



**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS  
LEE COLLEGE DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING  
August 21, 2025**

The Board of Regents of the Lee College District met on August 21, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at John B. Tucker Hall. Chairman Santana called the meeting to order stating that the meeting was duly posted and a quorum was present.

**PRESENT:** Gilbert Santana, Chairman; Pam Warford, Vice Chair; Mark Himself, Secretary (6:15 p.m. virtual); Gina Guillory, Assistant Secretary; Weston Cotten, Daryl Fontenot, Mark Hall, Judy Jirrels, Heron Thomas  
Dr. Lynda Villanueva, President

**ABSENT:** None

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE TO THE FLAG**

Regent Heron Thomas said the Invocation and led the Pledge to United States Flag and Texas Flag.

**STUDENT SPOTLIGHT**

Student Zoie Moore started last spring at Lee College, majoring in education and psychology with a goal to work with special needs children as a school psychologist. Introducing her, Dr. Rosemary Coffman, Executive Director of Student Success and Wellbeing, said Ms. Moore has worked as a student assistant in the Disability Services office, and now works part-time as a transition specialist with College Connect, a program serving neuro-divergent students. Ms. Moore told of several relatives who have inspired her love for education, psychology and anyone with special needs.

Saying she grew up in a low-income family and struggles with both anxiety and pain because of a medical condition, Ms. Moore appreciates the value of TimelyCare, to which she was introduced by K-leigh Villanueva, Counselor for Students with Disabilities. Saying TimelyCare has changed her life, she has used the talk-now feature late at night to de-escalate. She said she appreciates the 24/7 access, virtual interaction rather than in person, and that TimelyCare is free and makes medication affordable. She said students she has introduced to TimelyCare say they like the peer community aspect – interactions with other students, with trained counselors, and with doctors – all anonymous and all monitored to ensure safety.

**78.25**

**DISPOSITION OF MINUTES**

Regent Jirrels made a motion, seconded by Regent Warford, that the Board approve the minutes for Special Board Meeting – Budget Workshop, July 1, 2025; Building Committee Meeting, July 16, 2025; Audit & Investment Committee Meeting, July 21, 2025; Public Hearing – Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget, July 24, 2025; and Board Meeting, July 24, 2025.

The motion passed with no dissenting votes. Regent Himself was absent.

## REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN

None.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **Building Committee** – Committee Chair Daryl Fontenot said the committee met yesterday August 20. An update was presented about on-going projects, including the report that all work scheduled for completion prior to start of the semester will be finished. A campus refresh continues, featuring new furniture. A final campus facilities tour, to South Central Plant, Transportation, and Maintenance Physical Plant, followed the committee meeting.
- **Policy Committee** – Committee Chair Mark Hall reported the committee is scheduled to meet August 26.
- **Audit & Investment Committee** – Committee Chair Judy Jirrels reported the committee did not meet this month.

Building and Facilities – Serving on the Building Committee are Daryl Fontenot, Chair; Mark Himsel and Pam Warford

Policy Committee – Serving on the Policy Committee are Mark Hall, Chair; Weston Cotten and Heron Thomas

Audit and Investment Committee – Serving on the Audit and Investment Committee are Judy Jirrels, Chair; Gina Guillory, and Mark Himsel

### REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

- **Enrollment** – Dr. Villanueva reported enrollment is up 2% overall, including 8% at the main campus. Thanking the Board for support of First Time Free at Lee, she noted the number of new students this year is up 59%, compared to last year. She thanked the team led by Dr. Scott Bennett for their enrollment efforts. She said there is cautious optimism that Lee College for the fourth consecutive year will record its highest enrollment ever.  
*(At this time, Regent Himsel joined the meeting virtually)*
- **Support for Veterans** – Once again, Lee College has been recognized with the Veteran Education Excellence Recognition Bronze Award (VEERA) by the Texas Veterans Commission, Dr. Villanueva reported. She credited the dedication and excellence demonstrated every day by the Lee College Veterans Center, led by Tiffany Winchester.
- **Nursing Program** – Among 38 nursing students taking the national licensure exam (NCLEX), 36 have passed, Dr. Villanueva reported. She said the retention rate was 30% prior to Dr. Janena Norris joining Lee College; latest data shows the retention rate has increased to 71%. She thanked the faculty and everyone who supports the nursing program.
- **Lee College Foundation** – Noting that the 38th annual Lee College Gala is on September 26, Dr. Villanueva said the President's Cabinet challenges the Board to raise a minimum of \$10,000 and to have 100% participation.
- **Lee College Branch Campus at Barbers Hill** – Dr. Villanueva reported the interlocal agreement to establish the new Lee College branch campus was fully executed yesterday. She thanked the boards of Lee College and Barbers Hill ISD, and recognized Dr. Douglas Walcerz, Annette Ferguson, Jacob Atkin, Dr. Laura Lane-Worley, Dr. Scott Bennett, Kelli Forde Spiers, Dr. Helen Manibusan, and Dr. Janena Norris, all of Lee College, for their work, as well as Dr. Tina Jackson of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

## **INFORMATIONAL REPORTS**

### **Resignations and Retirements – Dr. Lynda Villanueva, President**

Cynthia Lewis, Faculty, Professional Administrative Technology – Retirement  
Magaly Bejar, Recruitment & Outreach Specialist – Resignation

### **Financial Report – Jacob Atkin, Chief Financial Officer and Vice President of Finance**

Noting that the cash position is declining as anticipated during summer, Mr. Atkin said the college remains well reserved. Cash position will begin to increase as the fall semester begins, he said.

At the end of July, tax collection is more than \$1 million under budget, as anticipated. Tuition & fees are up more than expected, resulting from an exceptional month at Huntsville Center, Mr. Atkin said, increasing total tuition & fee income to 107% of budget. State appropriation is on target; other income is tracking as expected. Expenses continue to track under budget, he said.

Resulting from the unanticipated tuition & fee income increase for July, projected fiscal year-end surplus has increased to \$6 million, Mr. Atkin reported.

Mr. Atkin also reviewed the capital projects report, and restricted funds status report, as of July 31.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

## **ITEMS OF ACTION**

### **A. PERSONNEL**

#### **79.25      CONSENT Agenda – Consideration of New Hires**

The Administration recommends that the Board approve the new hires as presented:

Ms. Bhuvaneswari Devalla, Programmer/Analyst

Ms. Faith Ivey, Advisor/Recruiter, Huntsville Center

Ms. Alix Whittenburg, Advisor/Recruiter, Huntsville Center

Regent Guillory made a motion, seconded by Regent Jirrels, that the Board approve the Administration's recommendation.

The motion passed with no dissenting votes.

### **B. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **80.25      Consideration of Interlocal Agreement with the City of Baytown for Use of the Wellness Center and Swimming Pool in the Fiscal Years 2025-2026 and 2026-2027**

The Administration recommends that the Board authorize the President or her designee to negotiate final terms and approve the agreement with the City of Baytown.

Regent Hall made a motion, seconded by Regent Fontenot, that the Board approve the Administration's recommendation.

The motion passed with no dissenting votes.

**81.25      Consideration to Award to Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) for Property Insurance Coverage**

The Administration recommends that the Board authorize the President or her designee to negotiate final terms and approve the award of Property Insurance coverage in the amount of \$533,781 per year.

Regent Fontenot made a motion, seconded by Regent Warford, that the Board approve the Administration's recommendation.

Noting there was only one bidder, Regent Hall asked if this is the norm. Mr. Atkin said the college for many years has used TASB for property insurance, and did not seek a bid from other vendors.

The motion passed with no dissenting votes.

**82.25      Consideration of Approval of Subscription Agreement with VitalSource to Provide an Inclusive Access Textbook System**

The Administration recommends that the Board authorize the President or her designee to negotiate final terms and approve the subscription agreement with VitalSource.

Regent Warford made a motion, seconded by Regent Jirrels, that the Board approve the Administration's recommendation. Chairman Santana noted this cost is covered by myBooks fees.

The motion passed with no dissenting votes.

**83.25      Consideration of Contract Between Windham School District and Lee College for Educational Services, Materials and Supplies in Support of Post-Secondary Education Programs Serving Students who are Incarcerated in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice**

The Administration recommends that the Board authorize the President or her designee to negotiate final terms and approve the contract between Windham School District and Lee College for educational services, materials and supplies in support of post-secondary education programs serving students who are incarcerated in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

Regent Guillory made a motion, seconded by Regent Cotten, that the Board approve the Administration's recommendation. Regent Hall asked for confirmation that this contract represents only one component of total funding for the college's prison program. Dr. Walcerz confirmed.

The motion passed with no dissenting votes.

**84.25      Consideration and Review of the 2025 Ad Valorem Tax Anticipated Collection Rate Certification**

The Administration recommends that the Board receive and approve the Certification of the Anticipated Ad Valorem Tax Collection Rate 2025 for Lee College District.

Regent Warford made a motion, seconded by Regent Jirrels, that the Board approve the Administration's recommendation.

The motion passed with no dissenting votes.

**85.25      Consideration of Ordinance and Resolution Adopting the Lee College District Operating Funds Budget**

The Administration recommends that the Board approve the Ordinance and Resolution adopting the Lee College District Operating Funds Budget for FY 2025-2026.

Regent Hall made a motion, seconded by Regent Cotten, that the Board approve the Administration's recommendation.

Discussion began with Mr. Atkin noting two changes from the proposed budget presented last month – (1) removal of defeasance payment on bond debt, and (2) an additional \$1.3 million to be collected on M&O taxes, resulting from updated estimates from Harris County showing valuations have increased by more than \$1 billion.

The updated budget proposes using the additional \$1.3 million for more maintenance and repairs funding, for a total of \$2.8 million for FY26, which is still less than the \$5.5 million budgeted for FY25 for maintenance and repairs. Implementation of a new Enterprise Resource System (ERP), and offset of funding cuts by the state of Texas, forced a reduction of dollars that otherwise would have been earmarked for maintenance and repairs, Mr. Atkin said. The updated budget proposes a tax rate of 0.17697 for M&O and 0.00623 for I&S, for a total tax rate of 0.1832, Mr. Atkin said.

Regents Warford and Fontenot stated why they would prefer to continue making the defeasance payments, and Regent Cotten said the absence of public comment suggests the community is not too worried about the tax rate continuing to support this practice. In answer to a question from Regents Jirrels, Mr. Atkin elaborated on consequences of defeasance payments, contrasting how soon and how much debt the college could take on without asking for an increased I&S tax rate, depending on whether or not defeasance is continued. He also elaborated in response to a thought offered by Regent Himsel perhaps to support continuation of the defeasance payment in FY26 by removing the additional \$1.3 million from maintenance and repairs.

Saying the debt involves low interest money, Regent Hall advocated for spending funds now for maintenance and repair improvements, rather than making a defeasance payment. Mr. Atkin said the consequence is to be prepared to ask taxpayers for a tax rate increase when a new bond issue is presented. Regent Cotten said the cost of a bond election overrides savings that can be realized.

After a summation by Chairman Santana, the motion passed 8-1, with Regent Cotten dissenting.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None.

**MATTERS OF CONCERN FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Santana declared the meeting adjourned at 7:09 pm.

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Chairman, Board of Regents

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Secretary, Board of Regents