

## Meeting Minutes

**PRESENT:** Alleyne Aular-Torres, F. Celeste Branham (remote), William Guidon Jr., Jennifer Burke, Janet May, Kelsey Preecs, Luke Shorty, Scott Adams, Michael Williams (remote), Diane Lebson (remote), Betsy Sawyer-Manter, Chelsey Fortin-Trimble (remote), Pamela Proulx-Curry, Mary Krebs, Necole Janczura

**STAFF AND GUESTS:** Lucy Martin, Maureen Kendzierski, Jamie McFaul, Michael Ashmore  
Brittany Gleixner-Hayat, Linda from Hospice Volunteers of Somerset County

### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Pamela Proulx-Curry called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM. After the introductions of Commissioners, staff, and guests, the quiz answer was given. One Commissioner answered the quiz question prior to the meeting. Mary Krebs answered the quiz correctly. The protocols for a hybrid business meeting were covered after Public Comment opened. The chair did remind members that conflicts of interest should be declared as agenda items come up.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Michael Ashmore will be retiring at the end of the year

### **APPRECIATIONS:**

Mary Krebs wanted to appreciate Jamie McFaul and other Commissioners for their support during the grant review

Diane Lebson wants to appreciate Celeste Branham for supporting the Maine Volunteer Foundation and Britt Gleixner-Hayat for raising the profile of the Commission

### **CONSENT AGENDA:**

Adding to the Agenda discussion around the Governor's Service Awards by Luke Shorty

MOVED by Luke Shorty to approve the consent agenda. SECONDED by William Guidon Jr. Vote on the motion (roll call): in favor – Adams, Aular-Torres, Branham, Burke, Day, Fortin-Trimble, Guidon, Janczura, Lebson, May, Preecs, Sawyer-Manter, Shorty, Torres, Williams. Opposed – none. Motion passed.

Under the motion, the following minutes were approved and reports accepted:  
Commission business meeting minutes of October 25, 2025 and Executive Committee report from November 17, 2025.

Minutes from the previous month need review

## **PLANNING AND FUTURE INITIATIVES**

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

The federal government has reopened.

The regular AmeriCorps monthly call is now scheduled for December

So far there has not been a NOFO released for the AmeriCorps awards; relevant parties have been notified that there will be a tight turnaround for the application and Jamie McFaul and Michael Ashmore have created an RFA in anticipation.

Michael Ashmore noted that the timeline will be equivalent to what is usually done where the AmeriCorps Seniors NOFO will be released first and that the AmeriCorps website is still under construction which would be necessary for releasing the NOFO

Luke Shorty asked if the federal government being funded until December will push the NOFO further into the new year

### **Inquiry on Volunteer Maine Programming for Governor's Office.**

Interest from the Governor's office regarding Volunteer Maine and a document was created to inform Samantha Horn and the Governor's office

### **Service to Workforce Grantee National Convening.**

Volunteer Maine represented at the National Governor's Association Service to Workforce Policy Academy Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah

Because Maine's AmeriCorps programs were able to continue working during the shutdown, Maine was the only policy academy in 25-26 that has developed apprenticeship pathways

Maine Conservation Corps has created an apprenticeship and other programs are in the process just will not be completed by the close of the Policy Academy

Maureen Kendzierski made a connection with the Schultz Foundation regarding their Mental Health Youth Corps which focuses on recruiting youth between the ages of 18-24 and training them to support younger folks in mental health

Delaware has a Catalyst Corps that is focused on supporting municipal and state government in job activities where there is a dearth of support – in Delaware this surfaced as reviewing job applications

Minnesota has a Senior Care Corps that focuses on caring for seniors

Brittany Gleixner-Hayat provided context regarding this initiative which was done in collaboration with the Department of Labor. It was an exploratory grant to see possibilities

### **MSF Retreat in Machias.**

Maureen Kendzierski discussed the Fellow Retreat at the Sunrise County Economic Council facility in Machias. Fellows engaged in a training with Dr. Brenda Zollitsch on day one and then presented on their work the next day.

Representative Christina Mitchell and Representative Morgan Rielly attended virtually.

Luke Shorty asked about the Education Awards and if the Maine Volunteer Foundation was covering them. Maureen Kendzierski clarified that for the current cohort of Fellows, the Resilient Maine NOAA grant is supporting the Education Award. The Education Award is only applicable to previous or current schooling costs similar to AmeriCorps.

Ruben Torres asked about feedback for improving the program created from the retreat. Maureen Kendzierski responded that there was interest in developing more concrete pathways from service into the workforce and how to support more Fellows. The Fellows also contributed to the conversation around creating a more intentional recruitment process.

Diane Lebson asked about NOAA funding and concern with federal funding cuts. Maureen Kendzierski clarified that the NOAA funding covers full funding for 5 cohorts but not necessarily 5 years of funding. Costs do fluctuate year to year for supporting the Fellows. Currently there is no perceived immediate risk to the loss of this grant.

If the NOAA grant goes away there are no Maine Service Fellows or a Volunteer Services Coordinator.

Now must create selection criteria for deciding on sites. Board will vote today if the Executive Committee can decide to

MOTION to allow the Executive Committee to develop and approve selection of site criteria for the Maine Service Fellows host sites

MOVED by Mary Krebs SECONDED by Kelsey Preecs

Discussion

Roll Call In favor: Adams, Aular-Torres, Branham, Burke, Day, Fortin Trimble, Guidon Jr, Janczura, Krebs, Lebson, May, Preecs, Sawyer-Manter, Shorty, Torres, Williams

Motion passed unanimously.

Maureen Kendzierski invites any Commission Board member to contribute to the selection process which will begin December 12

### **Maine Volunteer Foundation.**

Celeste Branham discussed the abbreviated meeting done earlier this month where they discussed the funds that the Maine Volunteer Foundation currently has as well as the Annual Appeals letters.

Betsy Sawyer-Manter mentioned the lack of return envelope included in the appeal letter and that a Thank You note should be included in the future for donations. Celeste Branham agrees.

Currently there are 7 Board Directors including Lance Boer, the Foundation Secretary who is leaving the Board

Brittany Gleixner-Hayat and Lucy Martin collaborated on a Betterment Foundation grant application that was applied through the Maine Volunteer Foundation, this grant was recommended by Vicki Rusult, the newest member of the Maine Volunteer Foundation who also assisted in reviewing the application

### **FOCUS ON MISSION RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **Statute Change.**

Volunteer Maine's state statute is now under the Maine Office of Community Affairs

#### **Legislative Engagement.**

Ruben Torres and Chelsey Fortin-Trimble discussed best practices on engaging with state legislators including recommended language and emphasizing impact but not a specific position.

Torres and Fortin-Trimble brought forward different scenarios for Commissioners to practice engagement with legislators.

Diane Lebson wants to share this information with grantees as well. Brittany Gleixner-Hayat notes that Volunteer Maine provides that training to new grantees and that Maine Association of Nonprofits also has trainings that they offer

### **BUSINESS REPORTS**

#### **Public Policy & Communications Task Force.**

Jennifer Burke and Brittany Gleixner-Hayat met with the Speaker of the House Fecteau regarding introduction to Volunteer Maine who suggested having a Volunteer Maine day in the Hall of Flags potentially with Maine Office of Community Affairs.

### **Grant Selection and Performance Task Force.**

William Guidon Jr. recognized the peer reviewers and the grant task force for their work in reviewing the applications for the Rural AmeriCorps RFA

William MOVED to approve funding of the Hospice Volunteers of Somerset County grant application at \$55,440 with 2.2 MSY, contingent on the correction to their budget cost per MSY and clarification to their performance measures outcomes pending corrections. Scott Adams SECONDED

Discussion was opened. Discussion ensued regarding the waiver for an audit because of a lack of capacity. Grants Task Force recommends a third party for an audit. Pamela Proulx-Curry mentioned that audits are expensive. Mary Krebs finds that a CPA would be a reasonable expense expectation for the grantee. Betsy Sawyer-Manter recognized that given their budget size they may not be required to have a third party audit.

Michael Ashmore clarified that even if they are not required to have an audit they are required to have a financial review and that they have been a planning grantee.

Luke Shorty asked about the budget. Jamie McFaul clarified that they have \$50K in hand

Luke Shorty asked if there was concern about their capacity for data reviews as it was deemed weak by reviewers. William Guidon Jr. noted that there was not a great concern

Luke Shorty wanted to acknowledge that the need that this program would serve in Somerset County is great.

*Note that Chelsey Fortin-Trimble and Diane Lebson had to step away*

Roll Call: In favor Adams, Aular-Torres, Branham, Burke, Day, Guidon Jr., Janczura, Krebs, Lebson, May, Preecs, Manter-Sawyer, Shorty, Torres, Williams MOTION PASSED

### **Executive Committee Task Force.**

No comments to report

### **Three Year Service Strategy Task Force.**

MOTION to approve the State Service Strategy Process Document where the Task Force approves Facilitator MOVED by Luke Shorty SECONDED by Scott Adams

Brittany Gleixner-Hayat discussed the purpose and information from the Three Year Service Strategy. Gleixner-Hayat noted the need for an external facilitator for this process. Commission Board members were asked to review background materials. Discussion around the development/enactment of the Three Year Service Strategy will occur during Commission Board meetings.

Discussion was opened.

Luke Shorty asked about the budget cost for the external facilitator. Ruben Torres asked what the contingencies are when things might go wrong. Brittany Gleixner-Hayat mentioned that in Phase 3 is when there might be the most complications due to incorporating public feedback and other Volunteer Maine events. Gleixner-Hayat encouraged that to help alleviate these possibilities, have individuals each plan several events/sessions rather than one person plan them all. Meetings will have to occur in rural and underserved areas. Betsy Sawyer-Manter asked about what the experience has been in the past of receiving public input. Luke Shorty responded that when this occurred before COVID that there was substantial feedback, Celeste Branham concurred.

Facilitator selection would have to be competitive. Jennifer Burke asked about capacity for facilitating group discussions and Brittany Gleixner-Hayat assured that the facilitator's role would be to support these groups and that the Commission would also assist.

Michael Ashmore clarified that the process would have to conclude where the final Facilitator approval because it is a competition is approved by a group. Luke Shorty clarified that the Task Force would have final approval of the Facilitator in the competition process. Facilitator is anticipated to be chosen by end of January/beginning of February at the latest.

Roll Call In Favor: Adams, Aular-Torres, Branham, Burke, Day, Guidon Jr., Janczura, Krebs, May, Preecs, Sawyer-Manter, Shorty, Torres, Williams. Motion PASSED unanimously.

### **Service Programs Task Force.**

Kelsey Preecs discussed how goals of Governor's Service Awards have changed. Ad hoc committee for planning the Governor's Service Awards. Service Programs Task Force will review nominations for the Governor's Service Awards. Nominations for Governor's Service Awards open at the first of the year.

Service Programs Task Force is assisting in the launch of ServeMaine. Michael Ashmore has sent out a list of agencies that he has already reached out to. Ask Commission Board members to make profiles on ServeMaine.org and reach out to agencies to create accounts and post their volunteer opportunities.

Michael Ashmore notes that Volunteer Maine is going to be conducting a large public campaign to have volunteers sign up for the site.

Mary Krebs asked about United Ways collaboration with ServeMaine. Brittany Gleixner-Hayat discussed how there are ongoing conversations and having a meeting at the beginning of December with the United Ways organizations. Commissioners were invited to attend. Krebs asked about potential engagement between ServeMaine and 211. Gleixner-Hayat clarified that there will be no engagement between ServeMaine and 211.

Necole Janczura mentioned the lack of Arts/History interest in creating an account on ServeMaine. Michael Ashmore asked for additional feedback moving forward as the Commissioners engage with ServeMaine

Luke Shorty discussed how the first Governor's Service Awards planning meeting occurred.

Governor's Service Awards in the past were always held in May because it is National Volunteer Month.

Michael Ashmore recommended speaking with Chelsey Fortin-Trimble to promote the Governor's Service Awards nominations

Celeste Branham asked whether there are representatives of the Maine Volunteer Foundation. Luke Shorty confirmed that Orion Breen, Vicki Rusult, and John Portela are all participating.

Public Policy & Communications Task Force will be asked to assist with GSA promotion

Roll of Honor Nominations will be closed in March. Michael Ashmore mentioned that there could be two deadlines one for the competitive that require review and one for the Roll of Honor that does not require a review and want to optimize participation.

### **Institutional Effectiveness and Accountability.**

Celeste Branham conducted an informal poll for feedback on Panthea Burns' presentation which was positive. The showing of the Dawn Land film as a potential program from Panthea Burns' presentation was chosen by the Task Force. Commissioners would be expected to watch the film on their own time and engage in a panel discussion following the film. The film has an additional cost for reservation that would need to be funded likely from small grants.

### **Financial Task Force.**

Luke Shorty mentioned that the task force will meet quarterly moving forward. Brittany Gleixner-Hayat mentioned that financial reports were finalized earlier this week.

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

**Commission staff reports.**

Brittany Gleixner-Hayat recognizes the Commission staff's reports

**BUSINESS WRAP UP**

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 December 19th, 2025

Motion was made to adjourn it

Luke Shorty MOVED and SECONDED by Kelsey Preecs and accepted unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 12:55 pm.