

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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REP. RYAN FECTEAU  
CHAIR

SEN. TROY JACKSON  
VICE-CHAIR

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
SUZANNE M. GRESSER



130<sup>TH</sup> MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE  
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

SEN. ELOISE A. VITELLI  
SEN. MATTHEA DAUGHTRY  
SEN. JEFFREY L. TIMBERLAKE  
SEN. MATTHEW POULIOT  
REP. MICHELLE DUNPHY  
REP. RACHEL TALBOT ROSS  
REP. KATHLEEN R.J. DILLINGHAM  
REP. JOEL STETKIS

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
MEETING SUMMARY  
May 20, 2021  
Approved May 27, 2021**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Speaker Fecteau called the May 20, 2021 special meeting of the 130<sup>th</sup> Legislative Council to order at 2:43 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Senators: President Jackson, Senator Vitelli, Senator Daughtry, Senator Timberlake and Senator Pouliot

Representatives: Speaker Fecteau, Representative Dunphy, Representative Talbot Ross and Representative Stetkis

Legislative Officers: Suzanne Gresser, Executive Director of the Legislative Council  
Darek Grant, Secretary of the Senate  
Rob Hunt, Clerk of the House  
Ed Charbonneau, Revisor of Statutes  
Chris Nolan, Director, Office of Fiscal and Program Review  
Danielle Fox, Director, Office of Policy and Legal Analysis  
Nik Rende, Director, Legislative Information Technology  
Dawna Lopatosky, Legislative Finance Director  
Jackie Little, Human Resources Director

Speaker Fecteau convened the meeting at 2:43 p.m. with a quorum of members present.

**SUMMARY OF April 22, 2021 MEETING OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**Motion:** That the Meeting Summary for April 22, 2021 be accepted and placed on file. Motion by President Jackson. Second by Senator Vitelli. **Motion passed unanimously (10-0).**

## **REPORTS FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND COUNCIL OFFICES**

No reports

## **REPORTS FROM COUNCIL COMMITTEES**

No reports

## **OLD BUSINESS**

None

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Item #1: Review of Legislative Council's COVID-19 Prevention Policy in Light of Revised Federal and State COVID-19 Guidance**

Speaker Fecteau initiated the discussion by identifying 4 overarching questions: (1) Is the Legislature going to return to the State House to hold its meetings for the remainder of the First Special Session? (2) Will the public be permitted to be present in the State House during the remainder of the First Special Session? (3) What approach will be used by those joint standing committees that continue to meet on or after May 24<sup>th</sup> to conclude their committee work? (4) Will the nonpartisan staff office directors be authorized to continue management strategies such as physical distancing during the final weeks of the First Special Session? Speaker Fecteau indicated that, after addressing the larger overarching issues, there would be many sub-issues to consider.

The members discussed and were in support of the Legislature returning to the State House for the remainder of the First Special Session. The members discussed allowing the public to be present in the State House, and all Legislative Council members indicated support for allowing the public into the State House, beginning on May 24<sup>th</sup>, the effective date of the Governor's revised Executive Order.

The members discussed the option of retaining the status quo with respect to completely electronic committee meetings. Members pointed to the difficulty of changing the method of committee meetings at this point for the remaining days of session; there was, however, broad support for developing the ability to incorporate electronic participation into in-person meetings beginning with the Second Regular Session of the 130<sup>th</sup> Legislature. Rep. Dillingham voiced her support for retaining the electronic method of the committee process as long as committee members who wish to may be physically present in the committee rooms without physical distancing restrictions, and as long as members of the public may be present in committee rooms to observe. Rep. Talbot Ross clarified that members of public present in committee rooms would be there to witness the committee proceedings occurring electronically on the Zoom platform, but not to participate in person. Speaker Fecteau reminded everyone that if committee members or members of the public wish to be present in the committee room during committee meetings, it is critical that everyone in the room accessing the electronic meeting use headphones to avoid audio feedback.

The members supported allowing the directors of the staff offices to continue to manage the physical distancing and scheduling of staff in their offices, as long as the legislative work continues to get done.

The Speaker raised the issue of removing the 6-foot physical distancing requirements in the chambers; the members supported the removal of the requirement of the 6-foot distancing requirement, but to allow the encouragement of physical distancing.

The members generally favored the gathering of limited information from members of the public seeking access to the State House for purposes of contact tracing.

The members did not agree on the issue of continuing the requirement of wearing protective face coverings in all Legislative spaces, including what areas could be excluded from the requirement.

**Motion:** That the Legislative Council revise the Legislative Council's COVID-19 Prevention Policy to remove the requirement that protective face coverings be worn in common areas of legislative space. Motion by Senator Timberlake. Second by Representative Stetkis. **Motion failed (4-6**, with President Jackson, Speaker Fecteau, Senator Vitelli, Senator Daughtry, Representative Dunphy, and Representative Talbot Ross opposed).

**Motion:** That the Legislative Council revise the Legislative Council's COVID-19 Prevention Policy to:

- Eliminate the prohibition on the presence in legislative space by members of the public;
- Eliminate the guest policy;
- Authorize nonpartisan office directors to continue to manage the number of staff members working together at the same time, and retains the encouragement of electronic workplace communications;
- Retain the requirement that protective face coverings be worn in legislative space, but specify that an individual need not wear a protective face covering if the individual is on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor exterior balcony in the State House;
- Eliminate the 6-foot physical distancing requirements; and
- Eliminate the self-screening question regarding whether an individual has been out of the state in the past 14 days;

Motion by President Jackson. Second by Senator Vitelli. **Motion passed (6-2-1-1**, with Senator Pouliot and Representative Dillingham opposed, Representative Stetkis abstained, and Senator Timberlake absent).

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REMARKS**

With no other business to consider or further announcements, the Legislative Council meeting was adjourned at 4:32 p.m.