MINUTES OF THE FIVE HUNDRED NINTY THIRD
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

Board of Trustees Room Z-203
La-Z-Boy Center
and via Microsoft Teams Meeting
6:00 p.m., May 19, 2020

This meeting was rescheduled from May 18th due to technical problems.

Present: Florence M. Buchanan, Lynette M. Dowler, Steve Hill, Krista K. Lambrix, Aaron N. Mason, and Mary Kay Thayer

Not Present: William T. Bruck

Also Present: Ijaz Ahmed, Jack Burns, Kevin Cooper, Parmeshwar Coomar, Valerie Culler, Barry Kinsey, AJ Fischer, Kelly Heinzlerling, Rick Hubbert, Brian Lay (on-campus), Kimberly Lindquist, Laura Manley, Joshua Myers, Kojo Quartey, Ryan Rafko, Jim Ross, Joe Verkennes, Tracy Vogt, Suzanne Wetzel (on-campus), Quri Wygonik, Grace Yackee, and Penny Dorcey (recording secretary)

Per Governor Whitmer’s Directive 2020-15, which is effective immediately and through June 12, 2020. This executive order provides temporary authorization for remote participation in public meetings and hearings and temporary relief from required monthly school board meetings. All participants attended this meeting remotely through the Microsoft Teams Meeting application, although Ms. Suzanne Wetzel, Vice President of Administration/Treasurer, and Mr. Brian Lay, Director of Information Services physically attended the meeting in the Board of Trustees Room, Z-203 to accommodate members of the community who might want to attend the meeting. No Community members were present.

1. Chair Dowler called the meeting at 6:00 p.m. She opened the meeting with a moment of silence for all of our military men and women and all those impacted by COVID-19.

2. There were no delegations present.

B. 2. a. (1) 3. It was moved by Ms. Thayer and supported by Mr. Hill, that the following item on the consent agenda be approved with a correction (Dr. Quartey attended the meeting remotely and was not physically in the Board of Trustees Room).

B. 2. a. (1) Approval of the April 27, 2020 regular meeting minutes

A role call vote was taken as follows:


No [0]

The motion carried.
It was moved by Ms. Thayer and supported by Ms. Lambrix that the Board Mr. Gary J. Vajcner be selected as the recipient of the 2019 College Supporter of the Year Award.

Ms. Thayer commented that Mr. Vajcner was an outstanding choice for this award. Chair Dowler stated that Mr. Vajcner’s impact on the county and the community is incredible.

A role call vote was taken as follows:


No [0]

The motion carried.

It was moved by Mr. Hill and supported by Mr. Mason that the Board approve the revised 2019-2020 Budget as presented.

Suzanne Wetzel, Vice President of Administration/Treasurer, reminded the Board that President Quartey has already updated them on the results of the DTE Tax appeal in his report to the Board earlier in the week. She explained that the portion of the tax evaluation that was presented tonight was regarding the power plant. The tax appeal has been finalized and the judgment has been entered. MCCC’s portion of the payback to DTE is $104,629. The College has been setting aside money for this payment. Part of the payment will come out of the General Fund and part will come out of the Millage Maintenance and Replacement Fund. The revised budget is included in the Board packet and it shows the two funds from which the money is coming. The county has to make the total refund for the power plant, which is $19,750,957. This payment has to be made to DTE within 60 days of the consent judgment, so the county is working toward making that payment by July 1st. The Board needs to act on this item tonight so that the money can be moved to the General Fund and then disburse it to the county so it can make their payment to DTE. The other piece of the tax appeal is that there is still no additional information on the tax appeal for the Fermi II plant. The College has money set aside for the Fermi II appeal as well. DTE has waived the interest on the tax refund. Dr. Quartey remarked that the outcome could have been much worse and that this is at least affordable. Ms. Thayer thanked Ms. Wetzel and Mr. Fischer for their efforts to keep a balanced budget. .

A role call vote was taken as follows:


No [0]

The motion carried.

President Quartey reported the following staff appointment:
Staff Appointment
Gregg Gianetti, General Maintenance Worker, effective June 1, 2020.
(this position fills a vacancy left by Bryan Rorke’s promotion to Custodial Foreman)

Ms. Wetzel explained that this position has been open now for multiple years due to Mr. Rorke’s promotion. This position is included in this year’s budget because maintenance will need extra help upon the opening of Founder’s Hall. Mr. Gianetti went through the interview process and was selected prior to the COVID-19 shutdown. He has been on hold since then. The hope is that the College will reopen on June 1st and Mr. Gianetti can be brought onboard and begin his training.

C. 3. a. (2) 7. The Board received a Statement of General Fund Revenues and Expenses for the period ending April 30, 2020.

Ms. Suzanne. Wetzel, Vice President of Administration/Treasurer, reported that the College has received the Personal Property Tax (PPT money) Tier III money in the amount of $295,898.50. This is about $50,000 less than what was received last year. The College has not received all of its PPT money for this year.

Ms. Wetzel also pointed out that Tuition and Fees Revenues are about $800,000 unfavorable to budget on the April statement. In addition to the DTE settlement, the College received a surprise notice last week that Erie Township has also filed a tax tribunal filing for Republic Services Landfill. They also received a settlement, so the College will be disbursing back to them through the county a total of $154,840.85. This settlement all has to do with this year. This happened because the property was reassessed, and as soon as they got that assessment, they filed with the tax tribunal and were successful in their appeal. The company was delinquent on their taxes so county treasurer take care of that by not disbursing back to the College.

Ms. Wetzel reported on State funding, which is projecting a $2.5 to $3 billion shortfall this year and next year. The College will most likely receive a negative supplemental, which means the state will withhold one payment. One state payment for MCCC equates to a little over $450,000, which is approximately a 10 percent this year, and likely a 10 percent reduction again next year. Ms. Wetzel explained that this affects the budget, which is very difficult this year due to the daily shifting of revenues as a result of events like the Republic Services Landfill tax tribunal, and the changing state budget, and the COVID-19 shutdown. Most other colleges are budgeting for a 10-15 percent decrease in enrollment. The College has budgeted for a 4 percent decrease, but may revise that to 10 percent decline. That being said, a number of colleges are projecting an increase in enrollment for the fall because they feel students may not go away to universities for a semester or two as they wait to see what is going to happen.

In terms of the projections for the 2019-20 budget, the finance team believes the College will be about $1.5 million in revenues over expenses assuming that it gets the negative supplemental, which is helpful with planning for the future. She and AJ Fischer, Director of Finances, met with the auditors today about the schedule for the 2019-20 audit, which will be gearing up at the end of summer. Ms. Wetzel and her staff are also working on a “back to work” plan, in hopes of opening up on June 1st. they are a building plan, and putting the pieces in place to bring employees back so
that they feel safe on campus and can serve MCCC students and community members.

Dr. Quartey added that he and his team are planning to call employees back to work on June 1st and do not expect another extension. In spite of all the negatives for the budget, the College has ended up in a decent position because the administration is being financially frugal. He thanked Ms. Wetzel, Mr. Fischer, and their team.

Chair Dowler commented that Ms. Wetzel Mr. Fischer have consistently year after year, built conservatism into the budget assumptions and work closely with the rest of the vice presidents across the administration to make sure the they are on task and the Board is updated on a regular basis relative to the College budget. She thanked them for being able to navigate the negatives with the positives to get the College to a relatively healthy place from a financial perspective during these difficult times.

Ms. Wetzel noted that Joe Verkennes, Director of Marketing and Communication, has been working on a marketing campaign to help boost enrollment. Mr. Verkennes explained that he has been communicating with the community, including high school graduates. He began with a summer post card mailing, which went out to 14,000 individuals, including all of MCCC’s current students who have enrolled in the last year. Additionally, another mailing was targeted to high school-aged students as well as those in their early 20s. That post card went out twice for summer, both before and after the COVID-19 shutdown. Mr. Verkennes also reached out online through public relations and ConstantContact emails. A fall postcard for the normal fall registration campaign went out about three weeks ago. Mr. Verkennes explained that he and his team are still waiting to understand what is going to happen in terms of instruction before sending crafting additional communications, but stated that they have been communication all along through social media regarding the status of those decisions. An email just went out today to currently enrolled students that announced that the College is moving as many classes as possible to blended and online formats for the fall and that they should register as soon as possible. Mr. Verkennes explained that a post card similar to that email is going to go out to the original 14,000 students. These communications will go out to prospective and current students and will be followed up with more public relations releases today and tomorrow to get the message out to the rest of the community as well. Mr. Verkennes announced a brand new, high demand career branding campaign, which focuses on eighteen programs that are the most high demand careers in Michigan and Southeast Michigan. These are featured on the College website, as well as on social media, via email and billboards, and online advertising, targeting high school aged students as well as adult students and the parents of high school students. Not only are these careers in high demand, but also at least 12-13 of these programs can be done through telework. These careers are also relevant during this time of the pandemic.

Chair Dowler thanked Mr. Verkennes. She commented the social media campaign is clearly the avenue that speaks to young people more so than mail and post cards, while older generations tend to look at the mail closer. Continuing the social media campaign is very important.

C. 3. a. (3) 8. Dr. Valerie Culler, Director of Financial Aid and Interim Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Success, announced the following
Procedure updates. In Procedure 300(c), Advanced Standing Procedure, is updated to require that a grade of C or better to qualify for transfer credit. Previously, a transfer of C- or better was accepted. There are two reasons for making the change. First, there are several courses at the College that require a grade of C or higher in order to progress to the next course. Second, MCCC is one of the colleges in Michigan that was accepting a grade of C- for transfer credit. By moving the standard to accepting a grade of C, MCCC is in aligned with what the other community colleges are doing.

For Procedure 312(a), Grading System, the College has agreed to a special grade to identify students who have withdrawn for extenuating circumstances and needed to go through the appeal process. Every semester the college does have a last date defined at which students can withdraw form course work, but in many cases there are student who have unexpected circumstances occurring that may need an exception to that date. The College does have an appeal process that can assist students in these types of situations. When those appeals are approved, the students are assigned a grade of grade of ‘WA’ for their withdrawal grade. That allows the College to designate it in a special way on the transcript so that other partner transfer institutions understand it was a withdrawal for extenuating circumstances.

C. 3. b. (1) 9. President Quartey summarized his reports to the Trustees, which he sends every other week.

Dr. Quartey stated that summer school started last week. His email this morning explained that the summer courses are all online and in line with the enrollment numbers last year. Dr. Yackee will give you an update on the fall semester later in the meeting. Dr. Culler has distributed some of the student portion of the CARES Act funds. The institutional portion is in process. The DTE with the makerspace project is ongoing. Depending on how the budget goes, the administration is considering a hiring freeze. The DTE tax appeal was included in the President’s report to the Board and in Ms. Wetzel’s report earlier. The Republic Services Landfill tax appeal was also in President Quartey’s report to the Board. Governor Whitmer has approved free college for, Adults over 25, years of age, however, there is no funding for it as of yet. There is another program for frontline workers being discussed, which is similar to the ‘adult over 25’ program still being discussed, but there is no funding for that yet either. Dr. Quartey announced that the College is expecting a fairly large private gift soon. Good things are still happening during these trying times.

Ms. Dowler commented that MCCC is fortunate to have a philanthropic, generous community that loves the College.

C. 3. b. (2) 10. Dr. Grace Yackee updated the Board on instructional updates for the summer and fall semesters.

Dr. Grace Yackee, Vice President of Instruction, reported that when looking at comparisons for online classes this semester and last year only, enrollment is up 25 percent. Last year enrollment was at 477 students and this semester enrollment is at 732 students. Enrollment is up by 183 students. When looking at duplicated headcount and seats specifically, enrollment is up 255 to the positive, or 65 percent. Dr. Yackee believes the community, given all the circumstances, is enjoying the
online versus classes no classes at all. So far the College is receiving positive feedback.

Dr. Yackee said that as the administration looks at the fall semester, they are offering online and blended formats as much as possible. There are two types of blended formats, there is some online instruction and some delivered face-to-face. In some cases, instruction will be on campus will be ion campus; however, the instructional area is trying to keep that at a minimum given the unpredictability of the situation. Blended classes can also be face-to-face via virtual classrooms, such as via Zoom. So, the College will deliver online classes, blended classes delivered on campus or virtually, and finally face-to-face classes. The majority of the classes that have a blended format are the career technology classes and classes with a lab component.

About 90 percent of MCCC’s classes have been released, for registration. The only ones that are currently ending are those that may have some issues yet to resolve.

Dr. Yackee reported that despite having to cancel performances for music and the Agora Chorale and Band, the College is able to award the performing music to scholarships to students. The instructional area felt it was important for continuity to award those scholarships, and they hope to be back in full form in the winter and they want to be prepared with the students who play instruments and who provide specific vocal components. Dr. Yackee hopes to have those performances back up online.

Dr. Yackee also said that she is hearing from Dr. Kimberly Lindquist, Dean of Health Sciences, that she is starting to get feedback from the clinical sites and that there is a “good chance” there will be good opportunities for clinicals for students, specifically through ProMedica and Beaumont hospitals, and they are proceeding with the nursing classes in the fall. That was the one component that was uncertain because the College has little control over the situation as they are controlled by third parties. Dr. Yackee, Dean Lindquist, the deans, and instructors are doing their best to plan for MCCC students that they will have opportunities and that the College can make adjustments as necessary.

Chair Dowler thanked Dr. Yackee and her staff for the flexibility and remarkable speed and speed at which the staff moved to transition to online classes.

C. 3. b. (3) 11. Suzanne Wetzel, Vice President of Administration/Treasurer, gave the Board a facilities update.

Ms. Wetzel noted that the campus is busy with all of the construction resuming on campus. Ms. Wetzel reported that currently, five projects have been brought back online. Work began on May 11th. The workers are back and Jack Burns Jr., Director of Planning and Facilities, put together a plan that clearly outlines the Colleges expectations for how they would be on campus in terms of masks, social distancing, and daily checks to make sure they are healthy before coming to campus. They have been very receptive to that. Five projects have come back up online. Barton Mallow and the subcontractors have resumed work on Founders Hall as of May 11th, and the project is moving forward. Lathe is onsite to begin work installing the new emergency generators. Turner Electric is on campus working on the IT rooms. Presidio has begun their work on the installation of the access control, security cameras, and the blue phones. The fifth project is the single-use restroom located in
the Campbell Building. This project was close to completing before the shutdown, and the contractors are in the process of completing the remaining work.

Ms. Wetzel announced that there are an additional 15 projects that will launch over the next four weeks. These projects include a new phone system working with EPC group. Brain Lay, Manager of Information Systems, and Kelly Heinzerling, Director of Auxiliary Services and Purchasing, are working with them. The College is finishing a contract with Jacobs Architects for the Diversity and Equity Center. The ceramics lab renovation is scheduled to begin on June 1st. The work with the architect for the Campbell Learning Resource Center renovations has begun. They are currently in the design stage. Molnar will begin working on the Whitman Center roof repairs, as soon as the weather is favorable. The bids for the tower painting at the Whitman Center are due May 27th. This job was done previously, but the College did not accept of pay for it, so the College redid the project. The main campus renovations include the addition of three single-use restrooms. Kohler Architecture will begin that project in the next couple of weeks. The Butler building is scheduled for demolition and these garage bids are due May 27th. The Life Science Building renovation bids are due on May 27th as well. Sidewalk work is planned for the main campus and the Whitman Center. Those bids are due on May 28th. Bids for repairs of parking lots 4, 5, and 6 will go out by the end of this week. The bid opening for the cell phone is June 8th. The work on the fiber loop on campus begins this week. Work on the second Internet connection will begin on main campus soon.

We look forward to seeing all the work completed. Ms. Wetzel thanked Jack Burns, Jr., Director of Planning and Facilities; Jeff VanSlambrouck, Maintenance Foreman; Brian Lay; John Wyrabkiewicz, Network Administrator; and Kelly Heinzerling have been working on all of these projects while the College has been shutdown. The work is all to their credit.

Dr. Quartey commended Ms. Wetzel, Mr. Burns, Mr. Lay, Ms. Heinzerling, Mr. VanSlambrouck, and their team who are all working on these projects. In other news, the new position for the Whitman Center is on hold due to budget constraints; however, the roof repairs, painting, and sidewalk projects will still move forward. Dr. Quartey and the Board will also have more conversations later about a future millage.

Chair Dowler remarked that when thinking about the impressive project list she couldn’t help thinking about all the work on the millage made possible because of the efforts by Dr. Quartey and many other. If not for the millage, the College would be in a very different place. She said that the critical maintenance list that Mr. Burns is managing must be far different today than it would have been if not for the millage.

C. 3. b. (4) 12. Dr. Valerie Culler, Director of Financial Aid and Interim Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Success reported that she and her staff are currently working on getting the CARES ACT funds out to students. The entire $650,258 must go directly to students and it cannot be used to pay for tuition, fees, or books to help them with their educational expenses specifically related to technology. To date, Dr. Culler’s office has paid out $131,410 in CARES Act funds to students and 145 students have received that funding. There are about 60 other students who have applied for the funding, but they do not have everything completed that they need to qualify because of the additional restrictions that the Department of Education put into the eligibility criteria.
Dr. Culler noted that her team in Financial Aid is reaching out to those students through email and phone calls, trying to help them finish up whatever it is they need to do. The awarding of the student portion is going very smoothly and now the task force is turning its attention to the College portion of the funding and having discussions about how the College is going to be able to utilize the student portion of the funding. The college is eligible for an additional $650,258 in institutional funding as well. Although there is plenty of guidance on what institutions can or cannot use the student portion for, there is much less guidance available for use of the institutional funds. AJ Fischer, Director of Finances, is working with his colleagues in the state, and they are having weekly meetings and discussion about the CARES Act. He is also looking at the resources available through his professional organizations to see what they published about guidance as well.

Dr. Culler stated that when it came to the student portion of the funding, there was a sense of urgency to move quickly to get the funds to the students. With the institutional funds, the task force feels, there is no sense of urgency, and that they have more time to make decisions. They know they are going to be institution will be audited on how it uses those funds so they need to be strict attention to following compliance. Dr. Culler welcomes suggestions on how MCCC can begin using those funds. The College auditor, recently contacted Dr. Culler and Mr. Fischer and told them that MCCC had been granted an additional $64,000 allocation of CARES Act funding. The department of Education did not notify colleges, but they did post it on their website.

Dr. Quartey commended Dr. Culler and her task force for pulling all of this together and they have disbursed $131,410 of the $650,258. The College has until next September to disburse the funds and the pandemic is far from over. If the College cannot spend the funds, the money will be turned over to another institution. President Quartey thanked Dr. Culler and her task force for their efforts. Ms. Thayer also thanked Dr. Culler and her team for working diligently on disbursing the CARES dollars. She has been in webinars where there has been conversation about all the hoops institutions have to jump through, while always keeping compliance at the top of their minds. Great work!

C. 3. b. (5) 13. Dr. Quartey led a discussion on the President’s Goals and Measurable Objectives. He has received one comment thus far from Trustee Buchanan. She would like to see that the President’s goals are measurable. For example in goal #1, Retention and Completion, she would like to see a percentage included. If the Trustees could look at Dr. Quartey’s draft goals, make comments and edits, and then discuss their ideas with him at their next one-on-one meeting, he will present his revise his goals and present them at the next Board meeting for approval. There are three major goals: 1) Student Focus and Reorganization, 2) Innovative Education, 3) Cultural Collaboration and Processes. Under each major goal are two subset goals.

Chair Dowler noted that some years ago, Dr. Quartey had measurable goals, but the measures were extreme, almost 100 percent or nothing. She stated that she appreciates Trustee Buchanan’s feedback about building smart goals that the Board can measure. She cautioned that as they build the goals out it is important not make them all or nothing. They must be achievable, specific, measurable, realistic and time-bound. Ms. Dowler welcomed the concept of asking the Board members to
provide direct feedback to President Quartey within two-weeks during their one-on-one(s) with him. That gives Dr. Quartey two weeks to revise his goals and then submit them to the Board for approval.

Ms. Buchanan stated that if “you have a more definitive metric it makes it easier to grade, and makes it much more quantitative than qualitative. Three goals in total with subsets are much better than 20 goals. If the metrics are less than expected, the Board can always reassess them mid-year, and realign them if necessary.

4. Board Member and Committee Reports

C. 4. b. (1) 14. The Board reviewed its self-evaluation. Ms. Thayer said that she thought the evaluation really showed the need for the Trustees to get a chance a chance to get to know each other better so that everyone is very comfortable with the processes and some of the background. The MCCA and ACCT have numerous webinars that can help boards understand that can be used for board development. Chair Dowler agreed and point out the webinar many of the Trustees attended last week on high quality board governance. Ms. Dowler highlighted some “beautiful nuggets” in the self-evaluation that give the Board fantastic insight to take into the Board workshop as soon as they are able it come together. She thinks that there are some thoughtful comments throughout the comment section. The numbers say one thing, but she asked if the Board had any particular questions about the open-ended comments. Ms. Dowler stated that she wanted the results of this self-evaluation to be the backbone for any upcoming team retreat.

Ms. Dowler noted that there were many comments about declining enrollment, adapting to changing needs, and consumer demand. She asked about the comment about the slowness of the College to adapt to the needs and consumer demand. This self-evaluation was filled out pre-COVID. Ms. Dowler said she suspect that there is some deeper thought on this particular segment relative to adaptation. Mr. Mason mentioned that he read a post about the top innovators over the last year. Most of the list was comprised of people, but third on the list was COVID-19, which forced innovation out of necessity. Ms. Dowler moved to the question about the goals for the coming year, which was heavily focused on having a strategic plan in place and suggested there be some Board and Presidential goals in place. She was also drawn to the comment around gaining more stakeholder feedback from the Monroe County School System, Business Community, countywide assessment, increase communication to the public and building stronger relations with these entities. Ms. Dowler said that when we thinking about stakeholder feedback and the roles that the President, the administration, and the director of communication play in that. When we have our off-site meeting, we should delve into what that looks like from a stakeholder perspective and what are the key issues at the College that we want to get in front of our stakeholders and influence people in their thinking and/or understanding, but most importantly their support to continue to strengthen relationships and the College’s foothold in the community. Trustee Mason reminded the assembly that these comments are in the context of the Board self-evaluation and not as criticisms of the staff of the College and are probably more Board driven. Some individuals, including the President and the staff, do some of these things exceedingly well. The comments in the evaluation are about the Board’s part.

Ms. Dowler left the rest of the comments for the Board to read and asked if anybody
had anything that got their attention and would like to talk about. Ms. Thayer had some comments about the Board retreat. She would like the President and the Board to figure out whether they needed to have their Board retreat at a park where they could social distance. She feels the Board need to build relationships. Dr. Quartey asked if the Board could accomplish this through a teams meeting and have an external person facilitate the retreat, perhaps somebody from the ACCT could facilitate the meeting. The Trustees felt it was important to meet face-to-face. Trustee Buchanan agreed that having a third party facilitator would be best. Ms. Dowler said that we could begin to design the day. Perhaps a subcommittee could work with the facilitator so that when the time comes, we are ready to go. This meeting would include the seven Trustees, Dr. Quartey, and Ms. Dorsey to be together so we would need a big room. The facilitator could attend via Teams or Zoom as travel restrictions might cause issues. Dr. Quartey set up a 30-minute phone call with Dr. Fisher, Ms. Dowler, Ms. Buchanan, Ms. Dorsey, and himself.

C. 4. b. (2) 15. The Board Study Meeting is scheduled for June 1, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. the Board will receive a preview of the 2020-21 proposed budget. This meeting will be held via Microsoft Teams.

C. 4. b. (3) 16. Chair Dowler noted the upcoming events.

Trustee Mason made the following statement, “I wanted to say thank you to Monroe County Community College. My son graduated and had 30 plus hours of dual enrollment, which gave a great foundation. Unfortunately the job market is not good right now, but he graduated very well and received good grades. The College has been really good to all three of my kids. Now [my son] needs a J O B!”

C. 4. b. (5) 17. It was moved by Ms. Lambrix and supported by Mr. Mason that the meeting be adjourned.

A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Yes (7) Florence M. Buchanan, Lynette M. Dowler, Steve Hill, Krista M. Lambrix, Aaron N. Mason, and Mary Kay Thayer

No (0) None

The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynette M. Dowler
Chair

Aaron N. Mason
Secretary

/prd