

Minutes of Special Board Meeting

The Board of Trustees Wharton County Junior College

A Special Board Meeting of the Board of Trustees of Wharton County Junior College was held Tuesday, July 19, 2016, beginning at 5:30 PM in the Hutchins Memorial Board Room. Mr. Gertson presided.

Trustees Present: Mr. Danny Gertson, Chair; Mrs. Amy Rod, Vice Chair; Mr. Monty Merecka, Secretary; Mr. Scott Glass; Mrs. Merle Hudgins; Mrs. Ann Hundl; Mr. Oliver Kunkel; and Mr. Larry Sitka

Trustees Absent: Mr. Jack Moses

Others Present: Ms. Betty McCrohan, President; Mr. Bryce Kocian, Vice President of Administrative Services; Mrs. Leigh Ann Collins, Vice President of Instruction; Mrs. Pam Youngblood, Vice President of Technology and Institutional Research; Mr. Dave Leenhouts, Vice President of Student Services; Mrs. Deanna Feyen, Executive Secretary to the President; Ms. Zina Carter; Ms. Trish Chandler; Mr. Kevin Dees; Ms. Carol Derkowski; Mr. Mike Feyen; Ms. GG Hunt; Ms. Kathy Kresta; Ms. Deborah Popek; Mr. Tommy Regan; Dr. Liz Rexford; Mr. Danny Terronez; Ms. Cindy Ward; Mr. Gus Wessels; Ms. Stephanie Witkoski; and Mr. Philip Wuthrich

Guests: Ms. Melissa Mahalitic (Bracewell, LLP); Mr. William Dikes; Mr. Dare Lovett; and Ms. Irma Sifontes (Abel Architects)

I. Call to Order and Welcome

-Mr. Gertson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

II. Review of proposed budget for FY2017

-Ms. McCrohan explained the Strategic Planning and Budget Projections and the reasons that the college is in the state that it is in budget wise.

-Mrs. Hudgins stated that the community complaint that she hears most often is that their tax dollars are paying for the Sugar Land and Richmond campuses. Ms. McCrohan explained that in the beginning investments were given but now the campuses make their own money with Sugar Land having the largest enrollment. The tax dollars are not used outside of the taxing district.

-Ms. McCrohan explained that the college needs to increase enrollment and the state funding is declining. She is concerned that the state will have a shortfall due to the

oil and gas decline and therefore decrease our appropriations.

-Ms. McCrohan stated that Fort Bend ISD chose to go with HCC for dual credit for free. Lamar CISD has the greatest potential for growth. Mr. Glass asked for clarity for the dual credit. Ms. McCrohan clarified that Lamar CISD will pay in-district tuition and they will pay fees. The college by law has to provide for ROAR Academy students for free. Roar Academy is designed for students that would not typically come to college. There are 25-30 students per cohort entering their freshman year. Wharton ISD was the only school in our area to apply for Early College.

-Mr. Kocian presented the budget as it stands now.

-Mr. Sitka asked what happens with the money that is left over at the end of the year. Mr. Kocian stated that they make repairs to the facilities but typically there is none left over.

-Mr. Hudgins stated that every month they hear that the college is doing great and at budget time they find out that the college is not doing well financially. Mr. Kocian explained that positions added last year were not budgeted for. Mr. Glass stated that it was hard to operate when you keep getting cut 10% year after year. Ms. McCrohan explained the items that are not anticipated, such as, more overloads, additional sections being offered, and faculty members getting sick and having to get someone else to cover the classes.

-Mrs. Hundl asked if there is a corresponding decrease to offset the loss in revenue. Mr. Kocian did not know and Ms. McCrohan stated that departments have made adjustments to their budget.

-Mr. Glass asked if the Strategic Plan has been identified for the expenses. Mr. Kocian stated not at this time. Ms. McCrohan stated that the departments will request these items separately and that has not happened yet. Mr. Glass asked if the amount could change. Ms. McCrohan said it would depend on if the request was institution wide or not. Mrs. Hundl asked when the board would see the Strategic Plan. Ms. McCrohan stated that it was completed and it will be brought back to the board. Mrs. Hundl asked why the items are brought to the board individually and not altogether. Ms. McCrohan stated that the process for filling faculty positions needed to be started early to fill the positions.

-Mr. Kocian explained the proposed request for an additional penny on the tax rate. Mr. Merecka announced that he was reluctant to approve a tax hike without knowing all the numbers. Mr. Kocian stated that the tax rate has not been increased in a long time.

-Mrs. Hundl asked what happens to the surplus in the individual department budgets. Mr. Kocian stated that the money goes back in the pot and gets spent where needed.

Mr. Glass said that every June there are many purchase orders where the departments are trying to spend their money so they do not get cut 10% the following year.

-Mrs. Hudgins asked where the money is from the sale of properties. Ms. McCrohan stated that the money is being held in the plant fund. Mrs. Hudgins stated that if she knew during the year what she has heard tonight, she would not have voted for the expansion of the Johnson building since enrollment is decreasing. Mr. Gertson stated that the expansion of the Johnson building will increase enrollment.

-Mr. Glass asked if the GPS (Guided Pathways) is not supported by the grant, does it go away. Ms. McCrohan stated that it is an initiative that we have to keep supporting.

-Mrs. Hundl stated that when the board comes to meetings they think the college is maintaining and now they are seeing that there is a deficit. Mr. Gertson reminded her that it is in part because of the loss of dual credit in Ft. Bend that was not anticipated. In order to grow you have to spend.

-Mrs. Hundl stated that she felt strongly that the college needs to expand the tax base. She stated that she had concerns that there are no salary increases and that the faculty needed an increase in longevity. Mr. Glass stated that it is the same story each year of no money and at the last minute each year the administration would come up with two steps. Mr. Glass stated that one increase to staff was \$19.00 per month and \$39.00 for 12 month employees. Mr. Glass stated that something different needed to be done and that the longevity step needed to be placed in the budget at the beginning of the budget process. Mr. Glass said that the college's biggest asset was faculty and staff. Mr. Glass' wish is that the college considers something more or different. Mr. Gertson stated that Mr. Glass needed to get his facts straight and that the college has given different amounts of steps each year. Mr. Glass apologized but added that as he remembered things, it was the same each year.

-Mr. Sitka asked about replacing the positions listed that were on hold. Mr. Kocian stated that the position would not be replaced at this time. Mr. Glass asked if the positions were currently in the budget and Mr. Kocian stated that they were. Mr. Sitka asked if they would be reinstated in the next year. Mr. Kocian stated that he hoped they would. Mr. Sitka and Mr. Glass stated that it was important to reinstate the positions. Mr. Gertson stated that they were micromanaging and the job of the board was policy. Mr. Glass stated that he thought that they were there to discuss issues on the agenda.

III. Other Items

IV. Adjourn

-The meeting adjourned at 6:55 P.M.

