

**SPRINGFIELD TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**REGULAR MEETING**

Monday, August 24, 2020

Zoom/Live Streamed via STCC YouTube Channel

5:00 p.m.

**Minutes of Meeting**

Present at Roll Call: Marikate Murren, Chair  
Jynai McDonald, Secretary  
Alessande Anderson, Student Trustee  
Maurice Lindsay, Alumni Trustee  
Steve Grande, Trustee  
Elizabeth Oleksak-Sposito, Trustee  
Eric Hagopian, Trustee  
Vicky Crouse, Trustee (joined after roll call)  
MacArthur Starks, Jr., Trustee (joined after roll call)

Unable to attend: Jeff Sattler, Trustee  
William Johnson, Trustee

Also Present: Dr. John B. Cook, President;

Dr. Renae Gorman, Professor of Physical Therapy and Chair,  
STCC-Professional Association (MCCC)

**I. Call to Order**

Trustee Chair Marikate Murren called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

**II. Roll Call**

Nine out of Eleven Trustees attended the meeting, constituting a quorum.

**III. Approval of Minutes – Board of Trustees Regular Meeting – June 22, 2020**

Trustee Eric Hagopian moved to approve the minutes from June 22, 2020 Board of Trustees meeting, seconded by Steve Grande. After no further discussion, minutes were unanimously approved through roll call.

#### IV. Trustee Committee Reports

##### **Committee on Ways and Means– Monday, July 20, 2020**

Committee on Ways and Means Chair Mac Starks referred to the meeting report to inform the full Board of the Ways and Means meeting held on Monday, July 20<sup>th</sup>.

Cash Flow Projection shows a balance of approximately \$2,600,000 available at TD Bank. According to projections through the month of October, there will be no need to divest any funds from FIA. The FY2020 Revenue and Spending Report shows a surplus due to savings in areas such as utilities, part-time salaries, and from several facilities projects that have been deferred or cancelled. Surplus funds are by definition transferred to college reserves. After deducting the amount of funds moved into reserves from cancelled projects, there is a remaining balance of \$1,863,241, which some will be used to pay additional invoices from FY2020.

Also discussed was status of the FY2021 budget. Using the Department of Higher Education recommendation (DHE), the budget includes of 4% decrease in state appropriation. At this point the fall semester enrollment is tracking down. Also previewed and considered is an anticipated “9C” cut in state support, which is as yet unknown. STCC has received \$375,000 from DCAMM for small facilities projects.

Also discussed and presented by the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Vice President of Administration/CFO, was a comprehensive view on academic program discontinuations and associated personnel cuts. The model, rationale, and detail for the necessity were described, the opportunity for questions to be asked by Trustees was offered. Committee Chair Starks requested any additional detail and data specific to the model related to program discontinuations to be forwarded to the committee. Board Chair Murren noted that she received a joint letter from MCCC-All Unit Congress, and requested that all comments from staff, faculty, and community members be sent to Nanette Flores, Clerk to the STCC Board of Trustees. Communications received will be compiled and forwarded to Trustees.

Final topic discussed was in regards to Value Stream Initiative with presentations of the overview and process, and of the new student checklist. Also discussed was the impact of the ChatNOW! Feature.

Trustee Eric Hagopian moved to approve the report of the July 20, Committee on Ways and Means, seconded by Trustee Steve Grande, and after no further discussion, unanimously approved through roll call.

##### **Investment Subcommittee – Thursday, August 6, 2020**

Committee Chair Starks was not present at the Investment Subcommittee meeting; Board Chair Murren proceeded to offer perspective to Trustees. At the meeting, Mr. Chase from FIA provided a detailed quarterly investment review report. Mr. Chase is having conversations with other higher education clients about impact of COVID 19

and on how this will impact future decisions on campuses. Dr. Cook also discussed the financial challenges due to COVID 19.

Trustee Vicki Crouse moved to approve the report of the August 6, Investment Subcommittee, seconded by Trustee Jynai McDonald, and after no further discussion, unanimously approved through roll call.

### **Committee on Ways and Means– Monday, August 17, 2020**

Board Chair Murren requested that as a matter of practice, Trustees receive materials and meeting packets one week in advance.

Committee Chair Starks proceeded to report on the August 17 Ways and Means meeting. Mr. Mike Chase from FIA presented an outlook on College reserves and clarified the distinction between reserves and investments. Discussed at the meeting was the availability of funds if divestment is needed due to the budget difficulties. Offered was that 90% of funds are liquid within one day, the other 10% are liquid on a quarterly basis. Other topics discussed was the Investment Subcommittee report, Investment Policy Statement and the historical use of reserves, which have been for one-time needs or budget-off sets, not to support operational expenses.

FY20201 Budget Detail: no major changes. The FY2021 budget revenue remains highly uncertain. Governor Baker has signed an interim budget through October, with great variation in potential cuts in state support (discussed was a range from -5% to -20%) as the Commonwealth contends with a significant budget deficit. These figures translate to a range in lost support of between \$1.3m and \$5.4m. Also presented was enrollment data trends for review which indicates substantial enrollment declines (upwards of 15%). A matrix presented with provided various forecasts representing scenarios that include enrollment declines and cuts in state appropriation.

Trustee Eric Hagopian moved to approve the report of the August 17, Committee on Ways and Means, seconded by Trustee Steve Grande, and after no further discussion, unanimously approved through roll call.

## **V. Comments from MCCC Chapter President**

Board Chair Marikate Murren Introduced Dr. Renae Gorman, Chair and Professor of Physical Therapy Assistant. Professor Gorman is also Chair of the local MCCC Chapter (STCC-Professional Association). A note from Chair Murren offered that she had received a letter from the Chapter President on July 17, and how that letter was in-turn shared with Trustees.

Dr. Gorman addressed the Board, and raised a number of concerns. These included her view on program discontinuations and faculty/staff cuts, expressing concerns related to data, as well as framing of enrollment and costs. She expresses sentiments for those faculty who lost their jobs, and stated that programs were discontinued not for lack of enrollment, but because administrators had personal grudges, and these decisions were retaliatory.

Dr. Gorman asked for the STCC Board of Trustees to support a reinstatement of programs, and three in particular (Automotive, Landscape, Cosmetology). She also pointed out to the recent Ways and Means meeting, that the surplus placed in reserves can be the source of funds to reinstate programs. Other points made included changes and/or turnover in senior administration, comments about the impact/collective bargaining process, and how there is not firm outlook on state appropriation cuts. Some questions and comments from Trustees included the following:

Chair Murren noted that Trustees have not met, have not violated the Open Meeting Law, and have made not budget decisions regarding funding in regards to this matter.

Trustee McDonald followed-up with a question specific to the mention of retaliation. Dr. Gorman's responded that there were there were no formal grievances in this regard.

Trustee Hagopian inquired about alternative plans and ideas for ways to bring substantial savings to the budget. Dr. Gorman noted efforts to advocate with policymakers, grassroots fundraising, the pursuit of grants, and how faculty support conversations with industry and employers.

A final area of comment by the MCCC Chapter President related to Presidential performance and Trustee roles and oversight. Dr. Gorman stated there was a lack of staff and faculty input in the President's most recent evaluation [*please see 2.24.2020 Trustee meeting minutes where call by Chair Murren made for Faculty/Staff input to the Presidential evaluation made; please see 4.27.2020 meeting minutes where the call is repeated*]. On behalf of her membership, Dr. Gorman expressed concern about the performance of President Cook.

Chair Murren noted her appreciation to Dr. Gorman and asked that she send a copy of her comments to Nanette Flores, who will forward to Trustees.

## **VI. President's Perspective**

President Cook began by expressing once more his outlook regarding difficult decisions, his public discussion of those decisions, collective bargaining aspects that administration must address including fidelity to contracts, and the very complicated and problematic fiscal conditions still present for STCC.

Dr. Cook further referenced a recent video, available on the STCC YouTube channel, where he talks with staff and faculty at length regarding the program discontinuations and related topics. He encouraged Trustees to view the video, and also referenced the ways he engages Trustees, which at times includes individual phone calls. Dr. Cook expressed an outlook he has shared with faculty and staff: if budgetary issues change, and funding is made available through state or federal means, the college will

revisit program and personnel decisions. For example, with low-density labs on campus this Fall, and the need for a second shift to ensure cleaning/sanitizing, the college is examining a recall of facilities/maintainer employees that had lost their jobs.

Turning to the work ahead for Fall Semester, President noted how 15 days out from the start of the semester, great work by faculty and staff has enabled STCC to be over 80% online. There has also been substantial investment in “access to campus” protocols, including the requirement by Massachusetts for some COVID-19 testing be in place. Regarding communication, the President reiterated his effort to consistently and directly communicate with students, staff, faculty and Trustees, offering that as challenges persist including enrollment declines, he wishes there was better news to communicate.

## **VII. Chair’s Report – Marikate Murren**

Included in the packet is a revised calendar to allow sufficient time to prepare packets and send these a week in advance.

*[MOTION 2020-12]*

*2<sup>nd</sup> Revision to 2020-2021 Board of Trustees Meetings Calendar:*

*Trustee Jynai McDonald moved: That the Springfield Technical Community College Board of Trustees approve the revised 2020-2021 Board of Trustees Meeting Calendar.*

Trustee Eric Hagopian seconded the motion, and unanimously approved through roll call.

## **VIII. Old Business – None**

## **IX. New Business - None**

## **X. Date of next Board of Trustees meeting – Annual Board of Trustee Retreat and Full Board Meeting – Friday, September 25, 2020**

## **XI. Adjournment – Meeting called to adjourn at 6:10 p.m. moved by Trustee Eric Hagopian, seconded by Trustee Betty Sposito and unanimously approved through roll call.**

  
Marikate Murren

Chair, STCC Board of Trustees