

the Ecology Learning Center

Board Agenda

November 19, 2025

5:32 p.m.-7:12 p.m.

In attendance: Josh Kercksmar, Tia Poulin, Leza Packard, Malcolm Campbell, Randy Fox, Margaret Macolichek, Donyse Babin. **Guests:** Beth Alma, Nicky Bartell, Beth Arnold, Jennifer Albee, Lauren Giroux, Prospective Student Members: Rhiannon Clements-Larrabee, Malia Degracia Beadling

Mission Moment: Nicky Bartell, Special Education Teacher

Nicky expressed gratitude for the school, her full-time position here this year, as it was a position of an FTE position in the past. ELC has a 25% student body with special education needs, which is higher than the rest of the state (20%). She shared the importance of the activities and learning environment here at ELC, which is so important to students who receive special education. She expressed further gratitude to the ed techs here at ELC for the support that they provide to the students. Shared that the expansion of the Special Education department is needed and important, and feels that it will meet the students' academic and behavioral needs as well.

Consent Agenda:

- Minutes: [10/15 Board Meeting Minutes](#)
- Executive Director's Report ([11.19.25 Board Meeting Director's Report](#))
- Governance Committee ([10/22/2025 Governance Committee Meeting Minutes](#))
- Treasury Report ([Finance Committee Report to the Board 25.11.12](#))

Motion to accept the consent agenda by Randy Fox, seconded by Margaret Macolichek; Unanimous

Opioid Overdose Reversal Policy

- First reading of [ELC policy draft JLCDB](#)

The Board reviewed the new policy in the first reading.

The question was posed whether the policy needs specific details about the use and storage of Narcan.

-The procedure to follow the policy will outline the operational aspect of the policy.

Q: Are there other policies this draft policy should reference at the bottom?

-No, this is a new policy and doesn't relate to other policies.

Q: Does this follow other policy formats?

-Yes, there will be a final edit to ensure consistency of font and layout

Comment: The Board, as well as the faculty, have been trained in Narcan administration

Financial Strategies & Discussion:

- Financial update:
 - We have spent the entire maintenance budget for the year.
 - The audit is coming along well.
 - The medical insurance turned out well for the staff who chose to enroll, and it has been financially beneficial to the budget
 - Cliff- it is not generating the revenue that we had hoped it would. With only \$50.00 in revenue in October.
 - We need a plan to replace the Annex, as several offices and programs are located in that building. (woodworking, outdoor equipment storage, etc.) We need a board member to join the Facilities committee so that a plan can be made.

- Sprinkler system: The issue is that the antifreeze that is in the system is no longer in compliance. The inspection stopped there, so the sprinkler heads have not been inspected. The price tag is \$30,000-\$40,000, which is not budgeted for. This needs to be addressed immediately. At the last meeting, the board was told that the current system would suppress a fire if one should occur. After further clarification, we are uncertain how well the system would work.
 - Is the building currently considered safe?
 - We were not given an answer as the 300 sprinkler heads were not inspected. Due to them not being inspected, there is no assurance that all of them will work if there is a fire.
 - We have access to \$30,000 line of credit. We also have the funds in the bank, but this expense was not in the budget. Thus, we could spend from our reservoir rather than borrow money.
 - Recommendation for the formation of a facilities committee immediately to prevent these issues in the future.
 - The Governance Committee (GC) will have to look at the Charter, as it may outline how we create the committee, as it outlines that facilities are separate from Operations.
 - GC will meet on December 3rd next month to avoid the holidays and review this portion of the charter.

Motion to access the funds needed to repair the sprinkler system by Randy Fox, Seconded by Tia Poulin;
Unanimous

Discussion:

Q: Will this ensure that all of the issues and inspections are addressed?

- Yes.

Q: Should we consider the continued use of the building until repairs are made?

- No clear decision was made. The students are off for vacation next week. The ED will make sure the repairs are made ASAP.

- Monthly Focus: Grants. Brainstorm possibilities. See the [Grants document](#).
 - Submitted 2 grants to the Onion Foundation, but they were not awarded
 - Grants strategy document was formed to address the limited time and resources
 - What role should the BOD play in the grant acquisition process?
 - At a Charter training, it was shared that other charter schools have a governing board and a grant/fundraising board or committee.
 - Suggestion that it was the committee that did only fundraising, not a separate board. Shared experience from a board member who has seen this model function, with a separate board. A Capitol Board or Development Board.
 - Request to utilize the work “committee” vs. “Board” to avoid confusion
 - Need a budget for a grant writer because the current board members' volunteer hours are limited.
 - Suggested \$5,000-\$6,000 a year for a grant writer
 - Temperature check of current board members who would join a grant writing committee. 2 people would consider it.
 - Reviewed steps to become a board member for those who would like to invite a potential board member.
 - Which funding priority should we focus on?
 - Facilities
 - Relocating the Hub- potential does exist to extend the lease at the Hub, which expires 6.30.25
 - Update sprinkler system

- The Cliff
- Vehicles
 - Potentially 2 next year (vans for transporting students)
- Outdoor Programing
 - Gear, travel, professional development
 - Adam Williams has successfully been awarded small grants every year to offset the Outdoor Programming budget.
 - He can also provide data to support the programming
 - Prospective Student Board Members shared that the Adventure Wednesdays are loved by the students. All the staff do an amazing job with limited resources.
 - Questions: Would having only one activity on Wednesdays instead of 3 options every Wednesday still be enjoyable?
 - Students felt this would limit the engagement due to all students' abilities and interests.
 - Having Adventure Wednesday helps with the burnout on academics that students experience.
 - The same has been expressed by teachers. Adventure Wednesdays energize and revitalize them to return to academics.
 - New legislation will require every Maine middle school student to have a module of outdoor education. Potentially an unfunded mandate.
 - The change in the setting in working with students has benefited relationship building and the connection between faculty and students. Which in turn benefits the classroom experience.
 - Suggestion that some staff review grant applications to help bring in the experiences and stories to the application process.

Executive Director Update:

- Highlighted the two prospective student board members. The input they can bring to board decisions. The students are a sophomore and a senior.
- The students shared their experiences at the school. What brought them here and how important the support from the faculty has been has been character-building. Both mentioned how the community feels here. The smaller, more encouraging, and accommodating environment. They expressed their interest in the board comes from wanting to know more about the school, how it functions, and having something different to do.
 - The Board expressed gratitude for their presence, input, and interest in how they would vote, despite not being able to formally cast votes.
- Fundraising- We are currently being funded for 120 students, and we are serving 131. The staff, and budget are feeling the squeeze. Reminder that Stone Soup is tomorrow night.

Motion to enter Executive Session for Board Matter under 1 MRSA 405.6A at 7:03 pm by Randy Fox, Seconded by Donyse Babin; Unanimous

Motion to exit executive session @ 7:09 pm by Randy Fox, Seconded by Donyse Babin; Unanimous

Motion to approve Beth Arnold to the Board of Directors by Margaret Mikolich, Seconded by Randy Fox; Unanimous

Motion to adjourn by Randy Fox, seconded by Donyse Babin; Unanimous

Adjourned: 7:12 pm