



Approved February 2, 2022

January 5, 2022, Board of Directors' Meeting Minutes

Directors Present: Maggie Allen (Zoom), Richard Durost, Sherry Gilbert, Timothy Rector, Janna Townsend (Zoom), Linda Warner (Zoom)

Director Andrew Landry joined the meeting at 5:14 p.m. Director Allen left the meeting at 5:15 p.m. (disconnected)

Directors Absent: None

Staff: Heather King, Head of School; Rachel Roberge, Assistant Head of School; Jill Alves, Business Manager (incoming); Linda Belanger, Business Manager

Public: Fern M.Y. Desjardins, Chair, Maine State Board of Education, and Charter Commission Liaison (Zoom)

1. Call to Order – Chair Gilbert called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m. A quorum was declared.
2. Public Comment – Chair Gilbert thanked MeAA for their donation to the tree fund raiser. Mikayla Pooler, a volunteer from MeAA, put together 867 centerpieces and donated them to Robin's Nest in Waterville. Chair Gilbert also shared a letter from Samira, a MeAA exchange student from Ghana, highlighting her experiences at the Academy. The letter is a testament to the great work being done to support cultural exchange at the Academy. Ms. King introduced Jill Alves, new Business Manager for MeAA.
3. Approval of December 1, 2021, Minutes  
Motion: Rector/Durost – The minutes of the December 1, 2021, meeting be approved as written. Motion carried unanimously.
  - a. Approval of Minutes from December 7, 2021, Emergency Board Meeting  
Motion: Durost/Rector - The minutes of the December 7, 2021, Emergency Board Meeting be approved as written. Motion carried unanimously.
4. Administrative Report

Ms. King reviewed activities for the month of December, which included a visit to the Buker Teen Center in Augusta. The Teen Center has an alternative to suspension that teaches skill building, social justice, and behavior modification to students in place of the traditional suspension. Maine Arts Academy is looking for ways to partner with the Buker Teen Center in the future.

Ms. King reported that the financial audit is complete, and the results are pending. A lunch program audit is in process, and MeAA is preparing for a special education audit scheduled for this spring.

The CSP federal grant final report is due at the end of January. Ms. King, Wendy Betts and Linda Belanger will be preparing the report.

Ms. King provided updates on several MeAA courses. In photography, students focused on color, composition, and lighting. In graphic design, students are putting final touches on a skateboard logo and actual board design using Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator. In illustration, students finished some gesture drawings and added movement to a current character they developed. Next semester they will be writing and developing a graphic novel, comic book comic strip series, or a picture book. In business practices, students are finishing five new portfolio pieces. In foundation and studio art, students are finishing a room drawing, and they had to complete 10-minute drawing prompts. The start of the second semester will focus on anatomy drawing. Portfolio reviews will be done at the end of the semester in each of these programs.

The Theater Program is preparing for the One-Act Play, Requiem, which will perform on January 25, 26 and 27, 2022. The play was written by sophomore Emily Carlton and is directed by senior Amara Aiken. The play is a collaboration between the theater program and the Electronic Music Ensemble, which is composing music and soundscape to underscore the play.

The Kennebec Valley Honors Music Festival is scheduled for February 5, 2022. MeAA has seven students participating in the Festival.

MeAA submitted a report to the Charter Commission that highlighted NWEA scores. Included in the report were strengths and areas for growth. The NWEA will be administered in January.

Chair Gilbert asked about the conference that was held on December 10, 2021. Ms. King reported the conference was fascinating, and training has already been conducted

with the MeAA staff. One of the workshops attended included a discussion on barriers from family demographics, including equity and the need to be aware of cultural differences, noting that no child should ever feel invisible. Another workshop they attended was on behavior management. Director Durost noted his support of professional development for staff and administration, resulting with charged batteries and excitement among the staff.

## 5. Committee Reports

### a. Finance Committee

Director Rector provided a report of the December 22, 2021, Finance Committee meeting. Financially, MeAA is solvent, with respect to budget activity vs. actual. MeAA is slightly under budget, with a bank balance of approximately \$560,000.

Student enrollment on October 1, 2021, was 213, which is the number on which the State reimbursement will be based. It is anticipated that for 2022-2023 the monthly reimbursement to MeAA will be approximately \$189,500.

There are anticipated increases for salaries and benefits, as well as increased costs for facilities for the coming school year. The MeAA annual audit is complete, and the preliminary report is pending, with a final report coming in January.

Some changes have occurred in the Business Office. Jill Alves and Wendy Betts will be working with Linda Belanger on the transition plan for Human Resources and the Business Office.

### b. Academic Excellence Committee

The Academic Excellence Committee did not meet in December. The next meeting is scheduled for January 25, 2022.

### c. Governance Committee

Director Landry provided a report of the December 27, 2021, Governance Committee meeting. Ms. King prepared an analysis regarding students in programs for budgeting, planning and academic purposes. Discussion included a broader look at longevity compensation, with merits, pros, cons, and efficiency. As Board members, they are obligated to maintain confidentiality. There was question of whether Board members should sign a confidentiality agreement annually or some other period of time. It was asked whether Board members should sign an agreement when they become members, and the agreement would remain a source

of commitment throughout term, as well as the possibility of signing a new agreement upon renewal of Board terms.

d. Fundraising, Development/Marketing Committee

The Fundraising, Development/Marketing Committee did not meet in December. The next meeting is scheduled for January 24, 2022.

6. Additions/Adjustments by Chair/Directors

Chair Gilbert added two items to the agenda: an update on COVID and a discussion of the possibility of hosting a dance at the end of January.

7. Old Business

a. Update Bus Contract

The contract with Poland Bus Company includes a clause of a 3% raise for the next year, and the following year. If enrollment drops below 215, that raise may be renegotiated. The contract was sent to Poland Bus Company, and MeAA is waiting on its return.

b. Does the State of Maine periodically administer the Tobacco Survey?

Ms. King reported that the National Youth Tobacco Survey run by the CDC is tied together with the Maine Surgeon General's Office. Director Durost asked if the survey is a national or state survey, to ensure that comparative results are received for the State of Maine vs. the national level.

c. Update on Money Raised from Portland Pie Company

A fund raiser at Portland Pie Company was held on November 23, 2021. Approximately \$100 was raised. The fund raiser was done through an on-line ordering system, which had issues the day of the fund raiser.

8. New Business

a. Discussion/Motion Regarding Enrollment (If a current student leaves, can they be replaced?)

Ms. King reported that an emergency Board meeting was held on December 7, 2021, to discuss whether to close enrollment for the remainder of the school year due to some programs being at capacity and others not. Students are applying to programs that are full. MeAA is not allowed to go below 10% of 220 and now we are below that. Chair Gilbert contacted the Charter Commission, and they are fine with MeAA's numbers, that MeAA will not be "dinged." Director Durost asked if students who are applying to programs that are at capacity are being counseled to select another major. Ms. King noted that this is the case, and MeAA is waiting to

hear back if applicants are willing to switch to different spots. Ms. King noted that MeAA needs the ability to say that if one program is full, there is room in another program, allowing a blueprint for the future.

Motion: Rector/Warner – Should room become available in programs and grades that are currently at maximum capacity, MeAA will reopen enrollment for those programs. Programs not at capacity will continue to remain open. Motion carried unanimously.

Gina Post, Chief Program Officer of the Maine Charter School Commission, will be notified of the Board's action.

b. GBO, Family Leave Act Policy (First Reading, but Board passed it in the Staff Handbook already)

The Board conducted a first reading of Policy File: GBA, Maine Family and Medical Leave Act. Ms. King reported that this document was adopted as part of the MeAA staff handbook. It is now being moved to policy, as the Charter Commission has requested it be included in the policy manual. A second reading will be held at the February 2, 2022, Board meeting.

c. JK, Student Discipline Policy (First Reading)

The Board conducted a first reading of Policy File: JK, Student Discipline. Ms. King reported that this policy is not yet included in the policy manual. Policies from other schools were reviewed, with schools having almost the exact same language. A second reading will be held at the February 2, 2022, Board meeting.

d. Report on December Charter Commission Meeting

Director Durost provided a report of the December 14, 2021, meeting of the Maine Charter School Commission. There has been a request from the Maine Education Association that the Professional Standards Board be reintroduced to be able to work on issues helpful to education and revise, review, and impact policy.

Also discussed were State Board of Education Rule Chapter 60, New School Siting Approval, and Maine Department of Education Chapter 125, Basic Approval Standards: Public Schools and School Administrative Units. Hearings were not held prior to these proposed rule changes. Sarah Forester, an attorney at the state level specializing in education law, recommended moving forward, recognizing hearings were forgotten, scheduling hearings, and notifying the Governor's office and Attorney General's office so the Legislature may move forward this spring. Public hearings could be held in January. The intent is to have all schools in

compliance by July 2026. This would allow time for passage of LD 705, Resolve, To Improve Air Quality and Ventilation in Maine's Public Schools.

Also reviewed was charter school attendance, comparing schools and how well schools can do. Attendance is weighted heavily. Ms. Desjardins noted that all schools, not just charter schools, must report truancy rates. The definition of truancy is provided by the Maine Department of Education. Growth and making progress are just as important as the final numbers.

e. Quarterly President's Meeting with Jeremy Jones

Chair Gilbert provided a report of the quarterly meeting with Jeremy Jones, Executive Director of the Maine Charter School Commission, held on December 2, 2021. All charter schools were represented. A resident asked if all presidents could report on Committees, Board responsibilities and membership. It was noted that MeAA is doing well in terms of being compliant.

f. Arts Pathway Monthly Meeting with Jeri Pitcher

Chair Gilbert reviewed the December 10, 2021, Arts Pathway monthly meeting with Jeri Pitcher, Arts Faculty Chair/Theater Director. Discussion included recital and goals implementation. MeAA is putting together a wish list of items that the staff would like. It was decided that MeAA would solicit businesses for items that the budget is not able to cover. Kat Ludwig, Special Education/Math Teacher, and Russ Cox, Creative Media Teacher, shared ideas for the wish list. The list was shared with the Fundraising/Marketing Committee.

g. Recital December

The December recital was fantastic! Jon Neal, Music Director, orchestrated music for a small band. There was a piano solo by a student, and Greg Judd, Vocal Teacher, performed selections in four-part harmony. There were also performances by the dance band jazz ensemble. The Dance instructors had students perform a lively routine. Peter Herman, Music/Guitar teacher, did much of his own orchestrations. Both Mr. Neal and Mr. Herman placed Finale on their wish lists. This is a program that will help students write their own music.

h. Annual Monitoring Report from Commission

The report includes the mission, vision, values, and priorities; progress toward the strategic vision; performance of the charter school portfolio; services to support excellent performance; and financial performance. Ms. Desjardin reported that it comes down to meeting the mission and what MeAA is all about. MeAA is doing exactly what they said they would do in their charter. Ms. King noted this is in part

due to the support of the Board. It is all about communication and what is really happening.

Chair Gilbert reported that there was discussion that the Charter Commission have meetings at each of the schools. Also discussed were the Charter Commission liaisons. The liaisons are the eyes and ears on the ground and are a unique attribute of the program of charter schools in Maine. Without the liaisons, it could open the door for Charter Commission members to have no real source of information as to what the executive director wants them to have. The schools may lose much contact as they now have with Commission members.

Ms. King provided a COVID update. MeAA has submitted a waiver to be a testing site with the State. The State sends MeAA individual free tests. Prior to this, MeAA was paying for their tests. This week MeAA received 200 tests. Those tests will be used to test students/staff who may have symptoms. Test results must be reported back to the State. Ms. King reported that the rules have changed with respect to quarantining. Quarantine is now five (5) days.

There is a dance scheduled for the end of January, and Ms. King asked the Board if they would like to have all participants be tested. The Board provided its consensus, supporting the proposed dance with testing done the morning of the day of the dance.

## 9. Announcements & Upcoming Events/Meetings

a. Governance Committee Meeting - Monday, January 17, 2022, 4:00 p.m.

<https://networkmaine.zoom.us/j/83622141642?pwd=S0NwaIN4Q1I2K0FiMGdMcXdWU3pvQT09>

b. Fundraising/Marketing Committee Meeting - Monday, January 24, 2022, 4:00 p.m.

<https://networkmaine.zoom.us/j/84724239552?pwd=dThZYnRiUXpodVISN2I0R0oxbDBMQT09>

c. Academic Excellence Committee Meeting - Tuesday, January 25, 2022, 4:00 p.m.

<https://networkmaine.zoom.us/j/85720621395?pwd=RVliSFN0YlJVOGNMRjNycG9zakIndz09>

d. Finance Committee Meeting - Wednesday, January 26, 2022, 4:00 p.m.

<https://networkmaine.zoom.us/j/88384678668?pwd=Q1FUZmdGd1FyZTRmbk91Ujl4ZUQ4QT09>

## 10. Next Board Meeting – February 2, 2022



Chair Gilbert thanked Linda Belanger, Business Manager, for her dedication and service to MeAA, noting without her assistance MeAA would not be succeeding in the way it is succeeding. Ms. Belanger has done a remarkable job pulling everything together, understanding the school system and budget. Chair Gilbert read a plaque dedicated to Ms. Belanger for her dedication and hard work. The Board and Finance Committee wished Ms. Belanger well as she enters retirement.

11. Executive Session Title 1, Chapter 13, Sub-chapter 1, Freedom of Access, 405, 6A.1: Individual's Right to Privacy

Motion: Durost/Rector – The Board enter executive session per Title 1, Chapter 13, Sub-chapter 1, Freedom of Access, 405, 6A.1: Individual's Right to Privacy.

Time: 6:28 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

The Board exited executive session at 7:00 p.m. No action was taken.

12. Adjournment

Motion: Durost – The meeting be adjourned. Time: 7:00 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Monique Gilbert