

Maine Maritime Academy

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Date: August 7, 2025

Location: Holmes Heritage Room

Chair: Wayne Norton

Recorder: Rachael Cotoni

Attendees:

Trustees: Liz True, Paul Mercer, Miles Theeman, Sue Loomis, Katy Longley, Wendy Morrison, Morten Arntzen, Mark Gardner, Bill Eisenhardt, Greg Johnson, Alaina Adams, Bob Somerville, Hailey Fardon. Faculty Representative: Jennifer Haddock & Joseph Harman

On Zoom: John Webb

Administration: President Johnson, VP Noel, Interim Provost Laurie Flood, Incoming Provost & VP Waters, VP Waldron, VP Markow and other MMA faculty and staff.

Chairman's Report

- The chairman reported that the board had a great retreat on August 6th.
- The Board reaffirmed support for the Strategic Plan, emphasizing financial sustainability, academic excellence, and branding/marketing.
- Thanks to committee chairs and subcommittees for advance work enabling streamlined meetings.
- Introductions/Acknowledgments:
 - Dr. Jennifer Waters, incoming Provost
 - Larry Burrill, Foundation Chair
 - Joe Harman, incoming faculty representative
 - Andrew Stroshal, Alumni Association President

President's Report

- President used time to highlight campus updates from Commandant/Regiment, Ship Operations, Athletics, Waterfront, Enrollment, and Advancement.

Athletics Report

- Recruiting strong; near full rosters.
- Hires: Joseph Swanson (Asst. AD/Comms), Levi Evans (Head Women's Soccer), Nathan Wiggins (Football DC), Jeremy Pease (Head Golf), six assistant coaches (two pending).
- Kelly Kline is one of 19 female football assistants among 664 programs nationally.
- Football reports Aug 13 (70–80 players); 10 games (4 home).
- NAC Man & Woman of the Year—Sam Nichols and Kirra Magana.
- Wrestling room wall pads (Mariner blue) installing Monday; gold mats ordered.
- Only one athletic trainer (Chad Bartlett) for 367 student-athletes; urgent hiring and interim EMT coverage strategies underway.
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Commandant's Office Report

- Capt. Cooper joined in May; focus on leadership development and a strong Commandant team.
- 200 new students are arriving within 9 days for regimental preparatory training.
- Continued emphasis on public messaging around Regiment value and leadership development.
- Thanked the volunteers on the fire department including faculty and staff.
- Regiment has an average of a 3.0 GPA and working with faculty to improve retention

Ship Update

Ship Acceptance & Operations (Captain Mac)

- Crew spent 120–150 days away supporting ship acceptance.
- Late-June sea trials identified issues; dry dock repairs complete; ship re-floated one week prior.
- Status: Moored at Rhoads Ship Repair (across from former *State of Maine*).
- Key dates (subject to change):
 - Move to Hanwa shipyard: Aug 18
 - Naming/Christening: Aug 20
 - Verification sea trial: Aug 22–23
 - Delivery to MARAD: Aug 29 (moved up from Sep 10)
 - Contractual 14 days alongside for outfitting; potential Philadelphia sail-away: Sep 13–25
- Transit & Berthing Plan: Attempt ceremonial Portland stop (timing/berth permitting); Searsport berthing through December; short December cruise for sea time and familiarization; winter in Portland thereafter.
- 2026 Joint Sea Term (Texas Maritime): Aim to join July 4, 2026 NYC 250th U.S. parade of ships (likely 3 of 5 training ships).
- Staffing: Add 4 permanent crew; hire additional 3 deck and 4 engineering officers for the cruise (rotations possible). TOTE Services will operate the ship initially; MMA crew temporarily on TOTE payroll.
- Best feature—space and training layout (two bridges, two engine rooms). Managing scale to 600 cadet berths. Request for \$1M MARAD operating support not yet approved; Texas covers its contingent.

Waterfront Update

- Winter projects complete, including *Tempest* (Tartan 41) re-decking.
- Bowdoin completed second of three cruises; 40 students trained this summer.
- Summer Sailing Program *Tempest* 2nd (Monhegan); Fishers Island 31 won class (Eggemoggin Race).

- Ongoing coordination with Reed & Reed during construction; thanks to Chris Grindel and Will McLean.

State Funding & Grant Updates

Trustees inquired about potential risks to federal grant funding. In response, a matrix outlines current grants and funding status.

Although \$5.2 million in earmarked funding was lost last year due to Department of Defense (DoD) budget cuts, the same proposals have been resubmitted through Senator Collins' office. There is cautious optimism that this funding will be reinstated in the next fiscal year, with an expected delay of approximately 9–10 months.

The Academy is actively pursuing \$8.2 million through a new Maritime Defense Industrial Alliance (MDIA) submission, along with an additional \$500,000 request for equipment via the maritime industrial base.

If the \$5.2 million is not reinstated, operations will continue as planned. The funding would have been used for equipment upgrades on the ship—not for capital projects—so older equipment would continue in use.

\$2 million is included in the request for the BIW project and is also being sought through other federal channels.

Overall, the administration is confident in the Academy's ability to secure federal grant funding, with multiple applications in progress.

It was noted that funding is due to a loss of initial federal sources; however, alternative funds are being used to fulfill financial commitments.

Ad-Hoc Enrollment Committee Report

- Competitive landscape remains fierce.
- Enrollment: 297 incoming; 50/50 in-/out-of-state; overall student body 52% in-state / 48% out-of-state. 137 of the incoming class are on the athletic rosters
- Recruiting: Expanded Puget Sound/Washington; Open House Sept 27; school visits/college fairs; Service Academy Nights; on-the-spot admissions; planning for Portland ship event once dates settle; Cruise '26 (East/Gulf Coasts) as outreach platform.

- Maine HS strategy: Nearly all high schools reached, with multiple touches at feeders; rural joint fairs used.
- Student Ambassadors: 50 students per Open House; Ask-a-Mariner (students, parents, regiment panels); Thanksgiving HS return program (metrics requested).
- Northern Maine: Continued outreach; affordability challenges persist.
- Dual Enrollment (Aspirations): Opportunity to deliver GenEd/entry courses online; prior Ship Structures/Civil ran with Limestone HS

Advancement Committee Report

- Affordability gap & image: More investment needed to amplify momentum and institutional polish.
- Marketing budget: Currently a fraction of 1% of operating budget; benchmark 3% discussed (with 2% as a step); need ROI-based spend plan (e.g., YouTube/digital buys to amplify Bryan Wolf video assets).
- Website Rebuild: Broad agreement a rebuild is needed; multi-phase, 2-year effort, six-figure scale; early coordination among Bryan, Will, Janet, Kate.
- Advancement travel: \$65K for out-of-state travel (constraint).
- Ship Arrival—Portland Concept: Mid-afternoon flotilla/tug sprays; formal dockside event with Senator Collins. VIP dinner at Ocean Gateway; strong press activation. If TOTE is still operating, ship access may be limited—community event may focus on harbor/press.
- December & Beyond: Once under MMA management, open the ship every two weeks for rotating HS/tour groups in southern Portland.
- Regional Outreach: Consider Eastport visit (fuel cost implications noted).

Advancement Results & Corporate Partnerships

- 28% YoY giving; strong endowment performance via re-engagement of lapsed donors (several \$50K+ scholarships).
- Planned Giving: *The Beacon* launched (summer; year-end and spring issues planned); initial inquiries positive.
- Unrestricted: \$282K achieved; \$500K target set for next year.
- Presidential Initiatives: >\$100K supporting student experience/campus life.

- New Corporate Partnership: \$360,000 / 4 years with a Baltimore-based bunkering company (linked to SVO); supports \$10,000/student cohorts with mentorship/fellowship pathway (growing annually).
- Sponsorships: Explore ship outfitting/named spaces and campus rebuild priorities.

Foundation Report & Coordination (Larry Burrill)

- 501c3 status received two months ago; 10-member board (incl. Chair of Trustees, President Johnson, Alumni rep).
- Initial pledges: \$500K
- Mission/Vision: 100% aligned to MMA; resource the “margin of excellence” toward a world-leading maritime college.
- Over the next 2–3 months, develop a preliminary philanthropic plan with clear institutional priorities; maintain monthly scheduled calls among Craig, Mark, and Larry; continued direct collaboration across Advancement, the Advancement Committee, and the Foundation.

Alumni Association (Andrew Stroshal '05)

- Mission: engage alumni across classes (board spans 1965–2012; 18 board members & 1 student).
- Director of Alumni Affairs is vacant; appreciation for Karen keeping programs on track; role needs filling.
- Coordination: Alumni Association will work in parallel with Foundation and Advancement (shared message, rapid philanthropic handoffs).
- Contact data: 7,300 alumni; normal mailing list 6,000 (includes parents/other donors). Email/phone coverage lags addresses; consider paid data-hygiene vendors and/or online directory over printed books.

Education Policy Committee Report

- Thanks to Dr. Lori Flood for interim provost service; welcome remarks from Dr. Jennifer Waters
- NECHE 2026 preparation ongoing (materials distributed; thanks to Ann for coordination).

Coast Guard License Exam Pass Rates

- Marine Transportation: 94%
- Engineering: 96%
- Drivers: culture reset; license-prep and mock tests; engineering mock tests begin in December; first-time pass rates 2.5x prior year; first engineering review class in 15 years.

Academic Program Review

- Comprehensive program-level operating cost review (majors portfolio; BIW; CPMD) with emphasis on moving from discussion to data-driven action.

MMA-BIW Program (Prof. Richard Reed)

- 2024 cohort: 41 incoming, 34 continuing (75 total); target 100 incoming not met.
- Majority are new BIW hires recruited for the program; some internal recruits.
- Recruitment Pivot: Admissions now actively aiding BIW recruiting; expectation of stronger results next year.
- January Intake: Potential mid-year cohort to smooth the on-ramp toward 100.
- Region 10 (100 HS students) moving in, enabling dual enrollment pathways.
- Grant Bid: \$10M for pre-hire training using existing courses.
- Naval Shipyard Use: Portsmouth planning two cadres next summer; projected revenue \$1.6–\$1.8M.
- Financial Transparency: Request for separate P&L for Brunswick (distinct from Bucksport).

ADA Title II (Accessibility) Compliance

- Deadline: April 2027.
- Scope: Web, online coursework, media/captions, and accessible design (e.g., color-blind-safe graphics).
- Need: Hire an Instructional Designer to lead compliance across courses and web, in partnership with IT/Comms.

Bucksport Facilities—Contractor Use

- Concern raised regarding use of MMA Bucksport facilities for outside programming.

- Clarification: In the cited case, the contractor paid for space; leadership to tighten policies to avoid “gray areas.”
- Confirmed that the contractor did rent the space

Digital Twin of Training Ship

- Captain Jennifer Norwood developed a 3D digital twin to use in case the ship needs to depart campus for relief
- Features: multi-layer model with equipment menus; supports training continuity if ship is diverted; interest from peer schools and MARAD; targeted for fall instructional use.

Operations Committee Report

- Facilities Master Plan will directly integrate with the Strategic Plan, be software-compatible, and function as an asset management plan (maintenance history, finishes, etc.). Format/approach discussions (with Janet) are converging; intent is both strategic and archival.
- Commendations to Ed Scott (Colliers), Jake Jacobs (Colliers) and Peter Stewart for capital project execution.
- Funding status: \$7M gap remains for the pier; \$5M financing request for Curtis Hall roof/windows was denied at the legislative level—alternate options are being pursued.
- Trustee engagement: Trustees invited to join the Operations Committee session when available for an update on the facilities master plan
- At-risk assets: Current assessment flags Andrews Hall (waterfront), staff housing, and overhead storage near Payson Hall as higher-concern facilities.
- Waterfront priority: Andrews Hall/waterfront identified as high-priority for redevelopment (academic needs; fundraising optics). Caution urged: do not remove structures before replacement plans are finalized due to current utilities/academic use.
- Philanthropy alignment: Explore climate/sea-level resiliency opportunities; keep a portfolio of naming options ready for donors (Larry).

Master Plan Mechanics & Housing Scenarios

- Plan will include 5- and 10-year cost projections (with inflation); deliver visuals and reporting to align with campaign planning.

- Trustees requested explicit modeling of residential capacity for enrollment growth (e.g., grow from 600→800, doubles vs. triples; occupancy reporting that nets out RD/other allocations).

Pier Progress (Ed Scott)

- Piles: 167/278 driven; 161 at terminal depth; 16/36 rock anchors drilled/grouted/tested (batter piles).
- Structure: Six outward-edge beams installed (four grouted; two next week); 15 precast deck sections and 16 conduit trench sections installed; all 278 piles for Phase 1 are on site.
- Production: Precast components ahead of schedule; Reed & Reed operating 30 personnel (six 5-person crews); 42,000 safe work hours logged.
- Schedule: Transportation/coating delays resolved; currently on track—early June 2026 ship-ready; June 2027 final wrap-up. The deck height (~40 ft above grade at the T-head) offers resilience against extreme high-water events.

Curtis Hall Progress

- Resequenced phases. Phase 1 nearing completion; power, safety systems, hot water, and generator accommodations addressed. Contractor has provided cost- and time-saving suggestions.

IT & Data

- Emphasis on reliable data systems, security, and enterprise upgrades to support facilities and academics.
- Future IT session (risk management, systems/state) at Operations Committee, with summary to the full Board.

Finance Committee

- Meeting minutes from the July 31 committee meeting were included in the packet.
- Investments: First National Wealth Management reported portfolio value \$75.155M at July month-end; \$76.755M as of July 28 update (significant portion is scholarship funds). First National will begin mid-quarter, portfolio-specific updates.
- FY25 Close

- Accounting convention requires a zero net; \$2.36M was transferred from reserves to the Budget Stabilization Fund to offset operations.
- Reported operating results reflect \$1.2M for ship fuel (transfer back to federal owner) and a planned \$600K carry-forward to FY26 to support Brunswick expansion. Adjusting for these one-time factors relative to the originally budgeted \$1.57M loss, the effective operating deficit was \$500K.
- Significant operating volume this year included capital projects, three labor agreements with retro pay (accrued for), training programs, and ship-acceptance travel/readiness costs (some reimbursed by MARAD; not all).
- Graduate program revenue under target (enrollment mix also lowered tuition/fee totals); FY26 budget adjusted for grad headcount. Program expenses are modest with room to grow sections at similar cost; clearer indirect-cost reporting requested.
- Brunswick accounting: \$600K FY25 carry-forward appears as a transfer; associated revenues in Other Income. Trustees requested separate Brunswick P&L (not blended with Bucksport).
- Grants/Simulators/IT: Significant simulator installations and upgrades underway (full-mission engineering simulator; survival craft simulator; switchboard/high-voltage; ECINS lab refresh; equipment allocations for Brunswick/Bucksport). IT risk-assessment work is ongoing; enterprise system replacements advancing.
- Recognized the Finance, HR/Payroll, Facilities, IT, and Academic teams for exceptional throughput and professionalism.

Student Affairs

- Curtis Hall at capacity; Leavitt Hall transitioned to student housing to relieve overflow and try to elevate some triples. They were short, 47 beds but were able to fit 34 of those students in Leavitt Hall.
- Commons and Leavitt Hall are at full capacity; Curtis is at 98% full. 67% on campus; 37% off campus. 54 less people living off-campus than the previous semester. Working on student experience while under renovation.
- Health Services – Counseling services will have interns this year and working with a new vendor for health services.

- Phase 3 renovations (May 2026–Jan 2027); 44 beds offline—planning required.
- Cruise feedback: issues with food/sanitation and Texas alcohol policy; positives included strong networking and Maine–Texas integration.

Governance Committee Report

- Proposed bylaw changes slated for November vote; clarified IACs and Board of Visitors roles (state law).
- Reviewed trustee terms (six expiring); officer nominations approved (Katy as Interim Treasurer) until bylaws are updated to include the CFO as the treasurer; committee assignments and resolutions (minutes, gifts) approved.

Resolutions:

Resolution #1

To Accept the Meeting Minutes of May 2, 2025, Board Meeting [Governance]

On a motion by Trustee Eisenhardt and seconded by Trustee Mercer, the Board unanimously voted to accept the minutes of the meeting held on May 2, 2025

Resolution #2

To Accept the Meeting Minutes of June 12, 2025, Board Meeting [Governance]

On a motion by Trustee Theeman and seconded by Trustee Mercer, the Board unanimously voted to accept the minutes of the meeting held on June 12, 2025.

Resolution #3

To Accept Gifts, Grants, and Donated Property [Advancement]

On a motion by Trustee Theeman and seconded by Trustee Mercer, the Board unanimously voted to approve the acceptance of gifts, grants, and donated property.

Resolution #4

To Accept the Nominations of Officers for 2025 -2026 [Governance]

On a motion by Trustee Theeman and seconded by Trustee Johnson, the Board unanimously voted to accept the nominated officers.

- Wayne Norton – Chairman
- John Webb – Vice Chairman
- Katy Longley – Treasurer
- Rachael Cotoni – Secretary

Resolution #5

To Accept the Board of Trustees Meeting Dates for 2025 -2026 [Governance]

On a motion by Trustee Eisenhardt and seconded by Trustee Loomis, the Board unanimously voted to accept the meeting dates.

- February 12, 2026
- May 1, 2026
- August 6, 2026
- November 5, 2026

Resolution #6

To Accept the Board of Trustees Committee Assignments 2025 - 2026 [Governance]

On a motion by Trustee Theeman and seconded by Trustee Johnson, the Board unanimously voted to accept the committee assignments.

Resolution #7

To Accept the Tentative Collective Bargaining Agreement reached between Academy Management and Supervisory Unit. [Governance]

On a motion by Trustee Theeman and seconded by Trustee Norton, the Board unanimously voted to accept the CBA agreement.

Executive Session

Motion to Enter Executive Session

Motion: Chair Eisenhardt moved that the Board of Trustees enter Executive Session pursuant to applicable state statutes for the purpose of discussing presidential evaluation and personnel matters.

Second: The motion was seconded by Trustee Longley

The motion passed unanimously, with no opposition.

The Board entered Executive Session at 2:33 pm.

Adjournment

On a motion by Chair Norton and seconded by Trustee Theeman, the board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 3:30 pm.

Action Items & Next Steps

Operations & Facilities

- Facilities Master Plan: Present at November Board; integrate with Strategic Plan and asset-management system; include 5- & 10-year cost projections.
- Residential Capacity Modeling: Provide scenarios (e.g., 600→800; doubles vs. triples; occupancy net of RD loads).
- Waterfront/Andrews Hall: Develop phased redevelopment concept (academic needs, utilities, fundraising optics); evaluate climate-resiliency funding and community/regional partnerships.
- Pier Project: Address ~\$7M funding gap; maintain schedule (June 2026 ship-ready; June 2027 closeout).
- Curtis Hall: Continue phased renovations; leverage contractor value engineering.
- IT: Schedule Operations Committee IT session (risk posture, enterprise replacements); summarize for full Board.

Academics & Programs

- Academic Program Review: Dr. Waters to lead comprehensive, cost-informed review; report actions.
- Coast Guard Prep: Sustain mock-test/licensing prep; extend engineering mock tests in December.

- ADA Title II: Hire Instructional Designer; campus-wide compliance plan for April 2027 deadline.
- BIW Program: Admissions partnership for recruiting; evaluate January intake; implement pre-hire training grant if awarded; track employment implications/supports.
- Naval Shipyard: Finalize two cadres next summer; revenue target \$1.6–\$1.8M.
- Graduate Programs: Refine financials (including indirects) and growth strategy.

Finance

- November Financial Presentation: Finance Committee & Auditors—deliver audited FY25 results; provide separate Brunswick P&L (not blended with Bucksport).
- Continue monitoring financial aid strategy, enrollment mix impacts, and simulator/IT capital flows.

