



THE MAINE EDUCATIONAL CENTER FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

GOVERNOR BAXTER SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
One Mackworth Island, Falmouth, ME 04105

Board of Directors
February 5, 2026

4:35pm **Workshop: Board Self-assessment Next Steps** Eric Waddell, *MSMA Executive Director*

Meeting Minutes

6:09pm I. **Call to Order and Roll Call of Board Members**

Present: Tommy Minch, Chair, Anna Perna, Vice Chair, Roxanne Baker, Lisette Belanger, Jason Bubier, Beth Campbell, Barbara Millios, Janet May, Mike Pulsifer, Dawna Thorpe, Sandra Wood

Excused: Claire Jeffers

Also present: Steve Connolly, Grace Cooney, Evah Hellewell, Kim Spencer, David Hillier, Jillian Thuringer, Taylor Markie, Megan Garrity, Kim Matthews-Hermans, Cathy Lushman, Dean Flanagan

6:11pm II. **Adjustments to the Agenda**
Sandra **motioned**; Lisette **seconded**
11 **in favor**. 0 **opposed**. 0 **abstained**

6:12pm III. **Motion to Approve the January 8, 2026 Board Minutes**
Dawna **motioned**; Anna **seconded**
Approved - no vote necessary.

6:15pm IV. **Public Comments**
None.

6:16pm V. **Executive Director's Report** Steve Connolly, *Executive Director*

- **ICE presence in Maine:** Lower student attendance; families sought food, medical, and legal support. Added contracted social work services and requested local donations.
- **MSBA update:** National and state school boards facing seat shortages, contentious meetings, and rising harassment. Discussion highlighted parental vs. governmental rights and the role of boards in protecting public education.
- **Seagulls basketball:** Small co-ed team (grades 4–8) showing growth, competitive play, and a winning season despite short roster.
- **MADSEC collaboration:** Seeking dialogue on key issues—IEP inclusion for audiological needs, importance of ASL, and appropriate Teacher of the Deaf services.
- **Strategic Plan 2030:** Developing standardized procedures for eligibility, IEPs, LRE, and service delivery.
- **Legislative update:** Proposal to raise school renovation funding cap from \$2M to \$8M; more discussion next month.
Website rebranding presentation: Led by Derek Kimball; focused on simplifying the brand (e.g., using “MECDHH” instead of the full title) to better serve target audiences, especially new parents.
- **Brand discussion:** Considered balance between honoring the full organizational name and creating a clear, accessible identity; emphasized audience needs over lengthy titles.



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- **Leadership work session:** Derek held a three-hour session with the deaf education leadership team (CORE and coordinators) to gather input for website mockups.
- **Next steps:** Derek refining mockups based on feedback; second presentation planned.

6:32pm VI. **Facilities Report** Dean Flanagan, *Director of Operations*

- **Audit:** Ongoing monthly updates; aiming for completion without shifting timelines. March presentation requested. Concern about 2024–2025 items. Added support to accelerate progress.
- **Greenlaw:** \$80K FEMA funds approved; reports submitted to MEMA. Funds planned for roof replacement. Roof holding well; frozen pipes addressed; insulation review pending. Room 101 updated and in use.
- **Security & Gates:** New swipe pad installed; more interior locks planned. Gates operational; snow removal required. Access provided to Portland Water District; coordinating 24/7 access with fire and police.
- **Grounds & Maintenance:** Fence removal planned after thaw. Spring lawn repairs needed. Minor grout/stonework fixes on punch list.
- **Mansion Chimneys:** BGS-funded project to rebuild chimneys after roof inspection; tallest chimney height reduced. Bid specs in progress.
- **Memorial Plans:** Creating a memorial sitting area using reclaimed bricks; memorial tree planned; reviewing and restoring past class gifts for inclusion.

New Business

6:45pm VII.

Staff Resignation

Erin Hansen, Teacher of the Deaf, Early Intervention and Family Services, effective February 13, 2026.

Dawna **motioned**; Lisette **seconded**
11 **in favor**. 0 **opposed**. 0 **abstained**

6:47pm VIII.

Announcements

6:48pm IX.

Adjournment

Lisette **motioned**; Anna **seconded**
11 **in favor**. 0 **opposed**. 0 **abstained**