

**Board of Commissioners**  
**Regular Business Meeting May 16, 2025**  
**Minutes**

**PRESENT:** F. Celeste Branham, Kelly Day (remote), William Guidon Jr., Necole Janczura, Janet May, Kelsey Preecs, Luke Shorty, Jenifer Tilton-Flood (remote), Ruben Torres, Scott Adams, Michael Williams, Diane Lebson (remote), Betsy Sawyer-Manter, Ninette Irabaruta (remote), Thomas Meuser (remote), Chelsey Fortin-Trimble (remote), Pamela Proulx-Curry

**STAFF AND GUESTS:** Lucy Martin, Maureen Kendzierski, Jamie McFaul, Tilan Copson, Michael Ashmore, Kofi Bofah, Brittany Gleixner-Hayat, Sara Knowles (online; Maine Conservation Corps)

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** There were no requests for public comment.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Luke Shorty called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM. After the introductions of Commissioners, staff, and guests, the quiz answer was given. No Commissioners answered the quiz question prior to 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:**

Luke Shorty announced he will be leaving early today to walk tomorrow at Thomas College for his MBA and Pamela, chair-elect, will take over the meeting after his departure.

**APPRECIATIONS:**

Happy birthday to Kofi Bofah of Volunteer Maine

Jenni Tilton-Flood appreciated the staff of Volunteer Maine for their assistance in testifying on behalf of LD876 to the legislature.

Written testimony was also provided by Pamela Proulx-Curry for both LD876 and LD1433

Luke Shorty appreciated Necole and Tilan for their hard work on the Governor's Service Awards that were incredibly successful.

Britt appreciated the board members' and staff's support and assistance during the transition into Executive Director.

**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,

Day, Fortin-Trimble, Guidon, Irabaruta, Janczura, Lebson, May, Meuser, Preecs, Proulx-Curry, Sawyer-Manter, Tilton-Flood, Torres, Williams. Opposed – none. Motion passed.

Under the motion, the following minutes were approved and reports accepted:  
Commission business meeting minutes of April 18, 2025 and Executive Committee reports from May 6, 2025.

## **PLANNING AND FUTURE INITIATIVES**

### **Update on federal issues.**

Luke Shorty discussed the termination of the AmeriCorps grants and the necessity of closing out and offboarding their members. Termination notices were sent on May 5<sup>th</sup> and the programs have until May 19<sup>th</sup> to close out their members though there is a 30-day grace period after the final day of service is identified. May 19<sup>th</sup> is also the day of the injunction hearing.

Michael Ashmore discussed that in good news the clarification that they submitted to ASC has been reviewed which would indicate the processing is occurring at AmeriCorps.

Brittany Gleixner-Hayat was contacted by the OIG about the impact of the cuts to Maine with a concern about how many programs were closed, how much were they worth, and how many there were left

Jenni Tilton-Flood mentioned that the ranking member of the House Approach Committee; Vice Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee; ranking member of the Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and Human Services; Education and Related Agencies on the Senate Appropriations Committee; and the ranking member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee sent a letter to the interim head of AmeriCorps calling for immediate reversal of layoffs and grant terminations.

Luke asked if this letter was a bipartisan letter and Jenni responded that it was mostly Democrats and Bernie Sanders (Independent).

Scott Adams appreciated the Communications team for the talking points and the press releases.

### **Foundation.**

Celeste Branham mentioned that they met on May 1<sup>st</sup> the treasurer was not able to attend to give a report on finances.

Grant applications for the Simmons Foundation and for the Maine Community Foundation were denied. Two grants remain in the pipeline.

Celeste asked for potential new Maine Volunteer Foundation board members as there is a need to expand the board and prepare a spreadsheet with members and their term.

### **Other (if needed)**

Brittany Gleixner-Hayat had a meeting with the Governor's Office on Friday with Hannah Pingree, Samantha Horn, and Sarah Curran to remind them of the importance of Volunteer Maine and update them on the situation regarding the loss of federal funding to Maine's AmeriCorps.

Hannah Pingree resigned, and Sarah Curran is now the Director of GOPIF.

## **FOCUS ON MISSION RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Commissioner Ambassador Reports on program visits.**

Jenni Tilton-Flood stopped in and checked in with Skowhegan Outdoors and encouraged other Commission members to reach out to their programs and check in. Members are very committed to continuing their work.

Luke Shorty had a conversation with Sara Knowles from Maine Conservation Corps regarding their efforts to keep their members in place and support them during the federal funding cuts.

## **BUSINESS REPORTS**

**Public Policy.** Jenni Tilton-Flood reported that in regard to federal issues the task force is continuing to build on relationships that the staff have already cultivated. Talked to all congressional offices last week about AmeriCorps and the benefits. Furthermore, LD876 Representative Morgan Rielly's bill to fund an additional 20 Maine Service Fellows in FY26 with \$700,000 from the legislature passed unanimously out of committee in a bipartisan effort. Now the focus is on the appropriations committee and bringing attention to the work that is being done and how the investment into 20 Maine Service Fellows. LD1433 passed on amendment with a fiscal note out of its work session as well. Representative Rielly will be presenting to his caucus on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of the value of service.

Jenni showed appreciation for Britt, Pam, and Samantha Horn for their support during the public comment and working sessions.

**Grant Selection and Performance Task Force.** William Guindon Jr. (Bill) discussed how there are three continuation grants as well as one new application. Luke, Bill, and Michael decided to call motions on each of the grants individually because of potential conflicts of interest. Bill gave summaries of each of the continuation grants and the new grant to the Commission. The motion is to approve funding up to the level of continuation for the

applicant contingent upon the resolution of legal actions and within the available timeframe.

MOVED by William Guindon Jr. (Bill) SECONDED by Pamela Proulx-Curry to move for discussion. No conflicts of interest were announced.

VOTE for Main Street Skowhegan continuation

In favor: Adams, Branham, Day, Fortin-Trimble, Guindon Jr., Irabaruta, Janczura, Lebson, May, Meuser, Preecs, Proulx-Curry, Sawyer-Manter, Tilton-Flood, Torres, and Williams. The motion passed unanimously.

Bill described the Alpha Legal continuation request and the great work that is being done by the organization and how they were a planning grant that incorporated Commission feedback into their applications and are now a success story for the process. The motion is to approve funding up to the level of continuation for the applicant contingent upon the resolution of legal actions and within the available timeframe.

MOVED by William Guindon Jr. SECONDED by Jenni Tilton-Flood. No conflicts of interest were announced. Discussion was opened.

Clarification was provided regarding the discrepancy between the executive summary and the budget in their application.

VOTE for Alpha Legal Foundation continuation

In favor: Adams, Branham, Day, Fortin-Trimble, Guindon Jr., Irabaruta, Janczura, Lebson, May, Meuser, Preecs, Proulx-Curry, Sawyer-Manter, Tilton-Flood, Torres, and Williams. The motion passed unanimously.

White Pines Programs continuation upon legal action. The motion is to approve funding up to the level of continuation for the applicant contingent upon the resolution of legal actions and within the available timeframe.

MOVED by William Guindon Jr. SECONDED by Michael Williams. No conflicts of interest were announced. Discussion was opened.

Clarification was provided around the discrepancies in the grantee's application.

VOTE for White Pines continuation.

In favor: Adams, Branham, Day, Fortin-Trimble, Guindon Jr., Irabaruta, Janczura, Lebson, May, Meuser, Preecs, Proulx-Curry, Sawyer-Manter, Tilton-Flood, Torres, and Williams. The motion passed unanimously.

The discussion moved into the new applicant for formula funds, Goodwill Industries of Northern New England.

Bill discussed the new application from Goodwill. Motion to approve funding up to the level of the application contingent on federal funding allocation and at the reasonable discretion of Volunteer Maine staff.

MOVED by William Guindon Jr. SECONDED by Pamela Proulx-Curry. No conflicts of interest were announced. Discussion was opened.

Extensive discussion occurred around the application. Commissioners expressed concern for the quality of the application and took into consideration the comments from peer reviewers and Commission board members. There was discussion around adding conditions for funding to the Goodwill application. Clarification was provided regarding the distribution of funding dependent on the results of litigation. A tabling of the motion for June was suggested but not followed through.

VOTE to approve funding up to the level of the application contingent on federal funding allocation and at the reasonable discretion of Volunteer Maine staff.

In favor: Adams, Branham, Day, Guindon Jr., Janczura, May, Preecs, Proulx-Curry.

Abstain: Fortin-Trimble, Irabaruta, Lebson, Meuser, Sawyer-Manter, Tilton-Flood, Torres, Williams.

8 voted in favor and 8 abstained their vote. The records show that those that voted all voted in favor so the motion passed.

**Executive Committee.** Luke discussed the next steps in their budget approval process as things have not been as usual. The Commission won't know if we have funding from the federal government for the Commission Support Grant and the CIF funds and that the application to the federal government was also created with both part one and part two of the state budget taken into consideration. It is uncertain whether part two of the state budget will be completed by June so the application for CSG and CIF funding only accounted for part one of the state budget. The Finance Task Force decided that if part two of the state budget was funded prior to June, that they could file an amendment to their application.

Motion to approve the budget as just explained by submitting part one of the state budget in the CSG and CIF grant applications and amending the application should part two of the state budget be approved.

MOVED by Celeste Branham and SECONDED by Michael Williams

VOTE to approve the budget as just explained by submitting part one of the state budget in the CSG and CIF grant applications and amending the application should part two of the state budget be approved.

In favor: Adams, Branham, Day, Fortin-Trimble, Guindon Jr., Irabaruta, Janczura, Lebson, May, Meuser, Preecs, Proulx-Curry, Sawyer-Manter, Tilton-Flood, Torres, and Williams. The motion passed unanimously.

June 20<sup>th</sup> is the next Commission meeting, and the National Service Staff Recognition Luncheon will be at 1 p.m. after the Commission meeting closes.

Michael discussed how the Commission has invited staff members from all national service programs in the state to the luncheon. The ambassadors for each service program sit with their program and the programs are recognized for their work. The RSVP's will be sent out in the next month.

**Financial Task Force.** Luke discussed how they will be meeting next Monday to look at the cash burn statement and how Kofi and Britt are developing materials.

*Luke Shorty leaves at 12:07 and hands over the meeting to Chair-elect Pamela Proulx-Curry*

**Communications Task Force (and Public Policy Task Force).** Ruben expressed appreciation for the contributions of the staff of the Commission for their assistance with talking points for the press releases.

Britt created an email with a summation of the material that Tilan has created in regards to communication on behalf of the Commission. Asked that Commissioners keep Volunteer Maine staff in the loop on any potential op-eds or communication with legislators

**Service Programs Task Force.** Kelsey discussed how Maine Service Fellows are fully enrolled, both host site and Service Fellow cohorts are onboarded, and Fellows will be participating in trainings hosted by NOAA in early June. The Green Employer Learning Cohort grant timeline from Service Year Alliance was extended into October so funds from that grant can also be used to support the Service to Career Pathways Policy Academy with the National Governor's Association.

**Institutional Effectiveness and Accountability.** Celeste discussed how they would like to have representatives from Wabanaki Reach for the June Commission meeting and Diane Lebson facilitated an introduction to the Executive Director. Potential collaboration with Wabanaki Reach on their programs and understanding their programs.

**AmeriCorps (federal agency).** No federal agency update.

**Commission staff reports** (items here in addition to published reports). Maureen reported that the NGA (National Governor's Association) Service to Career Pathways Policy Academy is working on bringing together service programs and industries in a June working group to develop potential partnerships between the two. Intermediaries that already have apprenticeship programs will also be invited.

## **BUSINESS WRAP UP**

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

Next business meeting is June 20, 2025 with a luncheon to recognize National Service Staff.

Motion was made to adjourn it was moved and accepted unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 12:25 pm.