

APPROVED MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE DISTRICT OF THE COUNTY OF MACOMB

A special meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Community College District of the County of Macomb was held Monday, March 11, 2019 at 5:30 p.m., in Room K324 of the John Lewis Student Community Center, South Campus, for the purpose of appointing a qualified elector of Macomb County to the position of Trustee for a term that will expire in November 2020.

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Lorenzo at 5:40 p.m.

2.0 ROLL CALL

Present: Katherine Lorenzo, Chairperson  
Frank Cusumano, Vice Chairperson  
Kristi Dean, Secretary  
Roseanne DiMaria, Treasurer  
Joan Flynn, Trustee  
Vincent Viviano, Trustee  
Vacant, Trustee

Absent:

Also present: James Sawyer, President  
Sharon Kowal, Executive Administrative Assistant to the President  
Jeffrey Steele, General Counsel

3.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by DiMaria, supported by Cusumano, to approve the agenda as presented.

ALL IN FAVOR:

Ayes: DiMaria, Cusumano, Dean, Flynn, Viviano, Lorenzo

Nays:

Absent:

Motion carried.

#### 4.0 AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (verbal)

##### Mr. Eugene Groesbeck

Hi, my name is Eugene Groesbeck. I live in Shelby Township. There's no secret to any of you here, maybe to some of the people here, that I was the candidate who came in third in November behind Joan Flynn and Roseanne DiMaria. I received over 75,000 votes. It wasn't the first time I've run for the office. I think it was the fifth time. I've applied for vacancies now a third time.

My background, I think is very solid and lends itself to being on this Board. I'm a graduate of Cousino High School class of '77, Macomb Community College class of '79, Lake Superior State University class of '82, Wayne State University 2001. So that's a high school diploma, an associate's degree, a bachelor's degree, and master's degree. I've worked 25 years for the Macomb County Sheriff's Department as a Corrections Deputy, where I served as steward, vice president, and president of the Macomb County Sheriff's Association. Currently, I am a Special Investigator with the United States Department of State Diplomatic Security Service. I served as a volunteer mediator with the Resolutions Center in Mount Clemens for 19 years. I am a member of the Foster Care Review Board in the Macomb County for the last 19 years. I say all that just to you give an idea of my resume and why I think I'm uniquely qualified for this position.

But yet, this Board or the subcommittee of the Board didn't see fit to even include me as a finalist. I think that's appalling, quite frankly, and a lot of people supported me in November, likewise. Since you've restricted me to two minutes rather than the normal amount of time for public participation, I won't read any of those comments, but you can find them on my website or my Facebook page, which still is up and running.

So, when I went through the procedure before to be appointed, the first time you appointed Mr. Jackson, came out of the blue, couldn't hold his seat after two years. Fact, I got more votes than him, he lost. He was off the Board. Then the next time I applied for vacancy, you appointed Elizabeth Lucido, who used it as a stepping stone to the County Commission. Served her two years then "went on to bigger and better things". So now here we are again, and I just can't see where you didn't see fit to include me at least as a finalist. I hope I'm not coming across as sour grapes, because it's not that. It really is just that you didn't do the right thing and 75,000 people in Macomb County I think would tell you the same.

And so, your procedure by which you choose to fill vacancies is very vague in your charter. You just have to choose, replace somebody or assign them within 30 days. It would appear to me that the best thing to do is amend your charter and insert some language to the effect that if a vacancy occurs within a certain amount of time to proximity of an election that the next highest vote getter be given consideration if not outright appointed to the Board. That's what a lot of Boards of your nature do. And so, I'm going to meet with you. I'm going to ask for a meeting with you, Mr. Sawyer, President Sawyer. Because I've looked at the charter, I can ask for a meeting with you and then ask for a meeting to sit down with the Board to work on this issue. Because really, you guys opened yourselves up to allegations of cronyism and also circumventing the will of the voters, in this case.

So, I've said my piece. I'm going to stay here and see who you do appoint. I wish them well. There's three seats that come up for election in 2020, Mr. Cusumano, Mr. Viviano, and this new person. I will be running again. And if history repeats itself, this new person might not be on the Board for very long. So we'll see. Thank you very much.

#### 5.0 APPOINTMENT TO FILL BOARD OF TRUSTEE VACANCY

MOTION by Cusumano, supported by Dean to adopt the following procedure for nomination, discussion and voting to fill the vacancy of trustee position with a qualified elector of the Macomb Community College tax district and to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Trustee Jennifer Haase with a term ending November 2020.

- 1) Each board member may nominate only one applicant to fill the vacancy; no second is required for the nomination
- 2) After the discussion is closed, voting will be conducted by a roll call vote
- 3) If there is more than one applicant nominated and no one applicant receives the necessary four votes, then the top two applicants and ties will then be eligible for a second round of discussion and voting
- 4) This process shall continue until an applicant is chosen to fill the vacant Trustee position

ALL IN FAVOR:

Ayes: DiMaria, Cusumano, Dean, Flynn, Viviano, Lorenzo

Nays:

Absent:

Motion carried.

Trustee Lorenzo asked the candidates to step up to the podium one at a time and tell the board a little about yourself and why you would like to serve as a Macomb Community College trustee.

#### Gerard Gauthier

Hello, President Lorenzo, Board of Trustees, President Sawyer, thank you for having me as one of your finalists. I appreciate it. Coming here today, I can see that this is a very important position because of all the security you had on the first and second floors.

My name is Gerry Gauthier. I'm a Macomb County resident my whole life. I've spent 23 years serving on the Fraser Public School Board of Education which I've recently resigned from in June of 2017. I am married for 35 years. My wife, Beth, was a Utica School teacher, Special Education, 39 years. I have three children, adult children. Kathleen, 31, Joseph, 29, Peter, 27. They're all grown, have gone to college, and are living successful lives around the country.

The reason I seek the position is that I wanted to fill a void. I spent 23 great years serving the community of Fraser Public Schools. During that time, with the help of the team of administrators, staff, parents, Board, we did a lot of great initiatives in helping students achieve success. The reason I left was there came a time where the Board was a little top heavy with Board members who no longer had students in the schools, and I was always a firm believer that the Board should be made up of people who had a stake in the schools right at the time that they had children. So I resigned and it created a little bit of a void. So when this position came up, I thought it was a great opportunity to use those skills that I've learned over those 23 years to help get back on part of a team to help enforce, improve, education in Macomb County. You saw my cover letter; I think is very important for all of our students, adults within the County to move forward, to be successful, and to help create that diversity that the County needs to be successful. When County Executive Hackel created his mantra of, Live, Work, Play in Macomb County, he should have included the term, learn, because I think that is a very important part of being a member of Macomb County. So, I open to you. Do you have any questions for me?

Trustee Cusumano asked Mr. Gauthier what he thinks we do best at Macomb Community College.

Mr. Gauthier responded: I think we create great programs. I am on the Mechatronics Advisory Group, here on South Campus. And by the way, thank you for approving the robot simulator last month. We appreciate that. That will serve great need to our workforce. But, I think we do a good job of looking out to the community, touching base with our employers to see what programs we need and create those programs. We have a workforce shortage and education is vital to filling those roles. Also, we did a good job of reaching out to our young people to help bridge that gap of transitioning from K12 or from high school into Macomb, in creating a comfortable atmosphere for them to continue their education.

Trustee Cusumano asked Mr. Gauthier what he thinks we can we do better, where do we need to improve?

Mr. Gauthier responded: I don't know a lot about the logistics of the running of the college, so right now, I can only go by what I see community wise, you do a great job there. I guess that will come along as time tells.

Trustee Cusumano noted that it is difficult to tell people you are asking to bring you on board what you think they can do better.

Mr. Gauthier said: I come with no agenda. I think Macomb Community College is a gem in the County, is a gem in Southeast Michigan. But, I don't know the inner workings of the college and the programs that go on here. I just see what is available to the community, and I think we do, you do a great job of being out there in the community.

Trustee Flynn asked Mr. Gauthier whether he will put his name on the ballot if the Trustees do not select him tonight?

Mr. Gauthier responded: I will guess I will have to see in 2020. I'm not bitter. I'm honored to be here. I'm sure you have two other fine candidates here and you're going to select who's best for the position right now and then we'll have to see what comes in November of 2020. I'm not closed minded to it though.

Trustee Cusumano asked Mr. Gauthier how he sees as the role of the Board of Trustees and the role of an individual trustee?

Mr. Gauthier responded: The role of the Board itself, it's main function, and I've taken my school board 101 classes, right, is the role of the Board of Trustees first, is to select the president and critique and follow the president. President is the, he's the leader of education, we're not in the education field. So, our job as trustees is to select the president who's going to run the college and lead everybody in the college. The next thing is to review his progress and then help set policy and guidelines for the president to help run the college. Finally, oversee the budget, because we're representing the taxpayers. And it's our job to make sure that everything's within budget and that nobody's going to jail.

Mr. Gauthier continued: As an individual trustee, we're the eyes and ears for the County and we can only bring back suggestions. We shouldn't have personal agendas and should work as a group to help fill those needs that the college has. Thank you very much and good luck with your choice tonight.

#### Grace Mocerì

Hello everybody, I really appreciate this opportunity, thank you for having me today. My name is Grace Mocerì. I'm a longtime resident of Macomb County. I'm actually a first generation college student. My parents were immigrants from Italy, so they didn't really believe too much in the college education at the time. So I forced myself actually to go to college and get a degree, and I did. I achieved that and I want to be a Board of Trustee because I believe in higher education. I believe I can bring in fresh new ideas with this generation today. That's about it, not much of a public speaker as you can see. I get nervous really easily. I'm open to any questions.

Trustee Cusumano asked Ms. Mocerì what she thinks we do best.

Ms. Mocerì responded, I went to Macomb Community College as a guest student when I went to Oakland and it's come a long way since I graduated. You guys have the University Center now and I just believe that in the next few years that you guys will sell more with new ideas and change.

Trustee Cusumano asked Ms. Mocerì what she thinks we can do better?

Ms. Mocerì responded: By listening to the community to see what people want and giving people what they want.

Trustee Flynn asked Ms. Mocerì whether she has ever run for an office, and whether she would run for trustee if she was not selected tonight?

Ms. Mocerri responded: Probably not. That's in 2020. This is a great opportunity for me, so I would have to see if I don't receive this position. I've been a longtime resident of Macomb County and I believe maybe I can be the new face of the Board.

Trustee Viviano asked Ms. Mocerri whether she believes in the programs we have here, particularly involving the trades.

Ms. Mocerri responded: Yes, I do. I'm a certified court reporter with the 41-B District Court, and I understand you guys have a CER program here, so yes I do believe in a lot of the programs that you have here. As well as, you do have a paralegal program, which I am a paralegal as well. Thank you so much.

### Shelley Malec Vitale

I didn't even prepare anything in the car. I didn't know I'd be saying anything about myself. My name is Shelley Malec Vitale and I've lived in this area for 31 years when I got married. I came from the west side in Dearborn Heights, but from a very strong community college. My dad was tool & die, so blue collar. That's skilled trades, very proud of that and my aunt, the ex-nun, hippie nun in California did get a college education, so I wasn't the first in the family. But I went to Eastern, it's really important and we all started out at community college. I went to Henry Ford. My husband went to Macomb Community College, and both of us said the same thing, that our years at the community college were, in some ways, better than our university days.

I had full professors at Henry Ford Community College and Eastern had them too but we didn't have any student teachers, we had a great education. And, when my three daughters, they're all in their 20s now, went to school as long as they possibly could to Macomb Community College because we loved it so much. And, from my oldest daughter, who is 27 going on 28, to my youngest, who is still here finishing up. I watched the college grow within these last eight years or so. I watched the college grow and get better and better. The practicalities of the college, the things that make it easier, the registration. When I went to Henry Ford, they threw us into a pit and we ran for our classes, and whoever was the fastest got their classes. I think Noelle started off calling in her classes here at Macomb, and then it got better and better. Now, it's such a streamline process that my youngest daughter can go into a room and they have people there that will sit down and help them register. We've utilized the special ed programs. We've utilized the counselors, over and over again, and the counselors are phenomenal. Helping you streamline a plan, helping you pick out a college or university that is good for you.

So, I think in the future, the future of education, especially a liberal arts education, is going to be changing from what it's been. When I started college my parents said any degree, any degree, you'll get a great job. So I got a fine arts degree. And you couldn't get a job with that now. So, my daughters, who are all by osmosis into the arts, we wouldn't allow them to get a degree that didn't have a job at the end of it. There's going to be a lot of changes coming up with children and how they are going to be able to make a living. There's a shift now, they're starting to talk about how skilled trades are necessary and Macomb's already up on that, they've already started up on that, they've already got great two-year programs for people who just want to go to two-year programs. I watched them follow the trends right on time, right when they're needed.

Twenty years ago the culinary arts trend, they were right on it. It became one of the best schools in around to get that. When Granholm, I think, was doing film and the tax deductions for film in the area were big, Macomb was right on it. And you can start off with film classes here. Now it the media arts, they've got a lot going on with media arts, it's awesome. So staying on trend is important - to be right on. Because where the industry's going, these kids are going to need jobs, people need jobs. And it's kind of heart breaking, in the past, I always kind of, I have a lot of stories. You can tell I'm Italian and I'm Polish too. But so, I don't know where the story part comes in, but in the past when you wanted a job, there were jobs. If you weren't cut out for a factory or something, the whole neighborhood had - you can have any business, the grocery store, the barber shop, the candy store, the bar, anything and you can have your own little business - start up and go with it, and it was all there. There's a lot of people that aren't cut out for working in a factory or working on the farm or working in an industry of some sort. They want to do a skilled trade and that's going to happen too. So we're going to have a lot of changes in the workforce and I think Macomb Community College will really be right on top - I would like to be a part of that. I can be right on top of helping this next generation get the education they need.

And last, I think I wrote this in my letter, the liberal arts education. I hear talk of people saying now that people can afford college they really want to just streamline it, to get just the classes that are necessary for whatever specialty or what they're specializing in. But, I believe that language of interacting with each other is all based on speaking each other's language. So, I can speak to someone in engineering and someone in engineering can talk to someone like me because they had comp classes and they had their science and biology. High school is a time when you grow up, it doesn't really all sink in, the brain doesn't develop until they hit community college. So, getting a well-rounded gen ed, those gen ed courses, those first few years help us the rest of our lives. To keep those lines of communication going so that we can all interact and work together. Boy, that's what I did without planning it.

Trustee Viviano asked Ms. Vitale whether she would run if she were not appointed.

Ms. Vitale responded: If I wasn't appointed, No. But I have no aspirations to run for anything. But if I was elected and it worked out where I was a valuable or an asset, if it looked like someone would encourage me that I should keep up with helping the college, I would run. I don't know how I would even begin to do it or anything, it wouldn't be some full fledged rah rah campaign but I would like to help if I can, you know any way I can.

Trustee Lorenzo asked Ms. Vitale whether she would be willing to serve more than two years.

Ms. Vitale responded: Absolutely, whatever you need or want of me.

Trustee Cusumano asked all three candidates whether they had any commitments that would prevent them from attending regular board meetings once a month.

Ms. Vitale said: No, I've already checked my calendar to see if I was free. My work at Paint Creek Center for the Arts is a part time position where I teach art classes to adults and I have my own art career with my husband and art shows and things like that.

Trustee Cusumano said our meetings are in the evening, the third week.

Ms. Vitale responded: Yep, I'm free.

Trustee Cusumano said and that goes for the other applicants.

Ms. Mocerri and Mr. Gauthier confirmed that they are available as well.

Trustee Lorenzo sincerely thanked all three of the candidates for applying and taking the time to be here. It is nice to have three good people to choose from; unfortunately, we can only pick one.

**NOMINATIONS:**

Trustee Cusumano nominated Shelley Vitale

Trustee Viviano nominated Grace Mocerri

**ROLL CALL VOTE TO SELECT THE TRUSTEE TO FILL THE VACANT SEAT:**

Trustee Cusumano casted his vote for Shelley Vitale

Trustee Dean casted her vote for Shelley Vitale

Trustee DiMaria casted her vote for Grace Mocerri

Trustee Flynn casted her vote for Shelley Vitale

Trustee Viviano casted his vote for Grace Mocerri

Trustee Lorenzo casted her vote for Shelley Vitale

Having received 4 votes for trustee, Shelly Vitale became the new trustee based on the procedure outlined above.

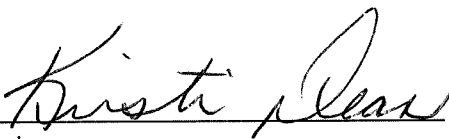
**6. ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION by Dean, supported by Cusumano, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT OF THE COUNTY OF MACOMB BOARD OF TRUSTEES

  
Secretary