



# Maine Academy of Natural Sciences

**MeANS Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**  
**Friday, 10/23/20 from 2:30 pm to 5:00 pm**  
**Maine Academy of Natural Sciences School Building**  
**13 Easler Drive, Hinckley, Maine**  
**BMR**

Board members present: Cheryl Bulmer, Cheryl Mercier, Dana Doran, Jesse Wechsler, Kim Patnode, Sally Beaulieu, Scott Byrd (by Zoom), Troy Frost (by Zoom), Shannon Webber (by Zoom), Robin Cyr (by Zoom), Scott Cyrway (by Zoom)

Staff members present: Matt Newberg, Danni Best, Becky Dennison, Nadya Plante, Angela Hesketh (Good Will-Hinkley), Donna Ferenc McGorty (Good Will-Hinckley by zoom)

Other: Sarah Belliveau, Preston Kinney (Auditors from Berry Dunn by Zoom), Bob Kautz (Maine Charter Commission by zoom), John Bird (Maine Charter Commission)

Board members not present: Tom Edwards

Cheryl Bulmer called the meeting to order at 2:34 p.m.

## **Additions/Adjustment to the Agenda:**

There were two adjustments to the agenda:

- 1) A presentation by a Threshold Student was postponed and replaced by the update on the program from Becky Dennison, Dean of Threshold.
- 2) Berry Dunn's presentation of the 2019-20 fiscal year's Audited Financial Statements was moved to 2:50 p.m. because Sarah Belliveau, the auditor, couldn't join until that time. There was no discussion and these changes to the agenda were approved.

## **Public Comment:**

There were no comments from the public.

## **Student/Staff Presentation:**

Becky Dennison gave a brief presentation about the Threshold Program, highlighting the following:

- The program currently enrolls 71 students -- the highest enrollment in the history of the program.
- The program is in the process of hiring a new teacher, which is unique in that the teacher should be qualified to teach all subjects.
- On the first Threshold Monday, 31 students attended by Zoom, which is a high success, since many students experience high social anxiety. Joining a large group of unknown people via computer is challenging for them.

- Teachers started teaching outside this fall.

Cheryl B., after consulting with a legal counselor, clarified voting rules at board meetings. The majority of the Board needs to be present in order to conduct board business. The vote of the majority of the members who are present at the meeting is needed to pass a motion. Anyone is allowed to abstain.

### **Consent Agenda:**

Consent Agenda included the following items:

- a. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes from 10/2/20
- b. HR committee Minutes
- c. Head of School Report

**There was a motion by Cheryl Mercier to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Dana Doran. Unanimous approval; motion carried at 2:45 p.m.**

### **Berry Dunn Presentation of FY 2019-2020 Audited Financial Statements (Sarah Belliveau and Preston Kinney)**

Berry Dunn auditors completed their audit of the 2019-20 fiscal year and presented the final draft to the Board. It was noted that the audit was clean. There were no significant adjustments or reclassifying of entries, with the exception of one entry adjustment that resulted in a net decrease to net income. The MeANS team was well prepared and responsive. There were no indications of material weaknesses in internal controls. No suspicious activity was uncovered using “surprise procedures,” which tested procedures around credit cards this year.

The following changes from 2019-20 were noted from the balance and statements and activities sheets:

- Cash line decreased due to a decrease in the due to related party liability.
- Accounts payable line decreased by \$60,967 due to the timing of capital purchases in 2019.
- Deferred revenue decreased by \$47,763, due to a variance in the school days used in calculation (16 days last year, compared to 15 days this year).
- Tuition revenues decreased by \$284,493 due to a change in state reimbursement for Special Education students.
- Grants and Contributions increased by approximately \$271,916 due to the CPS grant and the GWH grant.
- Instruction and student activities line increased by \$276,466 due to a 3% pay rate increase across the board in addition to adjustments to teachers’ salaries to meet the requirement for starting teacher salaries to be \$40,000.

- Auxiliary activities, including food and transportation, decreased by \$59,768 primarily due to a decrease in transportation costs.

Summaries of functional expenses:

- No significant changes in expense allocations from 2019 to 2020. MeANS continues to put the majority of its resources toward instruction and student activities (74% compared to 69% from last year).
- Total expenses increased by approximately \$189K in 2020, or 7%

There was a question from Jesse W. about the level of MeANS staff involvement in the process of preparing for the audit. The Finance Office of GWH does this for MeANS and GWH. They are not able to differentiate the time spent between GWH and MeANS, as the audit is done at the same time.

Another comment/question from Jesse W: Audit was passed with flying colors. Is there anything that the Board should be aware of? Two board members, Shannon W. and Angela H., who are members of the finance committee replied that there were no concerns. Cheryl B. was comfortable with the process.

Cheryl B. said that next year we need to look to the auditors to inform us of concerns as the person who heads the financial reporting has changed and we have a lot of federal money received for Covid-related expenses which needs to be kept track of and reported appropriately.

**There was a motion by Troy Frost to accept the audited financial statements of FY 2019-2020 as presented by Berry Dunn, seconded by Jesse Wechsler. Unanimous approval; motion carried at 3:19 p.m.**

The auditors from Berry Dunn left the meeting at 3:20 p.m.

**Action Item:**

Matt shared that the second CRF funds in the amount of \$202,000.00 was awarded at the end of September. Allocated funds must be used by 12/30/20, with the exception of funds dedicated to software licensing, which can extend beyond 12/30/2020. Supply chain delays also fall under the recent adjustment and can extend beyond 12/30/20. The budget for spending this money was submitted and approved. This budget includes:

- Chrome books - \$13000
- Technology support for teachers - \$2000
- Student supplies (kits for 184 students for remote learning at home) - \$6800

Matt N. asked the teachers and staff for input as to where the remaining funds should be spent, before submitting a budget to DOE. The most popular ideas were for extended outdoor space and

outdoor gear. There was also a proposal to build a pavilion (\$90,000) and the estimate for the timber frame for the structure is \$50,000 and \$20,000 for site work, and an additional \$20,000 for roofing. The pavilion would be 25' x 35' with eaves. There was also a proposal to build a yurt and platform (\$52,016). The yurt cost is approximately \$18,000 and platform for it is \$26,839. The yurt would be 30' in diameter, and the platform for it is 35'x35'.

Between all structures there will be an additional 4100 square feet increase of space. This could be used as an outdoor classroom and also would be a neat place to hold a graduation ceremony.

It was suggested that Matt N. will follow up with other potential contractors so that at least three are asked to provide competing estimates.

Kim P. shared her concern that the cost of material was not included in the provided estimate for the yurt, and that the labor and materials are not itemized. It was suggested that Matt N. will reach to the contractor and ask for an itemized list. Timing is a concern since the money needs to be spent by 12/30/20.

Matt confirmed that the items are in alignment with what is allowed under CRF funds.

Dana D. inquired as to how these two projects (pavilion and yurt) will align with previous commitments for the barn. He emphasized that the board did vote and committed money for the barn project already. He also pointed out all these structures need resources to be maintained.

Cheryl B. replied that \$82,000 has been designated on the GWH books for barn construction. Now, due to increase in material cost, the estimate on the barn is \$147,000. Thus, the project is on hold unless a solution can be found (such as fund raising).

Matt N. replied that these are low maintenance structures. They will be covered under our insurance policy. Timing for construction would ideally be to start in early November with a target completion date by the end of the year. He also shared that Jon Libby who would be building the pavilion will be including students in learning about the timber construction as he works on it.

Matt asked to change the action items on the agenda in a. Care funding #2 vote on pavilion of (around \$65,000) to now be (around \$90,000) and under item b. eliminate the request for a truck and replace the action for a yurt and platform for (around \$52,000)

Jesse Wechsler commented that he felt we should move forward with approval of the funds as Matt has the support of the staff, contractor commitment and recognition of ongoing maintenance costs.

**There was a motion by Jesse Wechsler to approve both action items: the pavilion for \$90,000 and a structure for yurt for \$52,000, seconded by Scott Byrd. Unanimous approval; motion carried at 4:07 p.m.**

**Information sharing:**

Updates from Head of School:

- The October 1st DOE report counted 184 students. The actual enrollment is slightly higher as a few students were accepted after October 1st. They do not count in this total.
- There are 68 Special Education students, constituting 36 % of the student population. This is the one of the highest percentages in the state.
- We now have the Ringer Award given to an outstanding member of the faculty or staff each month.
- First monthly newsletter was sent in October through Constant Contact.
- Dana D. hosted a group of students for mechanical logging field trip.

There was a request from Jesse W. to give an update on the COVID-19 situation at MeANS. Matt replied that although a nearby charter school had an outbreak, we have had no positive cases in the building. There was one positive case in the student body, however the student was tested before ever coming to the building. Any student who develops symptoms is asked to stay home. There is a return-to-school plan developed by the school nurse. We continue to be diligent in our precautions.

Head of School evaluation process (Kim Patnode):

- HR is making good progress in the process of head of school evaluation.
- By November 1st , 2020, the Board members and MeANS staff will receive an invitation to participate in a survey. A separate survey will go out to the MeANS families.
- By May 1st, 2021, Matt N. will complete a reflection of the Head of School professional growth plan which will include evidence of goal completion.

Verbal update from Academic Committee (Sally Beaulieu):

The Academic Committee's job is to make sure that the school follows the policies and curriculum as stated. The Committee used to visit the school and attend classes. It was asked how their work would be changed by Covid-19. Matt N. and Danni B. will work them so they can join classes remotely rather than in person.

Cheryl B. announced that the Mission and Bylaws amendments were approved by the Charter Commission and GWH Board. These changes will also be reflected on the website.

**Goal setting for 2020/2021:**

Cheryl B. outlined and discussed goals for 2020/21 and asked for volunteers. Cheryl M. indicated that she might be interested in helping with academic policies or evaluation. Troy F.

indicated that he will work on HR policies. Scott B. mentioned that help was needed with the Little Green light system to track donors. Jesse W. volunteer to help. Scott will have a development committee meeting to discuss other development goals and get assistance.

**Preparation for next meeting:**

There was discussion about whether there was a better day and time for board meetings to allow people to attend easier. It was decided to try a Thursday for our November meeting and do it later in the day. We will try 4pm.

**Next meeting is Thursday November 12th, 4:00pm to 6:30pm**

**There will be no meeting in December. This will give committee members time to work on goals. Goals will be discussed at the January meeting, and financials at the February meeting.**

**Any changes to future meeting dates/times will be set up after the November meeting takes place in order to see if the November change worked better for everyone.**

**Cheryl Mercier motioned for the meeting to adjourn. Dana Doran seconded. Meeting adjourned at 5:10pm.**