

APPROVED MINUTES OF INFORMATION SESSION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE DISTRICT OF THE COUNTY OF MACOMB

An open information session of the Board of Trustees of the Community College District of the County of Macomb was held Wednesday, May 18, 2022 at 6:00 p.m., in Room 341 of the John Lewis Student Community Center, South Campus, 14500 E. Twelve Mile Road, Warren, Michigan.

1.0 [CALL TO ORDER](#)

The meeting was called to order by Acting Chairperson Cusumano at 6 p.m.

2.0 [ROLL CALL](#)

Present:

Frank Cusumano, Acting Chairperson  
Kristi Dean, Secretary  
Roseanne DiMaria, Treasurer  
Joan Flynn, Trustee  
Shelley Vitale, Trustee  
Vincent Viviano, Trustee (arrived at 6:35 p.m.)

Absent:

Katherine Lorenzo, Chairperson

Also present:

James Sawyer, President  
Elizabeth Argiri, Vice President, Business  
Kevin Chandler, Vice President, College Advancement & Community Relations  
Joline Davis, Vice President, Human Resources  
Sharon Kowal, Assistant to the President  
William Leavens, Chief of College Police  
Deb Mende, Executive Director, Office of the President  
Gerri Pianko, Director of Budget and Grants  
Kathleen Poindexter, Interim Associate Vice President, Business  
Don Ritzenhein, Provost, Vice President of Learning Unit  
Jeffrey Steele, General Counsel, Office of General Counsel  
Jill Thomas-Little, Vice President, Student Services

3.0 [APPROVAL OF AGENDA](#)

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

ALL IN FAVOR:

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

ABSENT: Lorenzo

NAYS:

MOTION CARRIED.

4.0 AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None.

5.0 REVIEW OF AGENDA ITEMS AND MATERIALS

Acting Chairperson Cusumano questioned the reason why the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary book is being done out of house at a cost of \$74,490 for 250 books for publication by HOUR. He said that works out to \$296 per book. He understands there will be a digital book as well. The next qualified lowest bidder is in the range of \$36,000. He asked for justification on that type of expenditure. What is the plan for the 250 books, are they going to be donated to a library?

Dr. Kevin Chandler, vice president of College Advancement and Community Relations, said the plan is to publish this book to preserve the history of Macomb Community College. It will tell the story of the value that Macomb has provided the community and of the many initiatives originated at the college over the last 70 years. We do not have the publishing services needed to run this in house. We are having a minimum of 250 books printed, but we can order more. The books would be used at cultivation events, and as a tool to cultivate current and future donors, for gifts and for the community in terms of the initiatives in the book. We don't know all the initiatives yet and will meet with the company and our archivist to make that determination. We are considering a donor wall inside the book for those people who donate a set amount to the college for recognition in the book.

Acting Chairperson Cusumano asked if it would be available online linked to the website as well? Dr. Chandler said that it would, and HOUR has a digital component dedicated to that online presence. Their in-house experts are bar none in building that online identity for their clients. They have an audio video outfit, as well. The reason that is important is we have tried to embark on an oral history by interviewing retirees and others who have had an impact on the college. We have done an okay job, but it hasn't been to the standard of the video and audio capability that we want. Although that is not included in the board item, he wanted to share just how far HOUR's reach goes in terms of what they have to offer in resources, capabilities and writers.

Acting Chairperson Cusumano said we are not just purchasing a book; we are purchasing the whole package. Dr. Chandler said in this instance it will be the book, but they will help us with archives and the digital component, as well. The beauty is they will retain some of that institutional knowledge and if we did decide to go to an oral history or do something additional, they have the capability to do that in a seamless transition. HOUR is local, they have their own archives and networks in terms of enhancing some of the history of Macomb.

Acting Chairperson Cusumano appreciated the explanation and will reconsider his vote. Dr. Sawyer said samples are available for the trustees to look through. He added that part of our goal is to create a very impressive piece, a special piece commemorating seventy years of what the college has done for the community. It has to be first-class, and Dr. Chandler and the review team used part of that lens in their recommendation of HOUR.

Trustee Flynn asked who is SMZ and where are they located? Dr. Chandler responded that SMZ is the media buyer for our marketing, and they are in Troy, Michigan. SMZ organizes and

structures all our media buys whether they are traditional or digital. Traditional being billboards and buses. Digital is banner ads, click throughs and social media. They are a brokerage house and find the best pricing on the media buys for all of the college's marketing.

Trustee Vitale said 250 copies of the book seems like a lot, how did you decide on how many to make? Dr. Chandler responded that was the minimum for the bid and was structured across the board for each of the vendors. Trustee Vitale asked if they will be for sale? She thinks people will want them. Dr. Chandler said we have not decided on selling them, but we can order more. The request tonight is for approval to create the book and part of the ancillary piece to this is we are going to get at least 250 copies minimum with the option to buy more.

Acting Chairperson Cusumano said at the board's February 17, 2021 meeting an information item was presented to the trustees of a slight increase to the \$480,200 for media buying and placement services approved by the board in May 2020. The current proposal is for the expenditures of \$800,000, with no breakdown to these other expenditures and according to the backup materials is being approved administratively. What is going to be the total ambit of the reach for SMZ now, what are we expecting from them? Dr. Sawyer said as we were putting together the board item this year, we talked about the increase to the general marketing funds in the February timeframe. We recognized that we had other spot buys for ancillary services, like conference services and the university partners for example, that were below the board threshold and in the spirit of full transparency we tried to capture all those costs which is why the amount has increased. Acting Chairperson Cusumano asked if it is anticipated that there will be no more administrative approvals and the budget will be capped at \$800,000? Dr. Sawyer said that is correct we tried to capture everything in the \$800,000.

## 6.0 ISSUES AND UPDATES

### 6.1 President's Report

On behalf of Chairperson Lorenzo, Dr. Sawyer extends her regrets. She is ill and is very sorry to miss this evening's meetings.

Air Show at Selfridge – Dr. Sawyer said the college has a limited number of tickets for the July 9 Air Show at Selfridge. We have 20 tickets and are limiting them to the trustees and one guest. We are doing this in partnership with Macomb County and the Macomb County Chamber. We need to reserve these spots quickly, please let Ms. Kowal know as soon as possible if you can attend. If you haven't been to an air show before it is fun.

Closed Session – Dr. Sawyer said that a closed session is needed pursuant to MCL 15.268(c), to discuss collective bargaining matters.

COVID Protocols on Campus – Dr. Sawyer reassured the trustees that we continue to monitor the Covid situation, however we do not have any plans to change our protocols at this time.

Enrollment Update – Dr. Sawyer shared that summer credit hours are down about 11 percent and headcount is down about 8 percent. We had forecast a 9 percent decline, so we are close to what was budgeted.

Futures for Frontliners and MI Reconnect – Dr. Sawyer shared that the Futures for Frontliners and MI Reconnect programs continue to be advantageous for our students. This summer there are about 1,100 students taking advantage of the programs, which is great.

Presentation - Overview of 2022-2023 Initial Budget by G. Pianko

Property Tax Resolution – Dr. Sawyer said the board’s approval of the annual property tax resolution authorizes college administration to reach out and assess the levy to the municipalities and collect the funds.

July Board of Trustees Meetings – Dr. Sawyer thanked the board for giving consensus in April to move the July board meeting to July 12. President’s Council will be attending a professional development session focused on talent and the future of work, so it is very timely. This afternoon Trustee Flynn advised him that she had something come up on her calendar for July 12 with the City of Warren at 7 p.m. He’d like to suggest, if the trustees are amenable to it, starting the meeting at 5:30 p.m. and he suspects it will be adjourned by 6 p.m. This is not going to be a typical board meeting. It is going to be very focused; he anticipates collective bargaining agreements and new hires will be on the agenda. We prefer to have the new hires approved before August, when classes start, because things work out better for everyone. The trustees were amenable to the meeting’s time change to 5:30 p.m.

Personnel – Dr. Sawyer said we have two new hires tonight. Our first full-time faculty for dental hygiene and our associate dean for humanities.

NBU Contracts and L. Argiri Promotion – Dr. Sawyer added that the NBU contracts are on the agenda. Part of the approval includes his recommendation that Ms. Libby Argiri be promoted to Executive Vice President of Business. Ms. Argiri has been with the college over 20 years and her performance in that time has been exemplary. Through her career at Macomb, she has had assignments with increasing levels of responsibility. For the past ten years she has been in a senior leadership position as the CFO of the college. The board has the good fortune to interact with her and are aware of her professionalism and competence. What makes Ms. Argiri ideal for this role is her passion for the mission of Macomb – she is committed to our students, our faculty and staff and to our community. As he reflects on the leadership of the college, there needs to be a hierarchy in place, so if for some reason he is unavailable, Ms. Argiri will assume the overall responsibility of the college. Also, he often finds himself unable to attend external events because of calendar constraints, but it would be beneficial for a college presence and in her new capacity Ms. Argiri will be able to fill those roles as well. He appreciates the board’s consideration as you make the approval of contracts this evening. Acting Chairperson Cusumano Trustee Cusumano said he assumes the form contract has not changed from year to year. Dr. Sawyer confirmed that is correct.

Administration Items – Dr. Sawyer said part of the renovation project the board approved in September 2021 was for the major resurfacing of parking lots #4 and #5. This administration item is for that project.

Purchases - Dr. Sawyer stated although we discussed a couple purchase items earlier, Chairperson Lorenzo thought it would be helpful to make the distinction that the *Connect* magazine authorization is not a part of the external advertising, it is separate from the SMZ request.

IDEA – Kennedy & Co. Update – Dr. Sawyer said that our work with Kennedy & Co. continues. Thank you for your responses on availability to have a working session with Kennedy & Co. at the end of June. We will confirm the date and share it with you. Ms. Thomas-Little has been leading the discussion with the IDEA Council who are working on the basic elements of a diversity statement. On May 24 we have a strategic planning retreat with President’s Council where we will be assessing last year and looking to the future and a big part of that discussion will be working with Kennedy & Co. on the diversity statement. We will prepare a statement for reaction by the trustees when we meet in June. That will be your opportunity to provide your input and help shape the statement. We continue to make great progress.

Institutional Development Day – Dr. Sawyer shared that on May 10 we held Institutional Development Day on campus but also offered a virtual option. We did that to address some people’s concerns and for convenience. Turnout on campus was good and many people took advantage of the virtual option. He thanked Trustee Vitale for attending. He said it is nice to have a trustee join us and be recognized in the audience. It is a special day at the college, the one time a year the entire college community gets together. Since we haven’t done that in two years it was very well received with many positive comments. Two main events of the day are recognition of our twenty-five-year service award recipients and our retirees. It was nice doing that in person, it was much more meaningful. He also gave the State of the College address. He shared the video with the board via email. If you have an opportunity, please watch it and let him know if any questions come up. It was great to celebrate that day again. He appreciates the committee, led by Ms. N. McKee, and their contributions in making that a great day, it went very well.

Early College Graduation – Dr. Sawyer said Thursday, May 12 we celebrated the Early College Graduation at Jimmy John’s Field. He thanked Trustee Dean for attending. We had about 200 students participate. Ms. Argiri’s daughter graduated, and it was nice to celebrate her. The student speakers did a wonderful job, the weather was good, and it was a special day. It’s just indicative of how great that partnership is and the opportunities that program provides to high school students in Macomb County.

Dental Cultivation Event – Dr. Sawyer reminded the board members about the Dental Cultivation event on May 19. At this event we are inviting the dental community into our facility, trying to build those relationships, because they are who our students will be working for. We have already had very good connections and Dr. Ellis reports that she is regularly getting calls from people actively seeking students who are in the learning process. Our relationships are being built but this event is meant to pull that together and hopefully provide a philanthropic funding stream to help support our work in the Dental Clinic. You are more than welcome to attend.

Detroit Zoo Update – Dr. Sawyer provided a follow-up on the Detroit Zoo and the College’s willingness to provide land. He serves as the Chair of the Macomb County Zoo Authority which places him on the Detroit Zoo Board as well. At the last zoo board meeting he learned that the timeline of the nature center has been impacted. There is still a strong commitment from the Zoo to have the Great Lakes Nature Center in Macomb County. The new CEO, Dr. Murphy, has taken a step back though both from a planning perspective and a financial one. The pandemic was devastating to the zoo because it is largely budgeted from attendance. They are looking at a raising capital campaign from 2024 – 2029. That shows how far they are pushing it back and they are also looking at \$30 million budget which was \$10 million more than they anticipated. To be

blunt he does not think the center will be on our campus. He thinks they are going to continue to press to have the center someplace on the water. He could be wrong about that, but he appreciates the board's willingness to entertain the idea and he knows the zoo staff was appreciative as well. He doesn't see talking about this again unless something comes up.

MCCA Summer Conference – Dr. Sawyer reminded the board about the MCCA Summer Conference coming up in July. After looking at the agenda, the conference should be a good event. Most of you have already responded but if you haven't, please let Ms. Kowal know if you're attending.

#### 6.2 2022-2023 Initial General Fund Budget

Ms. Gerri Pianko provided the board an overview of the 2022-2023 initial general fund budget.

Trustee Flynn commented that the bottom line is we are in good shape.

Trustee Vitale said this comes up once per year and for her own edification she doesn't understand why there is the limitation of the increase of institution's millage rate if property tax values increase greater than the rate of inflation.

Ms. Libby Argiri, Vice President, Business, responded that what happens throughout the year is when the housing values for new construction rise greater than the rate of inflation, Proposal A, which was passed in 1974, caps the inflationary impact on property taxes that individuals or residents pay. Prior to Proposal A, when property tax values rose higher than the rate of inflation, property taxes would be high for the individual household. The Headlee Amendment caps the increase so that property taxes maintain a certain level and are not in excess for the residents of our county. This is actually a look back period, so the question you might have is - inflation is high now why is there a rollback? That is because property tax values and the levies are really one year behind. They looked at levels of last year 2021 – the State of Michigan works along with the counties of the state to finalize property tax values and then determine if there is any millage reduction fraction that's needed based on the rate of CPI at that time. While this is a measure to make sure there are not high increases to the residents in our community as they support the college and the municipalities, the unfortunate side is it is a permanent reduction to our levy rate. Each time there is a millage reduction fraction it is a permanent reduction, and we would need to go back to the voters to increase it to the levy they initially approved that was 1.464 in May of 2018.

#### 7.0 CLOSED SESSION

A closed session was called pursuant to MCL 15.268(c) to discuss collective bargaining matters.

#### 8.0 ADJOURNMENT

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

Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT OF THE COUNTY OF MACOMB BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Secretary