

**MAINE SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Special BOT Meeting Minutes
Monday, July 29, 2020
Maine School of Science and Mathematics
VIRTUAL

The Special Board Meeting is called for the purpose to discuss the reopening plan for MSSM and to vote, if warranted, to authorize the scope of operations for MSSM this fall.

Pursuant to MSSM by-laws only those Board Members in attendance at the Special Board Meeting may vote and pursuant to current State of Maine emergency declarations all votes shall be roll call votes.

Board members present were: K. Beaulieu, T. Bolen, K. Brackett, J. Chalmers, D. Coit, D. Ferguson, Chair; J. Havu, D. King, J. McGreevy, D. Pearson, Clerk, J. Philbrick, J. Pike, M. Reagan, L. Renick-Butera, R. Rice and A. Scott.

Absent were: M. Anderson, D. Chuhta, D. Haines, Honorary Member, J. Herweh, P. Orne and J. Patterson, Honorary Member.

I. The meeting was called to order at 3:00pm by D. Ferguson, Chair, followed by introductions.

II. Public Comment.

D. Ferguson stated that due to the overwhelming response to submitted Public Comment, they will not have the time to read all the comments submitted but they are available on Google Sites (located here: <https://sites.google.com/a/mssm.org/mssm-bot/home/board-meetings/2019-2020/special-meeting-july-29-2020>). Public Comment by those in attendance today will need to be limited to 2 minutes.

- D. Melega stated that he was part of the group working with D. Pearson regarding the opening of the school. He thanked D. Pearson for including him. He shared the MEDOE responsibilities (link located here: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/framework/part-I>). He highlighted Section I, Part 1: Physical Health and Safety from "Framework for Returning to Classroom Instruction," which states: "Schools should evaluate their existing ventilation capabilities and ensure that they are maximizing their current capacity. Adequate ventilation is required for classrooms, with schools having flexibility in implementation such as using properly working ventilation systems or outdoor air exchange using fans in open window or door."). He stated that LCS has failed to meet these requirements regarding ventilation components. He expects this will be looked at and addressed before we can safely move in and stressed to the BOT that we need to take care of these issues right away. (link to document located here: <https://schools.forhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2020/06/Harvard-Healthy-Buildings-Program-Schools-For-Health-Reopening-Covid19-June2020.pdf>).

**MAINE SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

- C. Alvarado stated that Limestone is far enough away. He understands the concerns, but we need to step back and think of the harm if we don't come back to school.
- M. Corey thanked everyone for all the work they have put into this. He agrees with Mr. Alvarado. He doesn't know if there has been any conversation about testing when the students come in. Based on this, maybe the school opens up, but trips to the store, etc. will come at a later date. He states his daughter attend school in Germany where they attend in-person classes.
- H. Brigman stated that she took part in the planning of opening the school. She wrote her comments before learning of the ventilation issues brought up by D. Melega and asks that the BOT seriously consider this. She read her comment. (located on Google Sites: <https://sites.google.com/a/mssm.org/mssm-bot/home/board-meetings/2019-2020/special-meeting-july-29-2020>).
- C. Berube stated that she was also a part of the planning for reopening the school. She disagreed with the logic that kids don't get COVID-19. The data is there that they do get it and die from it. She stated she is in favor of the hybrid model vs. fully opening due to: 1. All other boarding schools are keeping their room attendance down. 2. D. Melega's point about the LCS ventilation. She states that COVID-19 will happen here and she doesn't think we can keep them safe. We teach at the highest quality and should be able to teach remotely. If we can't teach remotely, who can?
- M. Rethman is a parent and stated he appreciates the opportunity to speak. Unfortunately, the BOT gets the challenge of having to balance all these thoughts and comments. He says we need to recognize the semblance of balance and have to account for 2 distance learning events (flu in 2018 and COVID-19). To be fair, the information that went out prior to the BOT meeting didn't explain how to manage risks. He added that the benefit of Limestone is that we are in a remote location.
- J. Pelletier is a student at MSSM and stated that as a resident of this area, the other public area schools are doing a hybrid model. Even though we're remote there is always a risk. He mentioned the recent outbreak that happened in Walmart in Presque Isle.
- M. Grillo said that mental health needs to be forefront. Is it reasonably safe to keep the students here?
- I. Atkinson stated that he would not like to be here for several months on end without a break though he loves MSSM and the people. How necessary is it to go back? Is there really a point to it? Online is definitely harder.
- S. Creagan is the father of 1st year 10th grader. He said the reason they applied to MSSM is due to the high quality curriculum and remote location of Limestone. He is comfortable with 6 weeks, but not 13 weeks. We need to think of testing strategies.
- R. Krishna is the father of a 1st year. He is in favor of the completely online option. False negatives have been coming out of the COVID-19 tests. He recently read about Stanford HS going completely online. The school made great advancements in making this happen.
- D. Ferguson asked D. Pearson to give a summary of the options.
- D. Pearson stated it will be challenging this year. There is no certainty of what the fall is going to look like with the pandemic. They are trying to maintain flexibility. We know and recognize there are many unknowns. He sees this more as "pros" rather than "bubble." He recognizes all the thoughtful comments and truly appreciates them. Also special thanks to the members of reopening

**MAINE SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

committee. We looked at 3 options based on safety and our high standard of academic programming. Also wanted to foster relationships between the students and staff. It will be challenging. He wants to be clear with everyone that the timeline for a decision is running out and we do need to move forward and start making plans. Within the criteria mentioned above, they discussed the options that were sent to the community.

- K. Beaulieu stated that the filters are being checked by LCS and they are going to go around each room to repair windows. She wasn't aware of these issues beforehand. If anyone knows of windows that need repair please let them know.
- K. Brackett asked if LCS is going to keep up with cleaning, sanitizing. Does LCS already have these supplies available?
- K. Beaulieu answered she is not aware of all the details but believes they are doing this and will. She knows D. Pearson is in talks with their office.
- D. Eustis-Grandy stated there are some very serious concerns about the cleaning.
- K. Brackett stated she can look into what Jackson Labs is using and would be happy to connect regarding their process of sanitization.
- D Pearson shared comments from D. Dougan about his concerns with chemicals. He said that he does have a letter from LCS regarding their protocols.
- M. Reagan asked if there is a way to come up with an additional plan (plan 4?). A hybrid of a hybrid maybe?
- L. Renick-Butera is wondering why the committee went with 13 week instead of break in between.
- D. Eustis-Grandy stated the reason was to take the students to Thanksgiving break and due to testing requirements.
- K. Brackett asked what free on campus testing is available to the school?
- D. Pearson stated that we have to have a reason to be tested. Possibly coordinating with UMaine system to accomplish.
- R. Rice stated that Jackson labs and Hospitals have exclusivity to be able to do this.
- M. Grillo said that in order to do this, we need to coordinate our schedule with UMPI. We are waiting on this meeting to take place. It's \$123/student.
- D. Pearson said they are also looking at Northern Light Health and Cary Medical Center for testing options.
- R. Rice stated that UMPI is beginning testing next week. We could coordinate moving days with that but they wouldn't want UMaine students in with MSSM students.
- M. Brozman asked if the testing through UMaine is for 1 test or more?
- R. Rice answered that they have contracted for thousands of tests over the UMaine system. MSSM could do the same thing but would need a separate contract. MSSM would have to coordinate with UMaine dates as they are already set.
- D. Eustis-Grandy asked if there is any possibility of being reimbursed for our testing?
- R. Rice answered that MSSM could potentially use COVID-19 relief funds. It is very difficult to get testing done in Aroostook county. It is only done if the CDC requires it.

**MAINE SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

- D. Ferguson/D. King stated that the reopening plan could be a fluid operation depending on what the governor, CDC, etc. decides. We could make a decision today and have to change it all tomorrow.
- R. Rice stated that any decision made today is provisional.
- D. Pearson stated how long is the plan for? The goal is for the whole year, but we will have to re-visit this throughout the school year again and again (including parents/LCS/ etc. in the process).
- R. Rice gave M. Grillo the UMPI testing dates: August 5th, August 18th, Aug. 23-24, and Sept. 3.
- M. Brozman asked for clarification on whether RA's will be there the entire time (both semesters). The answer is yes. He also asked why chat was disabled on the Zoom meeting.
- T. Moore (scribe) explained that she cannot save the chat discussions due to a setting. She would have to screenshot each section for the purpose of the minutes.
- D. Pearson stated that technology pieces won't be in place until October due to Grant process for funding of our needs.
- M. Reagan asked if there is a policy in place for staff to request to work from home?
- D. Pearson stated that it was made clear we will look at this on an individual basis.
- L. Renick-Butera asked what support is in place for the school nurse.
- D. Pearson shared that the current Director of Health Services (C. Farber) resigned on Monday, but we do have someone (also a Registered Nurse) in place that will be living in the dorm and is already a part of the community. He stated that RI's will also be assisting the nurse. Dr. Morningstar, our school physician, will also be helping. Additionally, he has reached out to other boarding schools to inquire about their processes.
- L. Renick-Butera asked what supports are in place for RI's then?
- M. Grillo stated that we established that a full RI staff is 6 at the dorm. We are currently down to 5. We have 4 RI's and have posted the position. With the inclusion of E. Pelkey and the nurse, that would be give us a total of 6 people living in the dorms right now.
- M. Brozman asked if there is anything in place to restrict movement of RI staff as well from being brought back into the dorm?
- D. Pearson stated that we would be asking everyone to follow the same protocols that students will need to do. We are asking them to be sensible, but we can't tell them they can't go out.
- D. Ferguson asked D. Pearson if he has a recommendation for the BOT about opening the school.
- D. Pearson stated he is in a very difficult position. We only have so much control. Based on conversations and all the things that will need to be done, he is looking at the Hybrid model as a recommendation, based on the number of students we can safely handle in the dorm and academic bldg. Any larger number of students and he worries about complete "burn-out" of our resources/staff. He thanked D. Ferguson for asking.

R. Rice motioned that the Board of Trustees accepts and supports the recommendation of the Executive Director of the Hybrid Model, regarding the Maine School of Science and Mathematics Back to School Planning scenarios. The Board also acknowledges the fluid nature of this situation and the possibility, even likelihood, of required significant changes to the implementation of the proposed plan. The Board asks that the Executive Director update the Chair and Executive Committee to alterations to the plan as warranted, seconded by D. King.

**MAINE SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Dr. EG would like to do something for the Seniors.

M. Brozman stated that many seniors he has talked to, feel that online education is not the same and asked if all the seniors can be on campus.

D. Ferguson stated it is clear that online learning is not the same, but we can't offer all students to come back in a safe manner at this time.

R. Rice stated that density is key. Based on what M. Grillo said earlier, there is a huge leap for lowering safety if there are 3-4 people in a room. He also mentioned the wastewater testing. It was \$5k every time they came and did it for UMPI. He added that their staff does this testing and may be able to offer this to MSSM.

M. Reagan asked if there is a back-up to be able to offer rooms at the Bunker Inn maybe?

D. Pearson stated that the Bunker Inn has offered help at a competitive rate, but it is still a hotel with people/contractors coming in and out. It is also, self-catering so he doesn't see this as a long term solution at all.

J. Pike do we have any guidance from the state?

D. Ferguson answered that it is up to each school board to come up with the plan. They pushed that down to the local level, so it is up to us. We have reached out to the state and it is clearly our decision on how we re-open.

R. Rice stated there are clear guidelines on certain protocols such as face masks in the classroom, but other than those things, there is very little.

D. Eustis-Grandy stated that Dorm rooms with doubles would be 109 total students.

R. Rice added that we may need to quarantine at some point, so filling all those rooms is not a good option.

D. King stated we should leave the execution of the little things we just talked about to Administration.

K. Brackett asked when does money come through from the state (flat funding) for this academic year?

D. Pearson answered that we already received flat funding to start this new year.

D. Ferguson added that we receive this quarterly.

**MAINE SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

D. Eustis-Grandy stated that we didn't look at what the financial aspect of Room & Board for hybrid model would look like.

D. Ferguson asked D. Pearson about this.

D. Pearson stated that we have to make sure people recognize that the school has to operate and Room & Board goes to the operation of the school. This is as far as we got with this, but it has to be looked at it. We also have to look at the school being able to function. We still need to be able to operate the school regardless of hybrid model.

R. Rice motioned to make a friendly amendment to state: back to school planning recommendation of hybrid model, seconded by D. King.

Roll Call Vote:

J. McGreevy – Yes, R. Rice – Abstaining, M. Reagan – Yes, L. Renick-Butera – Yes, K. Brackett – No, K. Beaulieu – Yes, J. Pike – No, J. Herweh – No, J. Havu – Yes, J. Chalmers – Yes, D. King – Yes, D. Coit – Yes, J. Philbrick. – Yes, D. Ferguson – Yes, T. Bolen - Yes

Motion passed with 11 yes, 3 no and 1 abstain.

D. Coit motioned to adjourn at 5:00pm, seconded by R. Rice.

Roll Call Vote:

J. McGreevy – Yes, R. Rice – Yes, M. Reagan – Yes, L. Renick-Butera – Yes, K. Brackett – Yes, K. Beaulieu – Yes, J. Pike – Yes, J. Herweh – Yes, J. Havu – Yes, J. Chalmers – Yes, D. King – Yes, D. Coit – Yes, J. Philbrick. – Yes, D. Ferguson – Yes, T. Bolen - Yes

Passed unanimously.