

Session #905

A meeting of the Mt. Hood Community College District Board of Education was held on September 9, 2015, with a workshop in the President's Office at 6 p.m. There was a Regular Session at 7:00 p.m. in the Board Room at Mt. Hood Community College, 26000 S.E. Stark Street, Gresham, Oregon.

Board members present: Michael Calcagno, Sonny Yellott, Jim Zordich (Vice Chair), Susie Jones (Chair), Tamie Arnold

Staff Present: Debra Derr, Carrie Toth

WORKSHOP

The Board agreed unanimously to postpone the workshop until after the regular session.

CONVENE MHCCD BOARD OF EDUCATION

A session of the Mt. Hood Community College District Board was called to order at 7:01 p.m. A quorum was present.

Board Members present: Sonny Yellott, Michael Calcagno, Jim Zordich (Vice Chair), Susie Jones (Chair), Tamie Arnold, Kenney Polson

BUSINESS/ACTION

3.1 AGENDA

Jim Zordich made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

3.2 CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Minutes from Board Mtg 7/8/15
- b. Minutes from Board Retreat 8/8/15
- c. Monthly Personnel Report
- d. Monthly Financial Report
- e. Acceptance/expenditure of projects funded in whole or partially by non-district funds
- f. Monthly Head Start Report
- g. Head Start Health and Safety Report

Tamie Arnold made a motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

CALL FOR PUBLIC INPUT

Cennie Moore-Fisher wanted to talk about tuition cost at Mt. Hood. She had heard that we are the third highest among community colleges, and it is her understanding that the tuition is being looked at for a raise. She is sorry to hear that – maybe enrollment is decreasing because potential students have families to support. She is hoping that there is no tuition raise.

Tony Vezina is student body present at PCC and represents the district as district student council chair. He is here to support a tuition freeze at Mt. Hood Community College. At PCC, students are facing similar issues and pushing for a similar freeze. He would like us not to raise tuition.

Mallory Hawk believes MHCC has seen a decrease in enrollment because students are finding it more difficult to support themselves, family, and go to college at the same time, so people are going out to the workforce.

Lindsay Patiño noted that the board decided on a \$3.50 increase last year. The last board had committed to lowering tuition if the state funding came in higher than \$535m. She wanted to remind the board about their commitment. She referred to a poll asking why students did not attend MHCC – many people responded that it was because they were going into the workforce. It all ties back to financial health for students. Any way that we can help students will help them and make Mt. Hood more approachable is important.

Seth Albert reiterated Patiño's statement.

PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS

5.1 ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY

Linda Vigesaa and Debra Derr presented the 2015-2016 Economic Impact Study. A full version is available as part of the official meeting minutes.

BUSINESS/ACTION

6.1 INTERNATIONAL STUDENT FEE PROPOSAL

John Hamblin presented the International Student Fee Proposal for a vote. Recently, MHCC was authorized to have international students at the ESL level for entry-level

English training. We currently have no established fee for these students. MHCC has done a study to set an appropriate structure and remain competitive in the number of contact hours and the price. He has proposed a flat rate of \$2420 for 20 contact hours per term. Hamblin requested it to be in place for Fall Term.

Arnold moved to approve the International Student Fee Proposal. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

6.2 RESOLUTION TO CONSIDER TUITION RATE ADJUSTMENTS

Susie Jones gave some background information on the tuition item. At the April meeting board meeting, there was a request by Administration to raise tuition by \$3.50/credit hour. There was much discussion and resistance at that time on the part of the board. Jim Zordich had put forward the idea to look at the state support – if it came in higher than expected, at \$550m, the board would use that extra money to offset the proposed tuition increase. The board agreed. Jones stated that there were many budget unknowns at that time; we did not know what our state support, ending fund balance, and enrollment would be – all those play significant roles. The board held special session on 9/3 to discuss options. They extensively discussed different scenarios and arrived at two possible proposals.

Option 1 is to eliminate the \$3.50 increase, effective Fall 2015. This would cause a revenue loss of \$700,000. Option 1 also includes a recommendation to implement a tuition freeze for current students. This is actually more than what the board proposed in April – a decrease, and a tuition lock.

Option 2 is similar - it reduces the tuition by \$1.50 per credit hour, and it includes tuition freeze.

Jones called for a motion to approve Option 1. Zordich moved to approve.

Derr stated that she would like to present some information. She thanked the board for the in-depth discussion they had at the workshop but said it is her responsibility to identify our challenges. Director Calcagno had asked what a best practice would be for tuition, and Derr responded after the work session that the reality is that tuition is just one part of moving the college forward to financial sustainability. Right now, as Rick Doughty has stated, we are operating on two spark plugs, and we need at least four. For the future, we do not know what will happen with our funding, our enrollment, and our economy. We are in a situation where we are experiencing an 18% decline in enrollment. We are exploring other ways to generate income. We are very actively

seeking resources through grants. Derr wants to encourage the board to look at the long-term impact. Accreditation plays a role – Standard 2 speaks to governance, that the institution demonstrates financial stability. Vital positions have been left open, and that means that many people are wearing multiple hats and work is not getting done. We need a commitment to programs and services tied to student success – affordability is one of those things. The College’s goal in presenting a tuition freeze shows that affordability is important. The accreditation study will look at the last seven years. Derr is concerned that we will not be able to make up the significant budget shortfall if a full tuition reduction was implemented. Board Policy also states that we need to continue to build our reserves, with a goal of 10%. Our reserves continue to go down, because we do not have a balanced budget. It will not happen in one year to turn enrollment around. We will have to dip into our fund balance. Derr read her recommendation: she would like to honor the integrity of the board but to take into account the enrollment information. Her recommendation is Option 2.

Jones discussed the tuition pledge, which she believes is a great idea. She thanked the staff and believes that the idea is very strong. She believes that a freeze could greatly influence a student’s decision to attend MHCC rather than PCC or other competitors.

Patiño commented that she would like to understand the state funding – how does the additional money come to \$700,000? Derr responded that the \$15m (\$550m instead of \$535m) of additional state money is for the entire state. MHCC’s impact is about \$700,000. Patiño commented that we are hoping for a bond, which would be a possible influx of money. Derr responded that the bond will not go against operational money – we could pay back our loans to free up some money, but the bond money cannot go to operational cost. DeMent commented that we currently pay \$2.4m toward debt. Derr would like to work with what we know, rather than what we hope for.

Calcagno will support Option 2 and would like to address the students. He stated that he himself has student loan debt and struggled with a decision. If enrollment continued to decline, or the bond did not pass, Calcagno noted that we would have to increase tuition even more down the road. He wants to support students but has to do what is in the best financial interest of the college – the tuition lock will be a huge tool for students so that they can plan ahead.

Yellott stated that he is conflicted and asked if we have we looked at our programs. Derr responded that we have looked at our programs and understand high cost versus low cost programs, and that we have to have a balance. We have a need to look at the needs of our regions, and we have programs we hope to develop.

Arnold stated that we heard the value the community college brings economically, and it is very vital that the board, as trustees, ensure that this remains a viable institution. She wanted students to know that she empathizes, as a former MHCC student and as a student herself. Arnold clarified that we are not the 3rd highest community college for tuition. When we go to the community for our bond and ask them to rebuild our college and ask for better facilities for our students, we have to make it fair.

Jones called for a vote on Option 1. Sonny Yellott voted in favor. Jones, Zordich, Calcagno, Arnold, and Polson were opposed. The motion failed.

Zordich moved to approve Option 2. Polson seconded the motion. Calcagno proposed an amendment that, in addition to reducing the tuition, the board also create a letter to be sent out to the students that the board members were not able to completely roll back the tuition increase, but they were able to reduce tuition and approve a tuition lock – he wants to respect the students and the faculty and apologize. Jones stated that rather than an amendment, a letter to the Advocate might suffice. Arnold suggested a fact sheet would be helpful that lays out some of what the staff have proposed – for example, that we are understaffed in custodians, haven't been able to fill positions, etc., so that students and community know that we are working hard to be fiscally responsible.

Polson stated that, unfortunately, the tuition clause was made without all the financial information. There was no way to know that enrollment would fall 18%. He stated that perhaps the timing on the decision was premature because all the facts were not clear. Derr agreed – the legislature determines the funding, and we do not know that until the legislature is done. The board and the College have to make our best guess. Legally, we have to have a budget approved by June 30th. The main piece is the enrollment decline. She stated that this board will have the same challenge – there will be unknowns when they vote on the budget next year. Polson stated that if we wrote something for the students – we want every student to understand in all fairness why this decision was made. He hopes that for students, knowing that the following year, your tuition isn't going to change, is going to be a reprieve.

Albert stated that he understands the difficulties that go into the decision and respects that the board has to make decisions based on the budget. He agreed that the Advocate letter is a good idea. He would like to see facts presented and posted on the website and the student app, so that every student at MHCC sees it.

Patiño thinks that the Advocate letter would be wonderful. ASG did a great job last year letting students know what would happen, and the students are aware that action is

being taken on tuition. It is great for students to respect their board and for the board to respect the students in return. Jones stated that the board would have to get the letter completed quickly.

Calcagno moved to add an amendment to issue a public letter of explanation. Zordich seconded. The amendment was approved unanimously.

Jones called for a vote on Option 2. Zordich, Jones, Calcagno, Arnold, and Polson voted in favor. Yellott voted no. The motion carried.

Calcagno and Polson thanked the students.

6.3 HEAD START POLICY REVISION

Susan Brady presented the second reading of the Food Substitutions Policy. Polson asked about food allergies – will substitutions be made? Brady clarified that Head Start needs doctor’s notes for the food substitutions. They will respond to doctor’s recommendations. Brady clarified that they will make substitutions for health purposes – they need to know who has life and death issues. They just cannot reasonably meet every requested substitution. Brady stated that they have already removed some of the more controversial items like pork and peanuts. Arnold asked about the reimbursement policy – why is that a concern? Brady responded that it is risky. They have a farm to table grant and serve healthy food with many choices. Calcagno commended Head Start on their farm-to-table menu options. Zordich moved to approve the policy. Calcagno seconded.

Jones, Calcagno, Yellott, Zordich, and Polson voted to approve the policy. Arnold voted no. The motion carried.

6.4 BOARD GOALS

The board has not finalized goals. They will continue discussion after the regular session.

7.1 PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Derr stated that lots has been going on around campus over the summer. She has spent time with the new ASG President and Vice President. She spoke with the leadership at their retreat. She also met with the new Rho Theta officers – they had many new ideas, one of which is to create video with the Integrated Media students to encourage students to be better prepared when taking placement tests. MHCC has hired 12 new Full-time faculty members and a Vice President for Student Development and Success,

Waldon Hagan, who will start on Monday. Other recent hires include Charles George, Director of Facilities; Eric Machado – Risk Management; and Nikki Gillis –Diversity Officer.

Derr continues to meet with local Superintendents – she is happy with the strengthening of those relationships.

Derr thanked board members who attended Government Affairs Chamber meeting. She distributed a handout from the Facilities department detailing the work they have been doing over the summer, including the Chemistry Lab upgrade.

In-service and convocation are next week; Derr invited the board members to convocation and the Gresham Rotary Steak Fry – she has tickets for the board members who would like to attend. Proceeds go to scholarships for MHCC.

CLOSING REMARKS

Tambi Boyle stated that the full-time faculty got to hire for their retirements and have one new hire in the Automotive program. Faculty members will be back next week.

Corey Huston recognized the difficulty that came with tuition decision. Many of the recent staff cuts have been Classified employees, and layoffs are extremely difficult. He is excited about the decision to freeze tuition, but he challenges the leaders present to come up with innovative ideas. He stated that an institution can't budget with cuts and can't rely on part-time employees.

Yellott thanked Derr for her comments and asked about the campus presence of Planned Parenthood. Derr responded that at one time, we had contracted with Planned Parenthood. That was targeted at students who did not have health insurance. That ended a number of years ago. Wallace Medical Concern now addresses those health care needs.

Calcagno reiterated interest in having improved access to the audio and video of board meetings. Derr responded that we have been investigating. If board takes action to do it, we will make it happen. Albert noted that the Advocate would also be willing to work with the board to record meetings.

Zordich has been working with Gresham Historical Society and has been reviewing old issues of the Outlook. He is currently working on the 50th Anniversary book. A link for shareyourhistory@mhcc.edu will be implemented and integrated into the website.

Jones thanked Zordich for the hard work he is putting into writing our history. In working through the issues the board has already worked through and will work through, in working with staff and students, she feels that the board is working well and in a spirit of trust.

Polson stated that it has been very interesting moving through these challenging issues and keeping an eye on sustainability. He hopes everyone involved, including students, will get behind the board, especially for the Bond, to make this college what the students deserve. He is excited about the good that the college can do.

Arnold thanked the board for including estimated times on the agenda.

Albert stated that the students have met with Dr. Derr and tossed around goals to establish how they can help each other. He stated that the students had a great retreat, and he is very excited for the ASG this year. He and the ASG members got a chance to meet with many of the sister community colleges' ASG presidents and was encouraged that we are having the same struggles and coming up with the same solutions.

Zordich moved to adjourn. Polson seconded. Meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

BOARD WORKSHOP

Board members present: Michael Calcagno, Sonny Yellott, Jim Zordich (Vice Chair), Susie Jones (Chair), Tamie Arnold

Staff Present: Debra Derr, Carrie Toth

Each board member selected their top five goals from the list created at the August Board retreat. They agreed that, as a board, their top three goals are:

- The Board will undertake a comprehensive policy review and explore Carver Policy Governance.
- The Board will help pass the GO Bond.
- The Board will undertake a greater advocacy role with the legislature.

These meeting minutes are designed to be ADA compliant. Signed minutes are available by request or in the office of Carrie Toth, Executive Assistant to the Board.