

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, January 18, 2021 at 6:00 p.m., electronically through GoToMeeting in order to maintain safe distancing practices and to avoid the occurrence of a large gathering.

1.0 [CALL TO ORDER](#)

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Lorenzo at 6:00 p.m.

2.0 [ROLL CALL](#)

Present:

Katherine Lorenzo, Clinton Township, Chairperson
Frank Cusumano, Macomb Township, Vice Chairperson
Kristi Dean, Shelby Township, Secretary
Roseanne DiMaria, Eastpointe, Treasurer
Joan Flynn, Warren, Trustee
Shelley Vitale, Macomb Township, Trustee
Vincent Viviano, Shelby Township, Trustee

Absent:

None

Also present:

James Sawyer, President
Nicole McKee, Director of Government and Institutional Relations
Jeffrey Steele, General Counsel

3.0 [APPROVAL OF AGENDA](#)

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

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: DiMaria, Cusumano, Dean, Flynn, Vitale, Viviano, Lorenzo

NAYS:

MOTION CARRIED.

4.0 [AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION](#)

None.

5.0 [PROPOSED RESOLUTION TO ENDORSE TRUSTEE DEAN AS A CANDIDATE/APPLICANT FOR THE POSITION OF MEMBER OF THE ACCT DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE](#)

5.1 [Proposed Resolution](#)

MOTION by Cusumano, supported by DiMaria, that the Board of Trustees endorse Trustee Kristi Dean as a candidate/applicant for the position of member of the ACCT Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.

Chair Lorenzo gave a brief recap of the events that led to this meeting. She said Trustee Dean asked her for her signature on behalf of the Board of Trustees. A single board member cannot give a signature without the other trustees being aware of it. She contacted her colleagues and asked for their permission. There was a lack of support. She emailed Trustee Dean to let her know and here we are looking for a resolution. The floor is open for discussion.

DISCUSSION:

Trustee Dean asked Dr. Sawyer where the \$25,000 amount come from? Dr. Sawyer responded, it was an estimate. He knows that the ACCT typically hold their conferences in expensive places, and he wanted to try to get an idea of the cost. He couldn't find any information on the location of the summer Board Meeting and Retreat, but the 2022 conferences are in DC and New York, right on Broadway, so we know that is an expensive location. A request on the application was the college's support of the applicants travel to those conferences and he was being cognizant of the financial commitment the college would be making.

Trustee Dean said, understood, but when she served as the delegate for the ACCT, the voting was remote. She thinks the conferences are going to be remote, because no one knows when we will be able to travel or meet in larger groups. She thinks that amount was little too much for this particular year. Dr. Sawyer agreed that for conferences in 2021 they are most likely to stay virtual, but by 2022 he suspects they will be in person. Trustee Dean said that is what she is recommending, she's not looking for a pay day or to travel around the United States, she is looking to represent the college. It's a nomination. She is not on the Diversity and Inclusion committee yet, it is a nomination. That is her argument.

Trustee Dean said to Chair Lorenzo, when you talked to other trustees and they were not supportive, she, herself, never received a call, which trustees did she reach out to? Chair Lorenzo said that she spoke personally to each one, with the exception of Trustee Cusumano who did not return her call.

Trustee Dean said she wished Chair Lorenzo had reached out to her to tell her that instead of sending an email saying she wouldn't sign it. She said she is disappointed, and just wished Chair Lorenzo would have contacted her first and told her what her issues were. Chair Lorenzo stated that she has no issues and to be perfectly clear, this is not personal. She has no issue with this at all. The only issue was she was asked to represent the board of trustees and no one board member has the right to sign on behalf of the entire board. She had to ask her colleagues, before she would give her signature.

Trustee Dean remarked that she was eliminated from the discussion. Chair Lorenzo told her that she didn't reach out to the trustees either to let them know what her intent was.

Trustee Dean said her other issue is that she has been on ACCT and SEMCOG and she never reached out to any board member there either to be put on that committee. Chair Lorenzo said yes, she did, that was at a board meeting. Chair Lorenzo represented the college at SEMCOG before Trustee Dean. Trustee Dean responded that she was appointed by Don Hubler and that had nothing to do with Macomb. Chair Lorenzo said okay, but she didn't have to have board support. Trustee Dean said she was appointed. Chair Lorenzo said and nobody asked for board support. Being appointed to anything is perfectly fine, but this is an issue of asking for board support. It is not being appointed, it is board support.

Trustee Dean said she did not know she needed board support, when she reached out to Dr. Sawyer and asked him to endorse the nomination. Chair Lorenzo pointed out that in the packet it spells it out very clearly "a letter of support from your local board indicating your institution's commitment to provide financial support." It wasn't even a letter from the president, it was a letter of support from the board. That is why she wasn't comfortable, because no one board member can sign on behalf of the board.

Trustee Viviano asked Dr. Sawyer if the amount of money is \$25,000? Dr. Sawyer said that is an estimate and it could certainly be high. He doesn't want to imply that is a certain amount, he's just trying to estimate what might be expected.

Trustee Flynn said she helped Trustee Dean get on the board at SEMCOG and finding out that she has been on SEMCOG for how long and she has never given a report at our meeting. When Trustee Flynn is on a committee that doesn't involve the county, she should give a report. Trustee Flynn continued saying, now Trustee Dean has been on ACCT for how long and she fought to get her on that, but she has not reported at any time. Trustee Flynn feels that Trustee Dean is not qualified to do this, that is her opinion, no hard feelings, but that is her opinion. Trustee Dean never gives a report on anything and that is wrong.

Trustee Cusumano said in preparing for this meeting he did some research and in the December 16, 2020 packet there was an audited report showing an actual expenditure of \$29,576 for the board of trustees. He requested from the Office of the President a breakdown itemization of those expenses. He doesn't anticipate that it will be ready for this evening, but perhaps for Wednesday evening. Dr. Sawyer interrupted Trustee Cusumano saying that he sent a response about 15 minutes ago. He responded to Trustee Cusumano's email, included the attachment and copied the trustees. Dr. Sawyer said that was a budgeted amount, it wasn't an actual expenditure.

After some discussion it was determined that Trustee Cusumano was referring to the recently revised budget showing the \$15,000 decrease to the board of trustees budget leaving an available amount of \$28,000.

Trustee Cusumano said the resolution before the board, in paragraph 3, limits "shall not cumulatively exceed \$5500" for Trustee Dean's participation in the ACCT's Diversity Equity and Inclusion committee. He said it is important that the board members be

encouraged to participate in national organizations. He has often argued that an educated trustee is a valuable asset. He gives his support to the motion as stated. He doesn't anticipate that costs are going to exceed \$5500 while working remotely through the Covid pandemic. He thinks it is important for the college to show a commitment to the board of trustees, in that he doesn't believe that the board of trustees are inconsequential, superfluous or somehow or another not important to the institution. He thinks that may be the message that is being sent by the out of hand rejection, and not to mention, the 34 percent reduction to the board's budget. He doesn't think the budget for the board of trustees that has been allocated by the budgetary process has ever fully been used.

Dr. Sawyer said the reduction is a temporary reduction for this fiscal year. As we were putting together the budget for the balance of the year, we recognized there would not be any travel and if there was it, would be at the end of the year, so we made that reduction for the current budget year. We anticipate returning the funds next year.

Chair Lorenzo said the amount that is pledged is a moot point. A stipulation of any amount cannot be made because the documents say the college must commit to providing financial support, and these are her words, in whatever amount is needed, so there is no telling what the support will be. Chair Lorenzo clarifies that the location of the conferences is unknown and the term for Trustee Dean begins in 2022, so there is no point talking about Covid in 2021 since she would not be elected to serve until 2022 and then we would have to say that we will come up with whatever amount is needed, whatever that might be. Before she calls the question that amount needs to be taken out of the equation.

Trustee Cusumano asked if the phraseology of the nomination request is so open-ended it could be any amount? Chair Lorenzo said yes, it could be any amount, it depends on post-Covid costs, on location, on airfare, there are a lot of unknowns. Trustee Cusumano asked if they are asking for a contribution from every member, similar to a fundraising committee? Chair Lorenzo said no they are asking for the college to put forth the money, to guarantee the money, would be a way of saying it.

Trustee Cusumano asked Chair Lorenzo to please reread the language. Chair Lorenzo said the wording is "your institution's commitment to provide financial support for your service as an ACCT board member, including participation in the ACCT Leadership Congress, Community College National Legislative Summit and annual summer Board of Directors retreat and meeting." Trustee Cusumano said so there are four distinct conferences and/or meetings that are anticipated.

Trustee Vitale said the ACCT and other organizations related to the board and trustees at community colleges inundate them with email after email asking for their participation and it is their fault that they don't provide an idea of how much a monetary commitment the college has. She thinks a better discussion would be to what benefit would this have for the college. In the past there have been other things that they have been advised would be very important for them to be involved in and Trustee Dean could be the first trustee in line, as far as she is willing to do so. That is something to think about. Also is

there some other position that is more beneficial to the college, are there any benefits for this kind of representation?

Chair Lorenzo asked Trustee Dean what she sees as the benefit. Trustee Dean replied that she looked at it as a national committee and that she would be representing Macomb, the state of Michigan and being part of it. That is all she was looking for. As a benefit, she asked Dr. Sawyer what kind of benefit does the college get from the ACCT?

Dr. Sawyer said that varies, and it is difficult to answer specifically to this committee because we don't have a direct connection to it. He said, we have had some trustees attend one of their professional development institutes for new trustees and he thought that was beneficial. This is obviously a topic that is important to the college but how their work relates to Macomb is difficult for him to answer because he is not that familiar with the work of their committee.

Trustee Flynn asked Trustee Dean after four months (on ACCT) what is her opinion, what has she learned? Trustee Dean said as the college's first virtual voting delegate, they basically presented three candidates who gave their speech and they were all elected. She is not sure what the process was to get those three nominees to the full board, she doesn't have any history. Basically, when Trustee Flynn helped her to be a delegate, she didn't have any history. Trustee Flynn said why should Trustee Dean go up higher when she hasn't even met local, she is against it. Trustee Dean said because of Covid they can't meet. Trustee Flynn said use Zoom, like they do.

Trustee Cusumano said when he first learned Trustee Dean was applying for this committee, he thought that's good because we need quite a bit of work, knowledge and input about diversity, equity and inclusion. Those are areas that the board of trustees has focused on as being important to the people of Macomb and the district that they represent. He knows, particularly on equity, it doesn't really get discussed much anymore but it has always been a hot topic at all the national meetings he has attended. He thinks it is important for the board to have some knowledge. A much larger question, as Trustee Vitale indicated, is whether or not the board's participation with any of these national or statewide organizations are beneficial to the college. It provides an environment that is a little outside of the box where a trustee can compare and talk to fellow trustees on a national basis. He has learned quite a bit from both at a state level and at the national level whenever he attended any of these conferences. He said the trigger point with this commitment was the cost. He understands from Dr. Sawyer's responses he does not know the exact cost, this was an estimate. The Chair has indicated that it would be so open ended the board couldn't make a cap or a commitment of some certainty unless the organization is willing to give an open-ended agreement for whatever they need. He thinks the ACCT is looking for a commitment, so they don't have people running and taking these offices and then not attending any of their conferences. There would be four national conferences that would have to be attended according to his understanding. So whether or not the \$5500 cap is even applicable would be the decisive issue in his eyes. He does think it is important for the board to continue to participate in these organizations, so he reiterates an educated trustee is a benefit and an asset to the organization, in his opinion.

Chair Lorenzo said to Trustee Cusumano she agrees 100 percent about the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion. She does not know if this particular committee is one that would benefit the college at all. This committee serves to bring in underserved colleges to ACCT. The committee is not to serve Macomb, it is to help the national organization, and that is why she doesn't think there would be any benefit to Macomb.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Cusumano, Dean

NAYS: DiMaria, Flynn, Vitale, Viviano, Lorenzo

MOTION FAILED.

Trustee Cusumano called a point of order stating the Chair was correct in her analysis that this meeting needed to be decided by the board in an open meeting.

6.0 ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by DiMaria, supported by Viviano, to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 6:32 p.m.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT OF THE COUNTY OF MACOMB BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Secretary