

Meeting Minutes

PRESENT: F. Celeste Branham, William Guidon Jr., Jennifer Burke, Janet May, Kelsey Preecs, Luke Shorty (remote), Scott Adams, Michael Williams (remote), Diane Lebson (remote), Betsy Sawyer-Manter (remote), Chelsey Fortin-Trimble (remote), Pamela Proulx-Curry, Mary Krebs, Ninette Irabaruta (remote), Tade Sullivan (remote),

STAFF AND GUESTS: Lucy Martin (remote), Maureen Kendzierski, Jamie McFaul, Michael Ashmore (remote), Brittany Gleixner-Hayat

PUBLIC COMMENT: There were no requests for public comment.

CALL TO ORDER

Pamela Proulx-Curry called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM. After the introductions of Commissioners, staff, and guests, the quiz answer was given. No Commissioners answered the quiz question prior to the meeting but Janet May was able to answer it correctly during the meeting. The protocols for a hybrid business meeting were covered before the Public Comment opened. The chair did remind members that conflicts of interest should be declared as agenda items come up.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Tade Sullivan has accepted a position outside of the state and will have to resign his position on the Board.

Amended Executive Committee minutes for September to recognize that the new Commissioner is Mary not Janet

Added the move to MOCA to agenda

APPRECIATIONS:

Diane Lebson extended appreciations to Nicki Janczura who is unable to attend

Celeste Branham extended appreciation to the Volunteer Maine staff for a productive Retreat

Brittany Gleixner-Hayat extended her appreciation to Michael Ashmore for setting up the conference room the day before

Tade Sullivan extends his appreciation to members of the Commission for their work and Brittany Gleixner-Hayat's work during the transition

CONSENT AGENDA: MOVED by Michael Williams to approve the consent agenda.

SECONDED by William Guidon. Vote on the motion (roll call): in favor – Adams, Branham,

Burke, Guidon, Lebson, May, Preecs, Sawyer-Manter, Shorty, Sullivan, Williams. Opposed – none. Motion passed.

Under the motion, the following minutes were approved and reports accepted:
Commission business meeting minutes of May 16, 2025 and Executive Committee report from September 2025.

PLANNING AND FUTURE INITIATIVES

Update on move to MOCA

Moving to MOCA regarding the financial and reporting changes. Speaking with Samantha Horn on the processes. Access to part B of the budget that creates the Management Analyst position that will soon be posted.

Diane Lebson asked about the general expectations of the role. Brittany Gleixner-Hayat discussed how it includes invoicing, creating reports, supporting and monitoring spending. At least 6 years of work experience is required and some experience with state data management to help identify patterns and issues.

The conference room at 19 Elkins will continue to be the meeting place for Commission Board meetings for the next six months.

Update on federal issues.

FY25 funding is secure but FY26 funding is still unsure. In previous government shutdowns the payment management service is not usually shut down but that may not be the case this time.

Michael Ashmore discussed how AmeriCorps released they would be using the same contingency plan as in 2023 for a potential government shut down

Michael Ashmore noted that shutdowns immediately affect AmeriCorps VISTA and are furloughed including Goodwill VISTA and Hunger Corps and would have to immediately stop service.

Betsy Sawyer-Manter discussed how the President discussed firing government employees during the shutdown. Michael answered that Volunteer Maine would not be affected but that there might be layoffs in AmeriCorps instead of furloughs.

Key takeaways from the National Service Summit including the overwhelming recognition of Maine at the Summit with both Michael Ashmore of Volunteer Maine and former Executive Director Maryalice Crofton receiving awards from America's Service Commissions (ASC)

Brittany Gleixner-Hayat shared appreciation for Chelsey Fortin-Trimble's contribution to the Summit with a Maine gift basket

Many Congressional representatives were also present at the National Service Summit including a Republican representative from Tennessee and Senator Coons both of whom expressed their support for service

Brittany Gleixner-Hayat would like to engage more AmeriCorps alumni moving forward

Chelsey Fortin-Trimble was elected to the ASC Board

ASC Board discussed a National Service Fund that would support ASC and Commissions in light of federal funding challenges

Michael Ashmore had a discussion with interim AmeriCorps director to hear directly about where they're at and what their plans are and her relationship with Mark Lloyd as the direct contact with the White House.

Commissioners discussed impacts of AmeriCorps funding on previous AmeriCorps research being used by nonprofits

Commissioners discussed how the volunteer requirement for eligibility of Medicare/Medicaid could promote volunteerism opportunities and connections with Maine food banks as a partner.

Foundation.

Celeste Branham mentioned new board member retired senior director from Eastern Maine Development Corporation corps and is a current economic consultant and recommended by Pam because of her grant writing experience and has taught grant management courses

Will be losing their active recording secretary and have three seats to fill

Held a strategy and workplan development session on September 2nd and themes emerged for the work plan for the Foundation moving forward over the next year including the continuation of the annual appeal, grant writing with greater contribution from Volunteer Maine, tap key donors and philanthropists as a strategy to inform the creation of the MOU between Volunteer Maine and the Maine Volunteer Foundation for the next year 25-26

Celeste Branham encourages Board members to recommend members for the Maine Volunteer Foundation board

Commissioner Recruitment

Pamela Proulx-Curry mentions that there are also five empty slots on the Commission Board to be filled

Annual Retreat

Final report from Maria Millard on the retreat is available for Commissioners' review.

Key outcomes included ensuring funding resiliency, establishing partnerships, increasing engagement, and reinforcing/supporting beneficial policies.

A three year strategic plan also needs to be created for Volunteer Maine.

Chelsey Fortin-Trimble had to transition to a different meeting

Commission Task Forces

The motion is to create a Strategic Plan Task Force for the Commission.

MOVED by William Guidon Jr. SECONDED by Jennifer Burke to move for discussion. No conflicts of interest were announced.

Discussion. This Task Force like the Ad Hoc Committee for the Retreat would include looking at the different models and determining what is the best approach. Bandwidth, budget for an external contractor, inclusion of public input, sharing the product, and deadline were all identified as priorities of the task force.

Would be about sixth months so that it would be available for when the new governor is in office

VOTE for creation of a Strategic Plan Task Force

In Favor: Adams, Branham, Burke, Guidon Jr., Krebs, Lebson, May, Preecs, Proulx-Curry, Sawyer-Manter, Williams; MOTION PASSED

Task force assignments will be emailed to Commissioners following the meeting.

FOCUS ON MISSION RESPONSIBILITIES

Commissioner Ambassador Program

Make your commitments based on geographic locations.

Diane Lebson served as the ambassador to Trekkers and Pamela Proulx-Curry was the ambassador to the Penobscot Nation

Celeste Branham and Britt have been invited by Resilience Corps to attend an in-service day with Window Dressers in October

Commission assignments lists will be updated and distributed to Commissioners

Mary Krebs asked for clarification of Commissioner's role as ambassador. Commissioners discussed how engaging with the programs, offering support, and making connections to program leaders are prioritized and that additional guidance is available for Commissioners.

BUSINESS REPORTS

Institutional Effectiveness and Accountability.

Celeste discusses looking for more task force members every first Wednesday of the month at noon

Celeste Branham has invited Panthea Burhams Program Manager for Wabanaki Reach to the October Commission Board Meeting

Service Programs Task Force

Maureen Kendzierski discusses Maine Service Fellows' service terms and the host site commitments and asks the Commission to vote on how long a site can host a Fellow and how long a Fellow can serve at a site. Currently host sites can host a service fellow twice but the project must be completely different or be significantly expanded. Request to codify that the service fellows can serve two 10 month terms of service and that sites can host two ten month term of service OR one twenty month term of service. The service member is not obligated to commit to the full twenty months of service even if they apply to the position advertised as twenty month they are only obligated to ten months and then a subsequent ten months.

These recommendations were developed in response to feedback from Host Sites

Question: if site does a ten month agreement and realize that they cannot complete the project in ten months and require longer

They cannot increase to twenty months but a review occurs at two months to evaluate where the project is and if it is feasible

Celeste MOVED Jennifer Burke SECONDED

Discussion was opened and closed

Roll Call: In favor Adams, Branham, Burke, Guidon Jr., Krebs, Lebson, May, Preecs, Proulx Curry, Manter-Sawyer, Williams MOTION PASSED

Public Policy.

Ruben Torres and Tade Sullivan are co-chairs of the public policy task force and focus is on meetings with five key legislators

Grant Selection and Performance Task Force.

Bill Guidon Jr. discussed how FY23 for Penobscot Nation funds are available but are restricted in their use

How best to use these funds – reached out to current grantees for additional capacity but ultimately opened a Rural Grant that will close October 15th and will have recommendations in November

Main Street Skowhegan mentioned they may have capacity to take on more but currently the task force is focusing on the Rural Grant applications

Executive Committee.

Minutes were posted and approved.

Communications Task Force.

Diane Lebson is focused on working with Maine Volunteer Foundation and is stepping away as chair for Communications Task Force.

Need to address the Communications Task Force in the absence of a Public Information Officer

Financial Task Force.

Jennifer Burke discussed the task force in absence of Luke Shorty and acknowledges Brittany Gleixner-Hayat's guidance in understanding the finances of the Commission

Brittany Gleixner-Hayat discussed the flexibility of finances that exists because of recent federal and staff changes.

William Guidon Jr. emphasizes that it is important to support the Commission in their decisions on financial decisions involving staff and programs.

Pamela Proulx-Curry expressed admiration for Brittany Gleixner-Hayat's strategic approach to the Commission's finances.

AmeriCorps (federal agency). No federal agency update.

Commission staff reports.

Michael Ashmore expressed remorse that he did not have his staff report available

Updates on NYC Climate Week and Serve Maine to be discussed in the coming meeting

BUSINESS WRAP UP

Orientation for new Commissioners

Pamela checked in on the hybrid meeting experience and all members that were online reported that the visual was good but the audio was spotty and all members present in person were also good.

Next scheduled business meeting is October 17th, 2025

Motion was made to adjourn it

Scott MOVED and SECONDED by Pam

was moved and accepted unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 12:03 pm.