

SPRINGFIELD TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Board of Trustee Annual Meeting
Monday, June 23, 2025 at 5:00 PM**

Minutes of Meeting

Present: Michael Knapik, Chair & Trustee
Dr. William Dávila, Secretary
Zoya Plunkett-Brown, '25 Student Trustee
Laurie Martin '90, Alumni Trustee
Tonia Butler Pérez, Trustee
Bill Johnson, Trustee
Norman Roldan, Trustee
Jeffrey Sattler, Trustee (Virtual)

Unable to Attend: Elizabeth Oleksak-Sposito, Vice Chair & Trustee
Samalid Hogan, Trustee
Anthony Moore, '15 Trustee

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

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

Board Chair Michael Knapik called the meeting to order at 5:06 p.m.

The following Trustees were present at roll call: Trustee Chair Michael Knapik, Trustee William Dávila, Trustee Zoya Plunkett-Brown, Trustee Laurie Martin, Trustee Tonia Butler Pérez, Trustee Bill Johnson, Trustee Norman Roldan and Trustee Jeff Sattler (Virtual) - eight Trustees present constituting a quorum.

II. Welcome Remarks – Trustee & Chair, Michael Knapik

Board Chair Michael Knapik welcomed Board Members, Administrators and General Public. Taking the opportunity to thank Trustees who attended this year's Commencement Ceremony and offering congratulations to our Student Trustee, Zoya Plunkett-Brown, Class of 2025.

III. Approval of Minutes

a) Board of Trustee Annual Meeting – Monday, May 19, 2025

Chair Knapik called for a motion to approve the minutes from the May 19th Board of Trustees meeting minutes, approved by Trustee Roldan, and after no further discussion, seconded by Trustee Johnson, and unanimously approved via roll call.

IV. Committee Reports

a) Committee on Facilities and Capital Improvements – June 16, 2025

Committee Chair, Trustee Jeff Sattler (via zoom) referred to the report included in the meeting packet from the June 16th Committee on Facilities and Capital Improvement meeting – shared highlights regarding the progress and status of the School of Health and Patient Simulation (SHPS) relocation out of Building 20 to Building 2/Scibelli Hall. This also included a discussion of “enabling moves” for related programs not going into Building 2. Dr. Cook discussed the BRIGHT Act, and the opportunity for DCAMM and public higher education to have more and dedicated capital funds helping public higher education move more diligently on these needed projects. The meeting included a tour of Building 17/Putnam Hall to observe the HVAC project in process.

A motion to approve the June 16, 2025 Committee on Facilities and Capital Improvements reports was moved by Trustee Jeff Sattler, seconded by Trustee Bill Johnson, and unanimously approved via roll call.

b) Presidential Evaluation Ad Hoc Committee Meetings (April 14 and June 3, 2025)

Committee Chair, Mike Knapik shared that the President Evaluation Ad Hoc Committee met twice (April 15 and June 3rd) - reiterated the timeline included and shared again that the process was consistent with past practices for annual Presidential Evaluations, and aligned with Department of Higher Education guidelines. Trustee Dávila, shared that he felt good about the process, including how input from each Trustee was sought.

During this part of the agenda, Trustee Tonia Butler Pérez reiterated her concerns with the lack of clarity of the President’s evaluation process. She stated that based on the self-evaluation the Board received from the President, I believe he is doing a great job. However, I believe that we should include the opinion of other key STCC stakeholders in the evaluation process to confirm the accomplishments in the President’s self-evaluation.

Trustee Butler Perez stated that Renae Gorman, MCC Chapter President and Grievance Officer reached out to her via emails concerning the Ad Hoc Committee for the Presidential Evaluation indicating that the STCC MCCC Chapter had reached out to the Ad Hoc Committee for the Presidential Evaluation on April 23, 2025, requesting the materials referenced during the April 14 meeting, and had not gotten a response. Ms. Gorman’s goal was to gather employee feedback based on the criteria presented, as mentioned by Chair Knapik during the meeting of April 14, 2025, that stakeholder comments could be submitted directly to him. She then read the emails sent from Renae Gorman, MCC Chapter President and Grievance Officer, that document that Ms. Gorman reached out to the Ad Hoc Committee for the Presidential Evaluation on April 23, 2025.

In response, Trustee Dávila shared that as a Committee member, he had not seen the email, and in his view as a professional quite familiar with executive evaluations, the process was well within the norm - the Board has been transparent, and it is about whether

the president is doing his job. He also noted that shared governance is a separate issue. As already mentioned, next year the President is up for a comprehensive evaluation.

Chair Knapik moved to approve the minutes from Presidential Evaluation Meetings held on April 14 and on June 3, 2025, seconded by Trustee Dávila and unanimously approved via role call.

V. President's Perspective – Dr. John B. Cook, President

Dr. Cook described ongoing efforts with campus/stakeholder communication and engagement, including:

Fall Enrollment Outlook

Fall enrollment is up, mostly driven by retention: expect that STCC will reach 6,000 students enrolled in the Fall of 2025. Also in the fall, groundbreaking of SHPS relocation and will see more construction happening.

Federal uncertainty remains

Referring to the article included in the packet, *Healey urges US Senate to reject Pell Grant cuts, touting success of Massachusetts program*, Dr. Cook updated on the issue of Pell grant credits are increased from 12 to 15 for full-time eligibility (therefore halftime would then be 7.5 credits from the current 6). This increase would affect many community college students given how many attend part-time. Is part of the advocacy now with the US Senate.

Articles & Letters of Support (Pell grants & Head Start)

Other items included in the packet is a letter to members of the MA delegation asking for continued support of Head Start, as well as an article *Tennessee and SFFA sue over funding for Hispanic-serving institutions* regarding the status of Hispanic-Serving Institution designation. Dr. Cook highlighted that the State of Tennessee is challenging HSI designations.

Quantum

Dr. Cook recently joined Mass Tech for a presentation on the quantum accelerator project slated for the Tech Park with regional Mayors and Elected Officials.

VI. Chair's Report – Chair Knapik

a) 2024-2025 Presidential Evaluation

[MOTION 2025-11] 2024-2025 Presidential Evaluation of Dr. Cook

Per previous discussion, Trustee William Dávila moved that the Springfield Technical Community College Board of Trustees approves the 2024-2025 Presidential Evaluation as presented, consistent with the Commonwealth's Open Meeting Law (OML) requirements, M.G.L. c. 30A, SS 18-25, and the Attorney General's regulations, educational materials and

advisories.

Motion was seconded by Trustee Norman Roldan, and approved via roll call (seven Yes votes; one abstention).

VII. New Business / Old Business

a) Farewell & Thank You: Student Trustee, 2023-2025, Zoya Plunket-Brown

The last meeting for our Student Trustee; thanked Zoya for her service and for sharing her inspiring journey. She shared that she was offered a job at New England Orthopedics and is taking the Board exam in July. Wishing Trustee Zoya all the Best!

b) Introduction: Student Trustee, 2025-2026, Caleb Sierra

Joining the meeting is recently elected Student Trustee Caleb Sierra - a Springfield resident, and a Business major, Trustee Sierra expressed his appreciation for the invitation and feels privileged to be a member of the Board of Trustees. He participates in the MILE initiative and tries to take advantage of everything STCC has to offer including participating in the STCC Business Club.

VIII. Date of Next Meeting: Monday, September 22, 2025

IX. Roll Call & Adjournment

At 5:44 p.m., Chair Knapik called for a motion to adjourn the meeting, Trustee Norman Roldan moved the motion, seconded by Trustee Tonia Butler-Pérez and unanimously approved via Roll Call.



Michael R. Knapik
Chair, STCC Board of Trustees



Dr. William Dávila
Secretary, STCC Board of Trustees

June 23, 2025

Motion:

With a recommendation from the Presidential Evaluation Committee, the Springfield Technical Community College Board of Trustees approves the presidential evaluation as presented, and submits the below to Commissioner Ortega and the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education

Annual Presidential Evaluation (FY 2025)

{Motion 2025-11} This evaluation was moved, seconded, and approved unanimously with one abstained by STCC Board of Trustees on June 23rd 2025 at a publicly noticed meeting held in accordance with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law

The Chair of the STCC Board of Trustees (BOT) utilized an Ad Hoc Committee comprised of three Trustees (Board Chair, Board Vice Chair, Board Secretary) to oversee and conduct the FY 2025 performance evaluation of President John B. Cook. Meetings held by the Committee were done in accordance with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law.

The evaluation was consistent with guidelines set forth by the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (DHE), and across multiple meetings, the Committee was invited to review information including the Self-Assessment prepared by Dr. Cook that had referencing of DHE Performance Measurement Reporting System (PMRS) metrics. The Committee also considered all relevant materials, including the STCC Strategic Plan (Momentum: 2023-2028), and were asked to review Board and Committee meeting minutes, materials and presentations from the year. Additionally, Committee members met individually with fellow Trustees to hear feedback directly about performance of President Cook; all Trustees were also asked to complete a survey that inquired about key performance areas (e.g. fiscal, capital) used by the Board for a number of years. At the May Board of Trustees meeting, held in Open Meeting, Trustees had further opportunity to provide comment to the Chair regarding the performance of Dr. Cook. Additionally, each of the four Vice Presidents reporting to Dr. Cook (Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Information Technology, Financial/Sustainability) were asked to respond to a set of questions asking about their work with the president. At multiple Board meetings, the Chair made clear that any stakeholders wishing to provide comment should email him directly.

Summary findings for the performance of President Cook for FY 2025 are as follows:

- Timely communication, particularly given federal uncertainty, and Dr. Cook uses a number of strategies to engage and otherwise make himself available.
- Fiscal expertise, with evidence not only his stewardship of budgets, but with capital-infrastructure investments, and notably, substantial increase in college Reserves.

- Strong leadership team: it is clear Dr. Cook has built an effective team, with institutional performance metrics in the areas of access, retention and completion, evidence the college continues in a positive direction.
- Planning: the college has done well with capital project strategy, and ongoing management of the School of Health move is significant.
- Continue to seek innovation: a program like STEM Studies is an example of how STCC remains a leader. Trustees appreciate that shared governance is about voice, and the Board is glad to see forums and processes being utilized, even as we see the president and administrators having to ultimately make decisions.
- College governance can be misunderstood so it is important for Trustees to make clear that the president is managing shared governance correctly, even when there is disagreement.
- Leadership: we note that the president has helped to elevate the role STCC plays in the region, especially with STEM and healthcare workforce conversations. Free community college (taxpayer-supported community college) has been very important for STCC, and the Board values the embrace of this opportunity.

GOALS for FY 2026:

- Continue planning and implementation of MassReconnect/MassEducate
- As needed, utilize exigencies should federal funding changes significantly alter college operations
- Effectively manage the construction phase of the School of Health move
- Ensure a timely response in 2026 to the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) with a Fifth-Year Report submission.

Conclusion:

Completing his ninth year as president, Dr. Cook continues to have the full faith of the STCC Board of Trustees, and it is clear that a long-tenured leader is an asset given the complicated nature of higher education. His steady presence, knowledge, and deep commitment to the college and region is welcome and valued. It was clarified for the Board that next year, FY 2026, is when the president is due for a comprehensive five-year evaluation, and that approach will be determined at the appropriate time.

Regarding presidential compensation, Trustees once again strongly encourage, like past years, that the Board of Higher Education, via the Commissioner of Higher Education, provide the maximum salary adjustment permissible via merit, market assessment, or any combination of factors.

Respectfully Submitted,



Michael R. Knapik, Chair

Board of Trustees, Springfield Technical Community College

Enc. Presidential Self-Assessment from Dr. John B. Cook