by Ben Zetterman and seconded by Paul Froman. Meeting adjourned at 1020 hrs.