



**Board of Trustees Regular Meeting
Tuesday, April 23, 2024
Performing Arts Center Atrium**

MINUTES

1. General Institutional Functions

- 1.1 Mr. Gewecke called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.
- 1.2 Public Statement: Adequate notice of this meeting specifying the time and location was transmitted via fax, posted to the Sussex County Community College Website, and on the main entry doors to the Administration Building, on April 18 and 19, 2024, pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-8.

1.3 Roll Call / Pledge of Allegiance

The following were present: Mr. Gewecke-Chair, Mrs. Smith-Vice Chair, Dr. Crowley-Treasurer, Mr. Santillo-Secretary, Dr. Carrick, Mrs. Frank, Mr. Hofmann, Dr. Silverthorne, Mr. Yardley, Dr. Connolly-Ex-Officio Member, and Mrs. Fullem-Recording Secretary.

Also present: Dr. Okay-Senior Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, Dr. Homer-Vice President of Student Success and Institutional Effectiveness, Dr. Gallo-Associate Vice-President of Academic Affairs, Mr. Fruge-Dean of Technical Occupations, Mr. Kula-Executive Director of the Foundation.

1.4 Mr. Gewecke welcomed the guests and stated:

All members of the public who provide public comment shall first identify themselves. Public comments may be submitted to the Board of Trustees Secretary via email or written letter if received at least (8) hours prior to the meeting. Written public comments shall be read at the meeting with the same time restrictions as all public comments at the meeting. Duplicative comments may be summarized at the discretion of the Board of Trustees Chair.

1.5 Courtesy of the Floor on Agenda Items Only (Public Session-5 Minutes per Speaker).

No one spoke.

ACTION

1.6 Approval/Acceptance of Minutes

Mrs. Smith moved to approve/acknowledge receipt of all minutes noted below. Dr. Crowley seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

- 1.6.1 Minutes from the March 26, 2024 Regular Board Meeting (Resolution No. GI04232024-1)

- 1.6.2 Minutes from the March 26, 2024 Executive Session (Resolution No. GI04232024-2)
- 1.6.3 Acknowledgment of Receipt of April 16, 2023 Committee Meeting Minutes. (Resolution No. GI04232024-3)
 - Personnel and Curriculum Committee.
 - Audit and Policy Committee.
 - Finance and Facilities Committee.

Consent Agenda – ACTION/RC

The President recommends items 2.1 - 2.5 for Board approval, as brought forth after discussion and review by Board Committees:

Mrs. Smith moved to approve all items on the Consent Agenda. Dr. Crowley seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: Dr. Carrick, Dr. Crowley, Mrs. Frank, Mr. Hofmann, Mr. Santillo, Dr. Silverthorne, Mrs. Smith, Mr. Yardley, and Mr. Gewecke voted yes. The motion carried unanimously.

2.1 Approval of Personnel Items

- 2.1.1 Personnel Actions: March 13, 2024 – April 9, 2024. (Resolution No. P04232024-1)
- 2.1.2 Recommendation to Approve One Sabbatical Leave for the '25-'26 AY. (Resolution No. P04232024-2)

2.2 Approval of Curriculum Items

- 2.2.1 New Academic Certificate: Liberal Arts & Sciences. (Resolution No. CI04232024-1)
- 2.2.2 Terminate Degree Option: Computer Information Systems: Digital Forensics, A.A.S. (Resolution No. CI04232024-2)
- 2.2.3 Approval to Terminate Certificate of Achievement: Cyber Crime Investigation. (Resolution No. CI04232024-3)

2.3 Approval of Policy Items

- 2.3.1 Re-adopt the Following Policies for Three-Year Review with No Changes. :
 - Policy No. 200.23 Sick Days. (Resolution No. AP04232024-1)
 - Policy No. 200.24 Personal Days. (Resolution No. AP04232024-2)
 - Policy No. 200.27 Jury Duty. (Resolution No. AP04232024-3)
- 2.3.1 Approval to Re-adopt Policy No. 200.25 Holiday Policy. The following language was added to the policy: “Part-time employees who are actively employed on the day of the holiday are granted time off with pay only for Winter Break.” (Resolution No. AP04232024-4)

2.4 Approval of Finance Items

- 2.4.1 Change Order for Vertiv Services. Original board approval for

\$23,000. Renewal rates increased. Amount for Change Order = \$28,175.17. Operating Funds. (Resolution No. BFF04232024-1)

- 2.4.2 Increase to FY24 Blanket Purchase Order, The Chef's Warehouse, for food supplies for culinary. Current PO: \$14,000 Increase by \$6,000= Total: \$20,000. Operating Funds. (Resolution BFF04232024-2)
- 2.4.3 GIS/Engineering for laptops and cart with Dell, in the amount of \$23,595.00. Laptops to run GIS and physics/engineering software to add to class set. Updated and energy efficient laptop cart to hold larger units. Funding: Carolyn Jane Scott Charitable Trust. (Resolution No. BFF04232024-3)
- 2.4.4 Virtual Internet Phone System with Distinctive VoIP, Install \$10,000.00 – Monthly recurring charges \$4586.65. Funding: Installation - Chapter 12, Monthly charges operations. Operating Funds. (Resolution No. BFF04232024-4)
- 2.4.5 Distinctive Voice and Data in the Amount of \$23,500.00, to replace older style fiber within buildings. This will greatly improve WIFI and all campus network services. Operating Funds. (Resolution No. BFF04232024-5)
- 2.4.6 Distinctive Voice and Data for Phone Hardware in the Amount of \$36,729. Upgrading phone systems – Phase 1, replace generic phone system with internet virtual phone system. Operating Funds. (Resolution No. BFF04232024-6)
- 2.4.7 SHI to Replace Fiber Switches, in the Amount of \$26,353.69. Operating Funds. (Resolution No. BFF04232024-7)
- 2.4.8 Revision to Prudential BPO. Increase to FY24 BPO for the Defined Contribution Retirement Program. Originally submitted and approved as Current PO: \$300,000 Increase by \$100,000= Total: \$400,000. The correct amount for approval is as follows: Current PO: \$19,250 Increase by \$25,000 – Total \$44,250. (Resolution No. BFF04232024-8)
- 2.5 Approval of Facilities Items
 - 2.5.1 Murray Contracting for Pavement Repair at MTEC, in the Amount of \$340,000. Operating Funds. (Resolution No. BFF04232024-9)
 - 2.5.2 Open Systems Integrators for Feenics Security System at MTEC in the Amount of \$29,926. Operating Funds. (Resolution No. BFF04232024-10)
 - 2.5.3 Open Systems Integrators for Feenics Security System at the PSTA, in the Amount of \$18,321. Chapter 12. (Resolution No. BFF04232024-11)
 - 2.5.4 SHI to Upgrade Classroom. Replace older out of warranty and failing Microsoft Surface Studio Workstations Graphic design classroom, in the Amount of \$133,449.12. ELF Grant. (Resolution No. BFF04232024-11)
 - 2.5.5 Unitemp MD, LLC for Building C HVAC, in the Amount of \$39,981. Operating Funds. (Resolution No. BFF04232024-12)
 - 2.5.6 Walkkill Group, LLC for Exterior Wall and Roof repair, Interior Renovation in

the Adult Transition Center, in the Amount of \$448,000. Funding: Partial - ATC Grant, Operating Funds (estimated funding breakout to follow from Walkkill). (Resolution No. BFF04232024-13)

3. Finance – ACTION/RC

- ACTION/RC** 3.1 Recommendation: Acknowledge Receipt and Review of Financial Statements - March 31, 2024 Nine Months YTD FYE June 30, 2024. (Resolution No. GI04232024-4)

Mr. Gandhi presented the Financial Statements - March 31, 2024 Nine Months YTD FYE June 30, 2024 including: Overall financial status - current and year end, key financial statement historical trend, conversation about why we need cash reserves (see presentation), March YTD FY24 Credit Hours, Income Statement and discussion, Balance Sheet-Assets, Balance Sheet-Liabilities, three-year comparison, and status of CAPEX projects funded through Chapter 12.

Dr. Crowley moved to acknowledge receipt and review of the financial statements noted above. Mr. Santillo seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: Dr. Carrick, Dr. Crowley, Mrs. Frank, Mr. Hofmann, Mr. Santillo, Dr. Silverthorne, Mrs. Smith, and Mr. Gewecke voted yes. Mr. Yardley abstained from the vote. The motion carried.

4. Reports

- 4.1 The Correspondence Report was received, reviewed, and filed.

5. Presentations – None this month.

6. Courtesy of the Floor on General Matters (Public Session-5 Minutes per Speaker.)

James Gaddy addressed the Board of Trustees. He said, "I am tired of hearing myself talk so I apologize in advance that you have to hear me talk. I'm here again. It has been almost two months since Jon Connolly called me at 9:20 at night and put me on administrative leave. Why I was put on administrative leave I still really don't have a clue. The letter says something about an online petition, the creation of one, which I promise you I did not do. Instead, what I think really happened here was that as a result of me speaking up at the County Commissioner's Meeting about the working conditions here at the college...to be clear, it's not about the colleagues I worked with. It was a wonderful team. But my comments were specifically about Jon Connolly. Coming back after I made those comments it was reported to me that Dr. Connolly said to a colleague that he couldn't stand to look at me. It was on that Wednesday evening that I...at 9:20 at night, I'm not sure why he felt the need to call me after hours, an exasperated Jon Connolly placed me on administrative leave. It makes me wonder is this the reason that you were chased out of Maine three times according to you. Jon Connolly said to me in a recorded conversation that he was chased out of Maine three times for exactly the same thing that was happening with the receipt of Jason Boehm's letter. And so it says to me that Dr. Connolly thinks that this is his school and not the county's school. This is a school that is here to support the students and it's here to support the community. But Jon continues to run it like it's his. And so my leave is complete retaliation for speaking up about the conditions. Again, I don't want to go into all the details but he had a gun on campus. He admitted to that. He was hiding money that...congratulations on the college being able to save. That puts the college in a really good place, but that was on the backs of everyone else. It wasn't me who decided to hide that money. It was Dr. Connolly who said we can't let the County Commissioners know

about this sort of thing. So, you know, it's not lost on me that I was put on administrative leave. Every day I have to wonder if today is the day that I get the phone call where my kids lose their health insurance. Every day I have to wonder, you know, what is next from Jon Connolly and it's really depressing. Meanwhile, I violated no policies of the college and I was placed on administrative leave. I've never been pointed to any policy that I violated. Jon Connolly has violated policies. He brought a gun to campus. I know it's exhausting, but this is my life since Jon Connolly decided to take retaliation against me. And so I just urge you, contact me about an investigation. It's been over two months since I sent a letter to the Board. I sent a follow up letter and simply asked if you would acknowledge receipt of my email, and I haven't even heard from anyone about that. This personal investigation that it references in the letter that verified my leave I heard nothing. So I just hope you wonder what is really going on here. I don't know what's going on and I haven't heard from anybody on the board as far as any investigation. I tried to handle this in the most appropriate way. I tried to handle it like adults. I've written to you. I brought it up. I spoke at every board meeting. I will continue to do so because I don't want to take legal action. The students of this college and the tax payers should not suffer because I asked for an investigation. So I urge you to do that investigation and I urge you for someone to be in contact with me about the status of my employment. And Dr. Connolly, what you've done to me is shameful. It really is. I've been nothing but loyal to this college and the fact that you couldn't stand to look at me is not the basis for putting someone on administrative leave. It will all come out."

Racquel Robyo addressed the Board of Trustees. She said, "My name is Racquel Robyo. I am speaking to you now for the third time to implore you once again to rectify the situation created by the blatantly illegal actions of Dr. Connolly. We're all very well aware of the abuse of power, sexual harassment, and illegal firearm, just to name a few. There is a new allegation actually, relatively new, is the suspected asbestos in the mansion where students work. Instead of reporting the suspicion, Dr. Connolly took it upon himself to personally test for the asbestos in direct violation of health codes. However, facilities took care of reporting it to the Department of Environmental Health, as per the law. But enough of that. I would rather not beat the horse Dr. Connolly has personally killed. Instead, I'd like to speak to you directly, the members of the Board. Any new trustees please heed my warning. Inaction has consequences. As promised, I, along with a few others, went to the County Commissioners board meetings and they are less than impressed with the inactions of this board. As I'm sure you are all well aware at this point they've expressed concerns with the increasing severity of these legal allegations against our president and have indicated that they will look into these actions or lack thereof. Quite unprompted actually the subject of the missing financial statements from the school's website was brought up well before the open forum and was a topic brought up at several of these board meetings that fell on perpetually deaf ears. Understand this, not as a threat, but as the natural consequence of any continue irresponsibility. It is quickly coming to a point where it will be you or him. Four of the previous board members have resigned for fear of personal liability lawsuits which would not have been necessary had proper action been taken. Remember, we have heard from several members of staff at these meetings that they have seen, quote, many presidents come and go. There have been multiple presidents in the history of this school, and for whatever reason, ineffectuality or illegality they're not employed here anymore. This is no different. If you don't do something about Dr. Connolly the Commissioners will do something about you. You are in appointed and elected positions and if you don't do your jobs, someone else will. Do you see how many people are behind me right now? And I'm not talking about the administrative audience. Students. People. Just like me. There will be more of this. We're not stopping. I'm not going anywhere. I have nothing to lose. You're the ones being put under the microscope and if you won't do it for the betterment of the school do it for yourselves. I've said before that as a member of the Student Government Association and the Student Ambassadors, I feel as though I can't properly do my job under Dr. Connolly and now it is at a point where you can't either. Thank you."

No one else spoke.

Mrs. Smith moved to close the floor. Mr. Yardley seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

7. Other Business

Discussion / Reports / Announcements:

- 7.1 Trustee Activity Update – Mrs. Smith noted that she will be here to see the college play, Arsenic and Old Lace.
- 7.2 President’s Report - A copy of the President’s Report is on file in the office of the president.
- 7.3 Chair’s Comments

Ms. Brown, who is no longer on the Board of Trustees had been appointed to Sussex County Community College’s Board of School Estimate. Mr. Gewecke appointed himself to replace Ms. Brown. Mr. Santillo moved to approve the appointment. Mrs. Smith seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

- 7.4 The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will take place Tuesday, May 28, 2024, location TBD.

8. Executive Session – Pending Litigation, Attorney-Client Privilege, and Personnel Matters

Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees will now go into an Executive Session to discuss matters pertaining to pending litigation, attorney-client privilege, and personnel matters. The matters discussed will be made public if and when the circumstances requiring confidentiality no longer exist, however it is not presently known if and when that will be.

It is expected that the Executive Session shall last approximately 60 minutes and no action will be taken after the Executive Session.

At 5:26 p.m. Mrs. Smith moved to enter into Executive Session. Dr. Crowley seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The Executive Session ended at 7:35 p.m. upon a motion made by Mrs. Smith and seconded by Mrs. Frank. The motion carried unanimously.

9. Adjournment

At 7:37 p.m., Dr. Carrick moved to adjourn the public meeting. Mrs. Smith seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Approved:



John Santillo, Secretary-Board of Trustees