

**SPRINGFIELD TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**Board of Trustee Regular
Monday, November 27, 2023 at 5:00 PM
Ira H. Rubenzahl Learning Commons, Building 19/Forum**

Minutes of Meeting

Present: Jynai McDonald, Chair Pro Tempore
Elizabeth Oleksak-Sposito, Secretary
Zoya Plunkett-Brown, Student Trustee
Laurie Martin, Alumni Trustee
Tonia Butler-Pérez, Trustee
Bill Johnson, Trustee
Jeff Sattler, Trustee
MacArthur Starks, Trustee
Samalid Hogan, Trustee (joined at 5:10, after roll-call)

Unable to Attend: Norman Roldan, Trustee

Also Present: Dr. John B. Cook, President
Nanette Flores, Executive Assistant to the President & Board Clerk

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

Acting Chair Jynai McDonald called the meeting to order at 5:06 p.m.

The following Trustees were present at roll call: Acting Chair Jynai McDonald, Trustee Secretary Elizabeth Oleksak-Sposito, Student Trustee Zoya Plunkett-Brown, Alumni Trustee Laurie Martin, Trustee Tonia Butler Pérez, Trustee Bill Johnson, Trustee Jeff Sattler, and Trustee MacArthur Starks. Eight Trustees present, constituting a quorum. Trustee Samalid Hogan joined at 5:10 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

a) Board of Trustee Meeting – Monday, October 30, 2023

Trustee Bill Johnson moved to approve the minutes from the October 30th Board of Trustees meeting, seconded by Trustee Jeff Sattler. After no further discussion, unanimously approved.

III. Committee Reports

a) Committee on Internal and External Relations, held on November 6, 2023

Committee Chair Jynai McDonald shared detail from the November 6th Committee on Internal and External Relations. The report included an update on MassReconnect (free community college for adults age 25+) presented by Darcey Kemp, Vice President of Student Affairs, as well as an outlook specific to the Cyber Range/ Union Station, presented by Mary

Kaselouskas, Vice President and CIO. Also presenting to the Committee was Dr. Chris Thuot, Vice President of Academic Affairs, with an overview of recommended program discontinuations. Dr. Thuot noted that implemented program suspensions had been shared previously with the committee. These program actions carry the support of faculty members, a few of whom were able to attend the committee meeting to take questions as needed. A memo from Academic Affairs details the rationale for each program action.

Trustee MacArthur Starks moved to approve the minutes from the November 6th Internal and External Relations Committee meeting, seconded by Trustee Bill Johnson. After no further discussion, unanimously approved.

The approval of the Committee meeting minutes was followed by the presentation of MOTION 2024-02: Program Discontinuation Approval: BUSNO.AS, BTCMO.AS, CADM.COC, EDSE.AA, URBN.AA

Trustee Bill Johnson moved “That the Springfield Technical Community College Board of Trustees approve discontinuation of the following academic programs: Online Business Administration (BUSNO.AS), Online Business Administration Transfer (BTCMO.AS), Computer-Aided Design and Manufacturing Certificate of Completion (CADM.COC), Secondary Education (EDSE.AA), and Urban Studies (URBN.AA).”

Trustee Elizabeth Oleksak-Sposito seconded the motion. After no further discussion, unanimously approved.

b) Audit Committee Report, held on November 13, 2023

Committee Chair MacArthur Starks shared details from the November 13th Audit Committee report noting that WithumSmith & Brown issued an unmodified opinion on the STCC financial statements. Also highlighting no material weaknesses/significant deficiencies within the report and internal controls. As noted in the report, WithumSmith & Brown described how separate from the college proper, the STCC Foundation was determined to have a significant deficiency related to internal controls, and noted that this finding does not impact the STCC audit. It was further elaborated during the committee meeting how proactive steps have been taken to address and correct the issue. Committee Chair Starks approved the motion to move the FY2023 Financial Statements and Audit to the Committee on Ways and Means.

b) Committee on Ways and Means, held on November 13, 2023

Committee Chair MacArthur Starks shared detail from the November 13th Committee on Ways and Means meeting report, noting that Michael Cosgrove, Partner and Lisa Rotondi, Senior Manager from WithumSmith & Brown provided the FY2034 required communications and Financial State and reiterated the information discussed at the Audit Committee. The Committee proceeded to unanimously approve the FY2023 Financial statements and via Motion 2024-03. Other topics discussed were the usual

Financial Update and Outlook, including the Cash Flow Projection, the FY2024 Enrollment Update with preliminary Fall 2023 credits approximately 13.5% higher when compared with the Fall 2022; and the FY2024 Revenue & Spending update, noting that there is a projected \$1.56M favorable variance for the fiscal year.

Trustee Tonia Butler Pérez moved to approve the minutes from the November 13th Committee on Ways and Means meeting, seconded by Trustee Bill Johnson. After no further discussion, unanimously approved.

IV. **President's Perspective** – Dr. John B. Cook, President

a) Final Fall Enrollment, MassReconnect & Fiscal Outlook

Enrollment highlighted Fall Semester/ approximately 13.5% higher year-over-year (and that also compares to a budgeted position of - 4.5%).

Darcey Kemp, Vice President, and Samantha Plourd, Dean of Enrollment, Retention and Completion, share details from the first semester with MassReconnect: the total amount awarded for Fall was \$652,760.23; 572 students have received funds (with over 60% of those awardees students of color). Also reviewed was student type, such as re-admit, first-time, intercollege transfer, and returning graduate. 40% of students admitted are “re-admit” – in part, because of a “stop out” marketing campaign, and a separate state-wide contract that also targeted regional adults with some college credits. As an example of how funds are distributed, the 85 “loan only” students are covered entirely with MassReconnect funds. Also highlighted in the presentation is data of program enrollment. Data shows increases of Hispanic/Latino and African American/Black students returning to STCC. Steps taken to promote the funds were further described for Trustees, and with a Fall 2/Flex Term, we’ve been very public in spreading the word, including also a series of ongoing webinars with over 300 attendees so far.

In addition, recently announced was the MASSGrant Plus Expansion. As noted in the presentation this is a new financial aid program for students attending MA public colleges, universities, and the University of MA. More to come on this.

One clarification: students do not need to apply for MassReconnect - if the student qualifies, it will be added to their financial aid packing automatically (auto packaged). STCC is planning on spending all money allocated by way of the Department of Higher Education. If community colleges run out, a strategy would be developed to seek additional funds from the legislature by way of a “supplemental” budget bill.

b) Early Outlook/ Spring Semester Enrollment (up approximately 8%)

c) Advancement (11/28 is *Giving Tuesday*; TBD/ Multi-year pledge – Valley District Dental Society)

Dr. Cook reminded all about tomorrow being *Giving Tuesday*, and described a multi-year pledge in the works with the Valley District Dental Society.

d) Hunger-Free Campus Initiative (*media coverage /STCC assets*)

A number of different resources and supports described for Trustees including the Ram Mini Mart, Care Packages through CAS (Center for Access Services), as well as the installation of lockers (adjacent to Building 13), giving students access to frozen and fresh food at their convenience.

e) Massachusetts and Quantum (computing; and as applied in multiple fields/economic segments)

Dr. Cook shared about his attendance to the Inaugural Quantum Massachusetts Conference in November hosted by the MassTech Collaborative. The look-ahead for leaders across sectors to consider growth in the quantum ecosystem (which extends beyond classical computing considerations).

f) Renewing Trustee/program tours in 2024 & Open Meeting Law

The plan was to arrange for Trustee Program Tours starting on the January 29, 2024, Board of Trustee meeting. Due to cold weather, the tours will wait until Spring with more mild weather to resume

V. Chair's Report – Trustee Jynai McDonald, Chair Pro Tempore

a) Debrief with President Cook: NECHE and Governance

Acting Chair McDonald along with Dr. Cook described the recent meeting with the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) regarding the Notice of Concern specific to Standard 3/Governance. Both felt STCC was well-received, and in particular, because a good deal of work to clarify roles, as well as demonstrate examples of concrete decisions (recent program discontinuations by the Board; Strategic Plan; hiring of a Chief Academic Officer); asked what has moved forward since the visiting team came to campus. Hoping to hear a formal action from NECHE by the end of the calendar year.

VI. Old Business / New Business

VII. Date of Next Meeting: Monday, January 29, 2024

VIII. Adjournment

At 6:07 p.m., Acting Chair Jynai McDonald moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Trustees Bill Johnson and Tonia Butler Pérez and unanimously approved.


Jynai McDonald
Chair Pro Tempore, STCC Board of Trustees


Elizabeth Oleksak-Sposito
Secretary, STCC Board of Trustees