

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, March 15, 2023 at 6:00 p.m., in Room 109 of the University Center, Center Campus, 44575 Garfield Road, Clinton Township, Michigan.

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, Chairperson  
Frank Cusumano, Vice Chairperson  
Kristi Dean, Secretary  
Joan Flynn, Trustee  
Shelley Vitale, Trustee  
Vincent Viviano, Trustee (arrived at 7 p.m.)

Absent:

Roseanne DiMaria, Treasurer

Also present:

James Sawyer, President  
Elizabeth Argiri, Executive Vice President, Business  
Kevin Chandler, Vice President, College Advancement & Community Relations  
Joline Davis, Vice President, Human Resources  
Tiffany Goliday, Executive Director, IDEA/Title IX  
Leslie Kellogg, Provost, Vice President of Learning Unit  
Sharon Kowal, Assistant to the President  
William Leavens, Chief of College Police  
Scott Sheets, Lieutenant, College Police  
Bill Simonson, Executive Director, Facilities and Operations  
Jeffrey Steele, General Counsel, Office of General Counsel  
Jill Thomas-Little, Vice President, Student Success

3.0 [APPROVAL OF AGENDA](#)

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

ALL IN FAVOR:

AYES: Flynn, Vitale, Cusumano, Dean, Lorenzo

NAYS:

ABSENT: DiMaria, Viviano

MOTION CARRIED.

4.0 [AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION](#)

None.

5.0 [REVIEW OF AGENDA ITEMS AND MATERIALS](#)

Trustee Cusumano said Item 11.4 - 2023 Annual Renovation Program requests an approval of \$3 million from the plant and technology funds. The recommendation is to authorize administration to solicit proposals, quotes and bids and award contracts, subject to the approval of General Counsel, to the lowest qualified bidders that will provide acceptable quality, service and performance meeting college specifications. He asked what is the oversight role of the board of trustees in the expenditure of public funds for \$3 million under this pre-approval arrangement and is it an unlawful delegation for the board to approve such expenditures? Dr. Sawyer responded this is an annual request to the board to authorize \$3 million for administration to solicit and award bids to the lowest qualified bidders for the projects listed on the write-up.

Executive Vice President Argiri added that the annual renovation program has been in existence for many years and there are many different projects that comprise this listing. It would be very cumbersome to come back to the board for every project. It would also make it very difficult to plan, especially when timing the completion of these projects with the least amount of impact on students, faculty, and staff. For the major renovations program, we come back to the board for approval of bids when they haven't been presented with the budget. For this meeting, Item 10.2, is the information report on the major renovations of center campus J building and south campus Q building. For these very large-scale projects, we present this information for the board to see that we do comply with the authorization of the board and our policy to select lowest bid. If we did not select lowest bid, we gave an explanation as to why.

General Counsel J. Steele said he thinks this is legal and not doing it this way would be very cumbersome and potentially could hold up the process. It would be within the board's province to demand everything be brought to the board piece by piece, but it would be very difficult to orchestrate and do in a cohesive way because of all the different contractors and projects that are involved in the symphony of needs to complete such a big project. Trustee Cusumano said he has found nothing in the board policy that precludes it from being done this way. A more elegant way to ensure oversight by the elected officials would be to bundle certain parts of this package for approval as it is occurring. He reviewed the statute and found nothing that stops the CEO or the board from taking this responsibility. To him it flies in the face of the oversight role of the board of trustees as gatekeeper of the public treasury.

Trustee Cusumano said as a practical matter under what circumstance would we not receive and file, even if we had issues? The executives would have bound the college and that would have been an enforceable contract based on the pre-approval that we are doing, so why do we even bother revisiting it? He doesn't think in his time as a trustee the board has ever not received and filed. Dr. Sawyer said the value of reporting this back gives transparency to the board. If through these reports you see a pattern of abuse that would be something to hold him accountable for and render judgement on him, as CEO.

Trustee Flynn asked for additional information about the Perkins grant fund. Dr. Sawyer said the Perkins fund is a national program named after Congressman Carl Perkins who put the fund in place many years ago. This is money that is dedicated by the federal government and passed down to the states. The college uses Perkins funds to support career and technical education programs and special service students. Trustee Flynn said if the grant comes from Michigan shouldn't we try to find vendors in Michigan? Dr. Sawyer said we follow the board's purchasing policy which binds us to use the lowest cost provider that meets the college's specifications. There is no stipulation in the board purchasing policy to consider where suppliers are located. Trustee Flynn asked if the Perkins grant fund has any stipulations? Dr. Sawyer said no it doesn't, but it is a very valuable program for the college because that money is used for purchasing equipment, supporting special services in counseling and professional development for faculty.

Trustee Dean asked if Item 11.3E, Gartner IT Research Service Agreement, is a new proposal authorization? EVP Argiri said the agreement is a renewal with a pricing package for three years. Trustee Dean asked if she knew how many students, faculty, and staff have used this in the past, because the board write-up says the service level includes campus-wide reference library access for all students, faculty and staff. EVP Argiri said CIO Mike Zimmerman will be available at the regular meeting to respond to any questions. But IT uses Gartner extensively for their verification that we have chosen specifications to industry standards in our very technical request for proposals. They have been helpful when we receive proposals in response to our RFP's and helping us draft policies and procedures, primarily in the IT and Business areas.

Trustee Vitale said as she was watching the documentary "Age of Easy Money" on *Frontline* (March 14, 2023) about the economic uncertainty and bank failure she noted that the college is doing everything right. Basically, the college turns those public monies over towards an ongoing onslaught onto the infrastructure that is directly listed. We do that right by putting all the money back into the professors and making everything better, we aren't hanging on to it and reinvesting it. It is a worthwhile program to watch.

Trustee Flynn said she took the MCCA's Trustee training and it was very good. But she comes back with a question for General Counsel, are the trustees insured if they get sued? Mr. Steele said yes. EVP Argiri said the board of trustees is covered under the college's standard MCCRMA policy with a liability limit of \$1 million per occurrence and \$15 million aggregate. Trustee Flynn said she voted for the raise so somebody might sue her. Mr. Steele said there are some difficulties in trying to sue a board of trustee member, but you are covered up to the liability limit. Trustee Flynn was glad to know about the coverage. Chairperson Lorenzo added that Trustee Flynn's point is well taken, because the trustees could be named along with a group in a lawsuit. Mr. Steele said there is a higher bar sometimes to sue a public official than it is to sue a non-public official, you are protected to some degree in that regard, so you can take some comfort in that as well.

Trustee Cusumano said with the recent tumult in the financial markets based on the inflationary pressures, can someone give him direction on what the exposure is for the college's investment portfolio?

EVP Argiri said we have been monitoring the situation very closely. The college does not hold any investments in Silicon Valley Bank or Signature Bank. There were six additional banks that have been indicated by Moody as possible downgrades and Comerica was one of them. We do bank with Comerica and the cash we have with them is subject to FDIC insurance. Anything outside of that is invested in governmental or treasury securities and are protected that way. This is the worst bond market this country has faced in almost 200 years. For the college's bond portfolio, we hold until maturity, so we have unrealized losses that aren't realized until we sell them. And because we left our cash flow in liquidity it is not an issue for us like it is for the banks. We are watching it very carefully and have made some modifications within our accounts at Comerica but as of now there doesn't appear to be any exposure to the college.

Trustee Cusumano said as a compliment to the college and the Business Office, this portfolio is far more diverse. He notices there are no certificates of deposit, which makes sense if the rate of return was so low. But there is a significant percentage down in municipal bonds which was minimal before. Although he still has the dispute that some of these government sponsored entities (GFCs) are not government instrumentalities, he congratulates and salutes the college for being more diverse and as a result the impact is less significant. EVP Argiri agreed that diversification is everything in this kind of market and we have been discussing with our investment advisor where we are at, the concerns out there and any modifications that we should take. Yes, we have taken steps to further diversify our portfolio including commercial paper and we do not have commercial paper with any of the banks that are in trouble.

## 6.0 ISSUES AND UPDATES

### 6.1 President's Report

Spring Break – There were no classes held the week of March 6.

Enrollment – Enrollment numbers have been consistent – compared to last winter credit hours are down 2.4 percent and head count is down 3.4 percent.

Personnel Actions – Two hiring recommendations and a tentative agreement with MCCCOPA are before the board for approval. Dr. Sawyer thanked the union leadership and J. Davis, VP of HR for negotiating an acceptable agreement within the parameters set by the board of trustees.

IDEA Update – The biggest update is Tiffany Goliday is joining us as our Executive Director of Inclusion, Diversity Equity and Access. Ms. Goliday introduced herself to the board of trustees.

Purchases – Dr. Sawyer indicated there are several purchases tonight, four are funded by the Perkins grant. The 2023 Renovation Program is also on the agenda and Executive Director, Bill Simonson will give an update on the program shortly.

Administration Items – Dr. Sawyer said there are two information items on the agenda. We talked earlier about the major renovations program and sharing the expenses for renovations in SQ and CJ that were approved last year. The other item is the short-term extension of MS SharePoint Services until the launch of the new portal. There is no official date for the launch but potentially could have a soft launch in early

fall or later. In the meantime, we will continue to use SharePoint because it supports the existing portal but when the transition is complete this contract will be terminated.

D3C3 Grant – Dr. Sawyer notified the board earlier that the college was awarded the full grant. It has not been announced yet but will be soon. From our perspective, part of the grant supporting student services includes:

- Six full-time positions (Success Coaches) to be the point of contact for our students and guide them to appropriate resources available at the college. We have hired five of the six positions.
- A case worker to oversee our mental health work. This person joined the college in January and is actively overseeing 15 cases. This work goes through our Behavioral Intervention Team. This is an important effort, and this position has already proved to be very beneficial.
- Hired Michael Baysdell to be our Director, K-12 Relations. Mr. Baysdell has been making great progress. Dual enrollment is up 26 percent over winter 2022. Our Early College for Macomb cohort for fall 2023 currently stands at 210 students. He has made inroads with districts that we haven't had much progress with on dual enrollment. For example, in Eastpointe, this fall we had two students but this winter we had 22. Growing our dual enrollment is an area we see of great opportunity for the college.

The D3C3 grant is the project J. Thomas-Little will be managing going forward. Periodic updates will be provided to the board.

Events hosted at the College:

State of Michigan, Labor and Economic Opportunity, Budget Discussion – Director Susan Corbin led the first regional discussion about the Governor's budget. LEO contacted the Macomb County Executive's Office, and they asked the college to host the event. People from all over southeast Michigan attended.

Swearing-In Ceremony for Representative John James – Dr. Sawyer thanked Trustee Vitale for attending the ceremony. There were about 60 people in attendance. The good thing about these types of events is they bring people to the college that normally do not come here. This gives them a chance to see the facilities and how the college plays such an important part in the community.

Macomb Economic Forecast – Dr. Sawyer thanked Trustees Lorenzo, Cusumano and Vitale for attending. Another 300 people attended and heard very positive comments about the college from County Executive Mark Hackel and our colleague from Wayne State who hosted the event. Another great opportunity for people to be on campus.

Announcements:

The Lorenzo Cultural Center Exhibit – Creative Michigan: Making the Mitten Modern - The exhibit is open! Dr. Sawyer said Trustees Lorenzo and Vitale attended the donor event. The exhibit opened on February 25 and runs through April 29. The exhibit explores the period of 1945-1969

during one of the largest periods of growth and creativity in Michigan's history. There are exhibits, artifacts, displays, events and speakers. The exhibit is open Tuesday thru Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Career Fair with City of Warren – The college is co-hosting a Career Fair in partnership with the City of Warren. It is Thursday, April 13 from 4 to 7 p.m. at the Sports & Expo Center. Many employers participate and there has been good attendance in the past.

Men's Basketball Team headed to Nationals – Dr. Sawyer shared that the Men's basketball team beat Kalamazoo Valley on Sunday and are headed to the NJCAA Division II National Championship in Danville, IL, March 21 – 25. Their first-round game will be played Tuesday, March 21 at 10 a.m. against Chesapeake College. Congratulations to Coach Nizam and the team for advancing and good luck!

Community College Month – Dr. Sawyer said April is Community College Month. Trustee Flynn inquired as to what do we do to support Community College Month. Dr. Sawyer and Nicole McKee, Director of Government and Institutional Relations will be attending Community College Day in Lansing on April 13. That is a day colleges send representatives to meet with the state legislators. We don't promote community college month per se because we allocate our resources to promote Macomb Community College specifically through an ongoing effort with our social media and other avenues. Next month we will have an update on our advertising in terms of the budget and some of the things we are doing. Our marketing is very targeted, so we focus on 18–24-year-old students, adult learners and influencers. We will begin promoting enrollment heavily in April. Yearlong registration opens on March 27 so there will be several items (emails, postcards, etc.) going to students and prospective students during April.

Trustee Flynn said it doesn't cost anything to pass a resolution that April is Community College Month. The mayor of Warren is passing a proclamation because the college is in Warren, but she was also going to get in touch with Mark Hackel and ask him to do a proclamation. Maybe it will promote Macomb Community College so we can get some students. She doesn't expect a grand display but let's do something. The ACCT said to pass a resolution at your March or April board meeting. At least they know we are cooperating with them. Dr. Sawyer asked if the board agreed to approve a resolution at the April board meeting recognizing Community College Month. The board agreed. Dr. Sawyer noted that in the future the resolution will be ready for the board to approve at the March board meeting.

Former Chairperson James F. Kelly – Dr. Sawyer shared that former board chairperson Jim Kelly has passed away. Mr. Kelly served on the board from January 2005 to December 2016. In recognition of his tenure as a trustee we will present a resolution at the April meeting for the Board to approve a donation of \$1,000 to the Trustee Endowment Fund in his honor. This has been a long-standing practice of the board but hasn't been done in a while so we reinvestigated this practice when we honored former Trustee C. Bolanowski in 2022.

Henry Ford Hospital Macomb request for sign easement – Dr. Sawyer said Henry Ford Hospital approached the college about locating some wayfinding signs on our property. With their recent renovations and additions, they want to install new signs on college property located between University Drive and the hospital parking lot. We've reviewed and discussed this request internally and agree it is a good idea to make that accommodation. However, rather than granting them an easement and knowing the board's sensitivity to them, our thought is to lease them the property for \$1. Also understanding that this is a unique situation and is for a strip of land that we will likely never use. If we should ever need that space, with a lease we would maintain authority over it. The property is before the University Center and nothing, but trees are directly across from it. Before we move forward, we want to be sure the trustees don't have any issues with this accommodation.

Trustee Vitale asked if the lease would be only where the signs are or the whole strip? Dr. Sawyer said it would be for the two spots the signs will be installed (yellow highlighted on handout). Trustee Flynn asked about the cost. Dr. Sawyer said it will be nominal, they are an important partner and clinical site. Mr. Steele added that the lease, as opposed to the easement, gives us more control both now and in the future. We can put clauses in the lease that would require them to install the signs, maintain them and perhaps give us some veto over the design if it was something we didn't like or think appropriate. He would also want a provision in the contract that if the signs were taken down that the hospital would make the property whole, like it was before the signs were installed. Mr. Steele said the hospital currently maintains the property, and likely will continue to but he hasn't decided if he wants to add that to the lease agreement. Dr. Sawyer said with no further concerns, we will proceed with their request.

Envisioning Discussion with Board of Trustees – Dr. Sawyer said that Chairperson Lorenzo is recommending we hold an open discussion with the trustees on the future of the college. We provide you with so much information during our information sessions that there is no opportunity for trustees to openly share their thoughts. The intent of this discussion would be to provide a forum for trustees to share their thoughts on the future direction of the college. For example, are there areas in the college where we should be putting forth more effort, putting in less effort, new areas the college should be exploring. What will the role of community colleges, and specifically Macomb Community College going to be in the future? Dr. Sawyer asked the board if they see value in that type of discussion? The trustees agreed that they do. Dr. Sawyer asked them to think about holding a separate session or using part of an information session for this discussion. Chairperson Lorenzo asked them to also think about holding a separate session during the week at any time or a weekend morning. We want to be accommodating so everyone can attend. Dr. Sawyer added that we are going to poll you but those are the current options.

Upcoming Events:

- Macomb Culinary Institute Fundraiser on Wednesday, April 12. Tickets are \$45 each/\$85 per couple.
- Macomb Adjunct Appreciation Reception on Friday, April 21. This is our opportunity to celebrate our adjunct faculty and the important work they do for the college.
- MCCA Summer Meeting in Traverse City, July 26 through July 28. Please let Ms. Kowal know if you plan to attend.

Presentations for April:

- Update on Financial Aid
- Update on Purchase Authorization for Advertising

The April meetings will be at south campus, K building, but the rooms (K267/250) will be on the main floor, signs will be posted.

Presentations tonight are Campus Safety and 2023 Renovations.

Showed news story by WDIV about the Dental Clinic.

6.2 [Campus Security Update](#)

Chief Leavens presented an update on campus safety, the investments made to improve campus safety and preventative measures that are in place.

Trustee Vitale asked if officers see someone on the security monitor approaching a building that could be considered suspicious do they interact with them immediately? Chief responded that if someone does see something or someone who looks suspicious, they need to call the police department. We do have cameras up and we monitor them as much as possible.

Trustee Vitale said she knows the staff is maxed out and has so much going on, but we have to make sure there are no gaps in the protocol. If someone is having problems, we need to give our people enough time and back up so they can make sure that person gets to the right amount of help they need and do not slip through the cracks. Chief said that is why we have partners; through HR we have the CARE team and students have BIT. We have a really good process here because it doesn't fall on just one person. VP Davis added that if HR is aware of someone that is struggling, her and her team will engage in wellness checks and follow through if needed. She shared a few examples.

Chairperson Lorenzo said she is fortunate to be a former employee of the college and received all the training on Stop The Bleed, AED, Narcan, etc. and it was just amazing but she thinks most people who aren't employed here don't have that training. The training sessions used to be online but she could not find them. Chief said staff, faculty and students can sign up for the training, but it is all hands on.

Chairperson Lorenzo asked what do you do if the perpetrator is in your classroom? It seems that the code NORA (Need Officer Right Away) is pretty common knowledge. Chief said there are more security enhancements coming on the phones. Every phone on campus will have a panic alarm, one button, when pressed will automatically go to the police department, identify the location of the alarm and opens a microphone enabling police to hear what's happening near that phone.

Trustee Vitale asked at what point do students get information about this? Do teacher's announce it in class on the first day? VP Thomas-Little said there is a safety segment in the new student orientation and teachers have information they share with their classes.



Chief said he will go to any department anywhere on campus and sit down and discuss safety. He does these two or three times a week. Chairperson Lorenzo commended Chief and his department. She thinks they are stellar, and her concern is not about the police in any way, her concern is, for example, if something were to happen right now, would we know what to do? She suggests inviting Chief or one of his staff to the envisioning session to delve into this training a little further.

### 6.3 Renovations

Bill Simonson provided an update on renovations – what has been done, what is currently happening and the requests on the agenda tonight.

EVP Argiri added that we track every project, as a project, so we will know exactly how much we've spent and if we are on budget. If the \$3 million we are seeking tonight goes over budget, we would have to come back to the board with a change order. That is one more check and balance we have in place.

### 7.0 CLOSED SESSION

There was no need for a closed session.

### 8.0 ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Vitale, supported by Flynn, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT OF THE COUNTY OF MACOMB BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Secretary