

MINUTES OF THE SIX HUNDRED THIRTY-FIVE  
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
OF THE MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

The Board Room  
La-Z-Boy Center  
5:30 p.m., February 23, 2026

Present: Lynette M. Dowler, Nicole R. Goodman (arrived 5:46 p.m.), Aaron N. Mason, Linda M. Roberts, Kristy Svatek-Whitson, Mary Kay Thayer

Not Present: Julie M. Edwards

Also Present: Angela Acosta, Amanda Althouse, Jenna Bazzell, Scott Behrens, Brian Bertram, Abby Carr, Paula Cooney, Kevin Cooper, An Crimmins, Chris Gossett, Melissa Grey, Nickie Hampsher, Elizabeth Hartig, Kelly Heinzerling, Rick Hubbert, Michele Jenkins, Jason King, Barry Kinsey, Denise Lindemann, Linda Marsh, Sarah Mason, Shawn McBride, Gerald McCarty, Joshua Myers, Mike Neaves, Omaira Ortiz, Stacey Pearce, Tina Pillarelli, Kojo Quartey, Helen Stripling, Frank Thomas, Beverly Tomek, Dan Tukel (Butzel Long and Associates), Joe Verkennes, Carl Whitson, Quri Wygonik, Grace Yackee, Penny Dorcey

1. Chair Aaron Mason called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. He noted that Trustee Nicole Goodman will arrive late and that Trustee Julie Edwards will not be in attendance.
  2. There were two delegations present.
- B. 2.
4. *It was moved by Trustee Thayer and supported by Trustee Kristy Svatek-Whitson that the following items on the consent agenda be approved.*
    - B. 2. a. (1) Approval of the minutes of the November 24, 2025 regular meeting of the Board of Trustees
    - B. 2. a. (2) Authorization for the President to Execute an Administrative Continuing Contract – Tomek
    - B. 2. a. (3) Authorization for the President to Execute a Faculty Contract to Administrator - Tomek
    - B. 2. a. (4) Authorization for the President to Authorize a First-year Probationary Administrative Contract - Lindemann
    - B. 2. a. (5) Authorization for the President to Authorize a Second-year Probationary Administrative Contract - Chisholm
    - B. 2. a. (6) Authorization for the President to Authorize a Second-year Probationary Administrative Contract - McBride
    - B. 2. a. (7) Authorization for the President to Authorize a First-year Probationary Faculty Contract - Harper
    - B. 2. a. (8) Authorization for the President to Authorize a Second-year Probationary Faculty Contract - Harper
    - B. 2. a. (9) Authorization for the President to Authorize a Continuing Faculty Contract - Iqbal
    - B. 2. a. (10) Authorization for the President to Authorize a Third-year Faculty Contract - Goodwin
    - B. 2. a. (11) Authorization for the President to Authorize a Third-year Faculty Contract - Gregory
    - B. 2. a. (12) Authorization for the President to Authorize Second-Year Faculty Contract – Shanafelt

B. 2. a. (13) Authorization for the President to Authorize Second-Year Faculty Contract – Jenkins

The motion carried unanimously.

5. *It was agreed by unanimous consent to move item C. 3. b. (2) Enriching Lives Award Presentation forward in the agenda.*

- C. 3. b. (2) 6. Grace Yackee, Vice President of Instruction, presented the Fall 2025 Enriching Lives Award. Dr Yackee explained that this award acknowledges the importance of the College’s employees and to recognize extraordinary achievements. Employees are recognized based on their commitment and examples of how they incorporate the MCCC mission, vision and values at work. The MCCC mission is a broad statement of our organizational scope, purpose, and operations that distinguish us from other colleges, universities, and organizations. These values guide our attitudes and our behavior. The Employee Engagement Committee accepts nominations for the Enriching Lives Performance Award during each semester to recognize any employee at MCCC. The committee is devoted to honoring the employee’s actions to create a positive change on our campus. Nominations are accepted at the midpoint of the semester, and the individual selected is recognized at the Board meeting closest to the end of the semester.

Tonight’s nominees include Jessica Gwosch, Adult Learner Coordinator; Melissa Grey, Professor of Psychology; Maziar Ashuri, Applied Science and Engineering Technologies adjunct; Michael Neaves, Power Systems Operator; and Stacey Pierce, High School Liaison and Administration Assistant.

The recipient of the Winter 2026 Enriching Lives Performance Award is Jessica Gwosch. Jessica is the Adult Learner Coordinator in the Student Success Department. She has been with the College since April 2025. Those who nominated her has this to say:

“Jessica is a wonderful example of multiple values listed above. Since joining our campus, she has compassionately advocated for adult learners every step of their educational journey. She spends an immense amount of time getting to know our students, completing intakes that will identify areas of need, providing resources and/or a listening ear to them and embodies what it means to be a member of student success. She provides a space for adult learners that both encourages and challenges them to reach and exceed what they might consider their potential, while providing students the support and tools needed to be successful. Jessica maintains a smile and generous, service-minded attitude and energy while working through each student situation, some of which are very challenging or complex. She is a team player, always willing to assist anyone on the team who may need it, and stays ahead of potential barriers. Jessica as a whole portrays student focus, accessibility, respect, excellence, outreach and engagement, and celebrates each student for who they are, where they are. She has shaped the experience of Momentum students and pours her all into all that she does. We are a better campus and team because of her. Thank you, Jessica!”

“I work with Jessica every day. She goes above and beyond for students ensuring they receive the support and services they need to be successful in the semester. She is student focused always staying late if she needs to in order to get students what they need. She is kind and respectful to all staff and students.

Jessica is an incredible empathetic individual; students often share very difficult stories with us yet she always shows so much love and care. Working with adult learners can be very demanding as the needs are greater, Jessica always makes time for every student.”

Dr. Yackee added that “Jessica holds a special place in my heart. My daughter was doing an internship in Mr. Verkennes Office and she was able to interview Jessica and help where she ended up being published on behalf of the College, I am telling you what a wonderful experience it was for her. You are so kind and gracious. Congratulations.

3. Old Business  
None

4. New Business

- B. 4. a. (1) 7. *It was moved by Trustee Thayer and supported Trustee Roberts that the following resolution of commendation be adopted for Mrs. Michelle Gaynier:*

*WHEREAS, Mrs. Michelle Gaynier retired from her position at Monroe County Community College, effective January 9, 2026, and*

*WHEREAS, she diligently served Monroe County Community College as a communications specialist for the Office of Marketing and Communications and The Foundation at MCCC for nearly 6 years, and*

*WHEREAS, she is a staunch supporter of the mission of community colleges and returned to the workforce by joining MCCC as a support staff member in 2019 after serving as communications coordinator at Schoolcraft Community College in Livonia for 11 years, and*

*WHEREAS, prior to her nearly two decades working to promote community colleges, she served in various communications roles to further the missions of a number of non-profit institutions, including as director of development for the St. Vincent Mercy Medical Center Foundation in Toledo, communications manager for Wayne County Regional Educational Service Center, and coordinator of public relations and development for the Detroit Institute for Children, and*

*WHEREAS, she holds a Bachelor of Arts with a focus in communications and marketing and a certificate in business administration from the University of Detroit Mercy, and*

*WHEREAS, she demonstrated a strong commitment to Monroe County Community College's mission of enriching lives by contributing her excellent writing, editing, design and project management skills to projects and campaigns to promote college initiatives and services that benefit and inform students and the community, such as Lifelong Learning classes, credit academic programs, Foundation Annual Fund campaigns, Admissions and academic pathway recruitment events, college viewbooks, business and workforce training courses, college and Foundation annual reports, events and concerts, services such as Heck's Market Food Pantry and The Foundation's student Emergency Relief Fund, and various enrichment opportunities for students beyond the classroom, and*

*WHEREAS, she effectively managed a wide range of essential tasks associated with her role and consistently demonstrated creativity and initiative in streamlining processes, including developing a system for the intake and management of the flow of hundreds of projects each year through the Office of Marketing and Communications, and*

*WHEREAS, she exemplified a dependable work ethic, earning a reputation for her proficiency and problem-solving abilities, and a drive to always learn more through her own discovery, as well as professional development through her interaction with other community college communicators via professional organizations like the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations, the only organization of its kind that exclusively represents marketing and public relations professionals at community and technical colleges, and the Michigan Community College Marketing Officers Association, and*

*WHEREAS, she was known for providing excellent service to MCCC employees, donors, students and the community, offering assistance with professionalism and warmth, and*

*WHEREAS, she is a true testament to the student and community focus of Monroe County Community College.*

*THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees recognizes Mrs. Michelle Gaynier for her years of dedicated service to Monroe County Community College; and*

*THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees expresses its very best wishes for her continued success, well-being and happiness in the next chapter of her life, with heartfelt appreciation for her contributions to MCCC, on this day, February 23, 2026.*

The motion carried unanimously.

- B. 4. a. (2) 8. *It was moved by Trustee Svatek-Whitson and supported by Trustee Dowler that the following resolution of commendation for Mr. Anthony Napier be adopted”*

*WHEREAS, Anthony Napier has decided to retire from his position as automotive lab technician with Monroe County Community College, effective January 24, and*

*WHEREAS, he has long been considered a technician of excellent caliber in the field of automotive engineering technology in industry, and*

*WHEREAS, during 5 years of service at the college he has demonstrated a high level of competence, skill and involvement with upkeep and maintenance of the automotive lab, and*

*WHEREAS, he has served to provide suggestions for important safety improvements for the automotive lab in the Career Technology Center, and*

*WHEREAS, he attained required credentials in the automotive field (ASE G1) and lab safety (MACS) implementation during that time, and*

*WHEREAS, during those 5 years he saved the college sizeable amount of expense by servicing and maintaining equipment in the labs, inventorying items and maintaining meticulous records digitally, and*

*WHEREAS, he has played an important role in support of our students, faculty and community in the automotive lab, and*

*WHEREAS, he has spent many hours supporting faculty and staff within the Applied Science and Engineering Technology Division at various public events that included the electric car show, weekend workshops, summer camps and division-wide open houses, and*

*WHEREAS, he has been a trusted friend and important member of the Applied Sciences and Engineering Technology Division.*

*THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees recognize Tony Napier for his dedicated service and contributions to the college, our students and the community, and*

*THAT IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees expresses its very best wishes for his continued success, wellbeing and happiness on this February 23, 2026.*

The motion carried unanimously.

- B. 4. a. (3) 9. *It was moved by Trustee Dowler and supported by Trustee Thayer that the following resolution of commendation be adopted:*

*WHEREAS, Angela Acosta will retire from her position as student retention specialist effective February 28, 2026, and*

*WHEREAS, coming to Monroe County Community College after serving a career in financial aid with the University of Michigan Dearborn, she has served with dedication and distinction for the Student Success team, demonstrating unwavering commitment to student success, equity and academic achievement, and*

*WHEREAS, throughout her time at MCCC, she has provided compassionate guidance, mentorship, and advocacy to countless students, helping them navigate challenges and persist toward their educational goals, and*

*WHEREAS, she holds a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Fairleigh Dickinson University, and*

*WHEREAS, she was known for her professionalism, integrity and collaborative spirit that have positively impacted colleagues, strengthened institutional initiatives and contributed meaningfully to a culture of support and belonging, and*

*WHEREAS, she is an incredible supporter of the mission of community colleges and is a true testament to the mission, vision and values of Monroe County Community College, and*

*WHEREAS, her expertise in student engagement and retention strategies has advanced the mission of the institution and improved outcomes for the students and community we serve, and*

*WHEREAS, her legacy will endure through the students she empowered, the programs she enhanced and the relationships she built;*

*NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we honor and celebrate Angela Acosta for her years of dedicated service, express our deepest gratitude for her invaluable contributions, and extend our sincere best wishes for a fulfilling and joyful retirement; and*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be presented as a lasting expression of appreciation and recognition for her outstanding service and commitment to MCCC on this day, February 23, 2026.*

The motion carried unanimously.

10. Trustees Nicole R. Goodman arrived at the meeting at 5:46 p.m.

- B. 4. a. (4) 11. *It was moved by Trustee Roberts and supported by Trustee Svatek-Whitson that the Board approves Policy 3.18. Student Employee Wage Rate as revised.*

Frank Thomas, Vice President of Finance and Administration explained that the minimum wage rate typically increase on January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. The Michigan Department of Labor is increasing the minimum wage rate from \$10.56 to \$13.75 this year. The new rate is effective back to January 1, 2026.

The motion carried unanimously.

- B. 4. a. (5) 12. *It was moved by Trustee Dowler and supported by Trustee Svatek-Whitson that the Board approves Policy 2.22, Scheduled Paid Holidays and Scheduled Paid Vacation Days 2026-2028 as revised.*

Frank Thomas explained that he is only asking approval of two years this year to align with the collective agreements, because those agreements end is 2028. FY25/26, has not ended yet, so those dates are also represented on the policy. The premise is to try to stay within the number of paid holidays of past years. This will become more complicated over the next two to three years as Christmas begins to inch its way into the weekend.

The motion carried unanimously.

- B. 4. a. (6) 13. *It was moved by Trustee Roberts and supported by Trustee Svatek-Whitson that the Board adopts Policy 1.82, Brand Identity Policy as presented.*

Joe Verkennes, Director of Marketing and Communications, presented a proposed Brand Identity Policy for Board approval. He noted that while the College has long maintained a comprehensive Brand Standards Guide within the Office of Marketing and Communications, the institution has experienced increased staff turnover and a rise in inconsistent or unauthorized use of College logos and branding elements. These developments prompted the need for a formal, institution-wide policy.

Mr. Verkennes emphasized that the College's brand extends beyond its primary logo and tagline; it represents the College's reputation, performance, and promise to the community. The new policy is designed to ensure that all communications reflect a coherent and consistent institutional identity. He reported that the policy was reviewed earlier in the academic year by all three College councils and the Cabinet. The Brand Standards Guide—used for many years by the Marketing and Communications Office—serves as the operational manual supporting the policy and is available on the department's website.

Key Policy Components include:

- **Institution-wide Alignment:**  
All marketing and communications materials—including printed brochures, digital media, videos, promotional items, advertising, and email signatures—must comply with the Brand Standards Guide.
- **Centralized Brand Authority:**  
No department, program, or office may create its own logo, sub-brand, or unauthorized branding. All marketing and communications executions must be developed in consultation with the Office of Marketing and Communications, which serves as the College’s brand steward.
- **Use of Logos and Marks:**  
The primary College logo is the official institutional identifier. Secondary marks, such as the Husky mascot, may be used only in appropriate contexts (e.g., student spirit activities) and not for official College business. Specialty marks may be used for short-term events or anniversaries but do not replace the primary logo.
- **Student Organizations:**  
Student groups may incorporate College branding with prior approval and must follow established standards.
- **External Use and Trademark Protection:**  
The College has encountered instances of off-brand or altered logo use by external entities. Although the College’s trademark is unregistered, it is protected under common-law trademark principles. The policy and guide strengthen the College’s ability to address unauthorized use.

Mr. Verkennes provided an overview of the guide, noting that it includes:

- Brand pillars, personality, mission, vision, and values
- Voice and tone standards
- Detailed logo usage rules, including prohibited alterations
- Color palettes and typography guidelines
- Templates for letterhead, PowerPoint, and Teams backgrounds
- Email signature standards
- An editorial style guide based on Associated Press style with College-specific exceptions

He noted that the guide is a living document and will continue to evolve as needed.

Mr. Verkennes requested Board approval of the adoption of the Brand Identity Policy, which formally establishes the standards and authorizes the Office of Marketing and Communications to manage and protect the College’s brand both internally and externally.

A Trustee remarked that the new policy and guide bring welcome clarity, noting that “everything is now in order” and that employees will now clearly understand appropriate and inappropriate uses of the College’s branding.

Mr. Verkennes agreed, stating that the policy provides a level of formality and authority that was previously missing. He explained that, in the past, the Marketing and Communications Office often had to correct logo misuse informally, without a formal policy to reference. The new policy now provides a clear foundation for those conversations. He noted that the development of the Brand Standards Guide was a significant undertaking. With a department of five staff members—two of whom are part-time and shared with another area—assembling a comprehensive, nearly 100-page guide required two years of work. The timing was appropriate given the influx of new employees and recent instances of improper use of College brand marks by external parties.

Mr. Verkennes further commented that the guide is exceptionally thorough and reflects a substantial amount of work, noting that in his own professional experience, branding initiatives often require revisiting the standards to stay grounded. He added that the guide is especially valuable during major projects, such as building renovations. When architects begin planning interior design elements or large-scale logo installations, they expect to receive a formal brand standards document. Providing the guide ensures that external partners have clear direction and that all visual representations of the College remain consistent and appropriate.

The motion carried unanimously.

*Board approves the attached list of naming opportunities related to the expansion and renovation of the Gerald Welch Health Education Building, pursuant to MCCC Policy 1.69, which supersedes any previous action by the Board related to naming opportunities and amounts in this facility.*

Joshua Myers, Executive Director of The Foundation and Director of Government and Alumni Affairs, provided an overview of proposed naming opportunities for spaces within the renovated Gerald Welch Health Education Building. He clarified that the item included in the Board packet was not being presented for approval, as the Board had already approved the College's naming policy in 2019. The current discussion concerned the establishment of naming values to support upcoming fundraising efforts.

Dr. Myers explained that the Board holds the exclusive authority to name any facility, room, or space on campus. In preparation for a capital campaign, The Foundation requests that the Board assign naming values in advance. This allows staff to work with donors without requiring repeated Board approval for each individual gift and provides a consistent framework for donor recognition.

A chart of proposed naming levels was displayed. Dr. Myers noted that the highest value—typically associated with naming an entire building—was set at \$1 million for the main two-story Allied Health wing. He explained that the building itself is already named in honor of President Gerald Welch, and that name will remain. At a future date, the College anticipates bringing forward a recommendation to update the building's functional name to the Gerald Welch Center for Health and Public Safety, reflecting the addition of criminal justice and potential future public safety programs such as EMT, paramedic, or fire training. That recommendation is not before the Board at this time.

Additional naming opportunities include \$500,000 for the gymnasium, with values decreasing for smaller rooms and spaces, down to \$2,500. Dr. Myers emphasized that these values serve as a structured menu for donor engagement and recognition, supporting the College's mission and benefiting students and the community.

Dr. Myers concluded by inviting questions from the Board and offering to review any of the proposed naming levels in further detail.

The motion carried unanimously.

### C. Information and Proposals

#### 1. Delegations

C. 1. b. (1) 15. Paula Cooney, citizen, addressed the Board as follows:

“As I thought about your work in this new calendar year, I was aware of how a “new year” often brings me to a renewed determination to live more fully committed to making choices that are in keeping with the values I hold.

I suspect that this may be true for you as well, both personally and in your role as a trustee for MCCC.

In the year and a half of meetings I have been attending, my sense has been that, whether or not it was explicitly on the agenda, there is the underlying presence of concerns about the LGTBQA+ community and attitudes held that have impacted conversations, decisions, and, yes, the financial state of the college.

I was remembering my own struggle to understand what it meant for men to love men and women to love women and then to engage with the idea that gender at birth was not the whole story of a person.

And, being a good Catholic girl, the unsettled feeling I had as it became clear through education from well informed and reputable sources in psychology, biology, and, yes theology rooted in the scripture that I needed an update in my own attitudes and beliefs.

And then I met same sex couples and transgender persons who witnessed beyond a doubt for me that the expression of their humanity through their sexuality and gender were as normal for them as being a heterosexual woman was for me.

I would like to challenge each of you as individuals and together as a board to consider taking the courageous step that may challenge views you have held since childhood. Become informed so that you are making choices, not only because you are following the law, but because you have fully informed yourselves in these matters.

By definition, there are two kinds of ignorance...invincible ignorance -- the lack of knowledge through no fault of the individual. and vincible ignorance – where there is a lack of knowledge that could be avoided by an individual’s reasonable effort. I know, for myself, that I wasn’t sure I wanted to make the effort to know. But I did.

I trust that each of you are on the Board because you believe in MCCC and its mission and would not want anything to stand in the way of its unfolding fully in service to its students and this community. It will take courage to be open to a new viewpoint – and, I am quite certain, it will take even more courage to stand in what may be an uncomfortable place for the common good. I encourage and support you in every effort you take in this regard.”

- C. 1. b. (2) 16. Kara Sparks, student, student and member of the Turning Point USA Club, addressed the Board. She stated that she recently joined the organization after attending its tabling event and wished to clarify the purpose of the club in light of recent misunderstandings. She explained that the club’s mission is to educate students about how government functions, how to communicate effectively across differing viewpoints, and how to engage constructively in civic processes. She emphasized that the group aims to help students become more informed, thoughtful, and engaged individuals.

Ms. Sparks shared that her experience in the club has been positive and that she has participated in meaningful discussions reminiscent of her high school civics classes. She noted that members hold a variety of viewpoints but are able to come together for respectful dialogue about current issues.

Ms. Sparks also inquired whether there is an online location where information regarding the club’s appeal process is posted. She stated that she had recently submitted an appeal and asked about the expected timeline for receiving a response.

1. Non-staff Communications and Reports  
None

3. President and Staff

- C. 3. a. (1) 17. President Quartey announced the following staff appointments, continuing administrative contract, continuing faculty contract to administrator, probationary administrative contracts, continuing faculty contract, probationary faculty, retirements, and resignation:

Staff Appointments:

Pamela Douglas, Administrative Assistant for Upward Bound, effective January 5, 2026 (replacing Dana Phipps)

Amanda Neal, Admissions Assistant, effective January 5, 2026 (replacing Alana Garant)

Charles Sanecki, Automotive Lab Technician, effective January 22, 2026 (replacing Anthony Napier)

Robert Patterson, Welding Manufacturing Lab Technician, effective January 28, 2026 (Replacing Robert Semanske)

Continuing Administrative Contract:

Beverly Tomek, Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences, effective July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027

Continuing Faculty Contract for Administrator:

Beverly Tomek, Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences, effective July 1, 2026

Second-Year Probationary Administrative Contract:

Christy Chisholm, Director of Nursing, effective July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027

Shawn McBride, EMS Program Director, effective July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027

First-year Probationary Administrative Contract – Promotion:

Denise Lindemann, Director of Financial Services, effective December 15, 2025 through December 14, 2026 (replacing Frank Thomas)

Continuing Faculty Contract, effective 8/24/26:

Talha Iqbal, Associate Professor, Electrical Engineering Technology

Third-year Probationary Faculty Contract, effective 8/24/26-5/13/27:

Ben Goodwin, Assistant Professor of English

Amanda Gregory, Associate Professor of Paralegal

Third-year Probationary Faculty Contract, effective 8/24/26-8/23/27:

Kelly Riley, Professional Counselor

Second-year Probationary Faculty Contract 8/24/26-5/13/27:

Rodney Harper, Associate Professor of Mechanical Design Technology

Meagan Shanafelt, Simulation and Nursing Skills Lab Coordinator

First-year Probationary Faculty Contract 8/25/25- 5/13/26:

Rodney Harper, Associate Professor of Mechanical Design Technology

First-year Probationary Faculty Contract, effective 1/6/26-12/18/26:

Michelle Jenkins, Professional Counselor

Retirements:

Angela Acosta, Student Retention Specialist, effective February 27, 2026

Penny Dorcey, Executive Assistant to the President and Secretary to the Board of Trustees, effective March 31

Resignation:

Selina Griswold, Associate Professor of Business, effective December 18, 2025

- C. 3. a. (2) 18. Frank Thomas, Vice President of Financial Services and Administration/Treasurer, gave the board an update on the General Fund Revenues and Expenses, and Other Changes for the period ending January 30, 2026.

Mr. Thomas reviewed the financial statements for the period ending January 31, 2026. He noted that the College remains on target with the approved budget and is currently operating under budget overall. He reported that the College received its third and final payment under the Employee Retention Credit (ERC) program in the amount of \$1.5 million. This payment was unexpected given earlier federal statements regarding the discontinuation of COVID-related programs. As a result, the “Other Revenue” category now reflects revenue in excess of budgeted amounts. Mr. Thomas further noted that the College incurred expenses related to the consultant hired four years ago to administer the ERC process. The fee associated with the final payment totaled \$229,000, which will cause the “Contracted Services” line item to exceed budget. The net effect of the ERC payment and consultant fee remains positive.

The Vice President also highlighted several emerging cost pressures within the maintenance and operations budget. The College is experiencing a number of unplanned repairs, many of which are already pushing line items over budget. These include issues with air conditioning systems, heating systems, elevator repairs, and the geothermal system. He reported that repairs to the geothermal system are estimated at \$250,000 to \$300,000. Debris was discovered within the system, and samples have been sent for testing to determine the cause. He stated that while the material resembles dirt, the College is awaiting test results before drawing conclusions.

A Trustee asked whether the geothermal system issues might be covered under warranty, given the relative newness of the installation. The Vice President responded that such issues are not typical when proper maintenance has been performed, but he declined to speculate further until the test results are received. He stated that it is

*possible* maintenance factors contributed, but he was not prepared to confirm that at this time.

Chair Aaron Mason stated that it would be valuable for the Board to receive ongoing updates regarding the geothermal system issues as additional information becomes available. He noted that the College will be closing out the current budget year at the end of June, and it would be helpful for the Board to continue monitoring the situation throughout the remainder of the fiscal year. He added that more details may emerge as testing results are received and repairs progress, and that continued updates will assist the Board in understanding the full scope of the issue, particularly given that the College is still making payments on the system.

Chair Mason commented that in his prior experience with public schools, the district maintained a comprehensive list of facilities needs and priorities, updated annually. While the list was extensive and often exceeded available funding, it provided a clear visual overview of upcoming needs, shifting priorities, and items that required immediate attention. The Chair Mason stated that having a similar visual tool at the Board level would be helpful for understanding the College's long-term maintenance needs, ensuring that high-priority issues are addressed, and identifying any emerging concerns—such as the structural wall issue that occurred early in the millage cycle.

Trustee Thayer remarked that approximately twelve years ago the College was significantly behind in addressing its facility needs, with many projects repeatedly deferred. She noted that the situation at that time was challenging and underscored the importance of maintaining a clear understanding of priorities to avoid falling back into a cycle of postponing necessary repairs. She expressed appreciation that the Board is now able to address issues more proactively.

Mr. Thomas noted that situations like the current geothermal system issue can arise when long-term planning is not consistently maintained. He stated that when maintenance needs are deferred over time, problems can accumulate and eventually surface unexpectedly. He emphasized the importance of having a structured facilities plan, as referenced by the Chair, to prevent issues from “sneaking up” on the institution in the future. He assured the Board that the College has sufficient funds available to complete the necessary repairs. He stated that addressing the issues now will be significantly less costly than delaying them and attempting to resolve them several years down the road. He emphasized that the College intends to move forward with the needed repairs promptly while being judicious in how millage funds are used, given that the fund is not being replenished.

Chair Mason noted that the geothermal system was a new technology for the College at the time of installation, and in hindsight, there may have been opportunities to better understand the appropriate maintenance requirements and incorporate them into regular procedures. He emphasized the importance of looking not only at the immediate issue but also at the broader long-term maintenance needs to prevent similar costs in the future.

Chair Mason stated that the Board has a responsibility to be good stewards of taxpayer funds. He observed that while the current repair estimate is approximately \$250,000, it is possible that routine maintenance—at a significantly lower cost—might have prevented the issue. He stressed the importance of ensuring that the College has clear visibility into maintenance needs and that appropriate preventive measures are incorporated into planning as the fiscal year progresses. Mr. Thomas added that Mike Neaves Alerted him that maintenance is starting on the air conditioning right now.

Chair Mason posed a question regarding the status of the single-audit. Mr. Thomas reported that the single audit is currently in draft form. He stated that Tracy Moon had provided the final component needed for completion, and he has reviewed it and given approval to proceed. He noted that the next step will be to finalize the audit and begin the process of submitting it to the federal clearinghouse. Chair Mason stated that the update on the single audit was reassuring and that it reflects the College being in a stronger position this year. He noted that the College experienced a challenging audit cycle a few years ago and expressed appreciation for the progress that has been made.

Trustee Roberts requested clarification regarding the elevator repairs referenced earlier in the financial report. She noted that the College has undertaken numerous elevator repairs over the years and asked for additional detail about the current issue, specifically inquiring whether the malfunction is occurring in the Administration

Building. Mr. Thomas responded that the current elevator issue is located in the Campbell Building. He noted that although the College has completed numerous elevator repairs over the years, this is a new problem that requires attention. He confirmed that the maintenance team is working with the appropriate contractors to address the issue. Trustee Roberts noted that the Campbell Building had undergone significant renovation and expressed concern that elevator issues were still occurring. Mr. Thomas responded that the current problem appears to be an electrical issue. He explained that diagnostic equipment has been installed on the elevator to determine the cause of the malfunction, including potential problems with the circuit boards. He added that the College is working with the contractor to identify and resolve the issue.

- C. 3. a. (3) 19. Frank Thomas explained that Procedure 6.06 (a) was updated to make it current with federal guidelines. Mr. Thomas explained that this is the mileage rate for the IRS.
- C. 3. b. (4) 20. Ms. Elizabeth Hartig, Reference Librarian, presented the 20th year of the One Book, One Community program on behalf of the committee. She noted that this long-standing collaborative initiative involves Monroe County Community College, the Monroe County Library System, and the Monroe County Museum System. She stated that the program continues to enrich lives and foster community engagement, as reflected in its mission.

Ms. Hartig introduced this year's selected book, *The Art Thief* by Michael Finkel, a true account of the most prolific art thief of the 21st century, responsible for stealing more than \$2 billion in artwork across Europe. She noted that Finkel is the only American journalist to have interviewed the subject extensively, and that he will visit campus on March 2. She highlighted the scope of this year's program, which includes 53 events—an expansion from a single month to an entire quarter of the year. Events will take place not only throughout Monroe County but also in Wayne County. Planned activities include faculty presentations, journalism ethics discussions hosted by The Agora, escape rooms, book clubs, art museum tours, and makerspace workshops.

Ms. Hartig emphasized the value of seeing students engage with community members of all ages and backgrounds through shared reading and discussion. Bookmarks and flyers were available, including a bookmark listing all 20 books selected over the program's history.

Ms. Hartig added that this year's program includes a wide variety of creative and engaging events. She noted that the Monroe County Museum will host a "Night at the Museum"-themed murder mystery event, and additional activities include a sketch and nature tour, as well as a session on building community through book clubs, designed to help participants learn how to start and facilitate book discussions. She stated that the program offers something for everyone, with several faculty members contributing presentations and lectures. Ms. Hartig reiterated that it will be a robust and exciting series of events. She invited Trustees to attend events and offered to answer any questions.

Chair Mason commented on the importance of the College's role as a cultural center for the community. He noted that Monroe County is largely rural and lacks comparable venues for arts, performance, and cultural engagement. He emphasized that events such as One Book, One Community exemplify MCCC's position as the county's cultural hub and serve as a powerful representation of the College's value to the broader community. He expressed appreciation to all involved for their efforts in sustaining and enriching this aspect of the College's mission.

- C. 3. b. (1) 21. President Quartey summarized the bi-weekly reports he provides to the Board, noting that the most recent update was sent the previous Friday. He discussed recent executive orders related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and explained that national guidance has emphasized three approaches: remove, replace, and restructure. He stated that the College has undertaken restructuring efforts and has reviewed its institutional values accordingly. The revised values have been reviewed by two councils and will be presented to a third before being brought to the Board, potentially next month. President Quartey noted that he believed the updated values were included as an attachment in his report.

Chair Mason reflected on the broader context of recent changes affecting higher education institutions. He emphasized the importance of institutional choice for students and acknowledged the role that private, faith-based institutions such as

Lourdes University have played in the region. He noted, however, that Lourdes' participation in direct college enrollment significantly reduced Monroe County Community College's enrollment over the past eight years. He explained that a 2018 change in Michigan law allowed students in certain rural border counties to participate in direct college programs within a 20-mile radius, which resulted in local tax dollars being used to support enrollment at out-of-state private institutions. He stated that, based on conversations with policymakers at the time, he believed the impact on MCCC was not fully understood when the legislation passed. He described discussions held with local superintendents, who indicated that their decisions to partner with Lourdes were driven largely by cost considerations. Chair Mason noted that Lourdes' recruitment model relied heavily on athletics and that a significant percentage of its students were on sports scholarships. He referenced the recent closure of Concordia University and the disruption it caused for students, including his own family member, and expressed concern that Lourdes' sudden closure may similarly affect many students and families.

Chair Mason encouraged Trustees to consider the long-term implications of these enrollment shifts and noted that some of MCCC's recent enrollment increases may be attributable to changes in the competitive landscape. He acknowledged that school districts made decisions they believed were best for their budgets and staffing needs, but emphasized that the resulting model proved unsustainable for Lourdes.

Vice Chair Dowler spoke from the perspective of students affected by Lourdes' closure, noting that many are likely experiencing uncertainty and urgency. She emphasized the importance of providing clear, accessible options for displaced students as soon as possible. She encouraged continued discussion at the next Board meeting regarding potential outreach or support strategies that MCCC might consider, and expressed that offering a stable, local option could be beneficial for students who might otherwise feel pressured to transfer to institutions farther away.

Chair Mason added that if the State has been willing to allocate funding to support students attending out-of-state institutions in the past, MCCC should explore ways to support students now facing displacement. He stated that he did not wish to speak on behalf of the College administration but emphasized the Board's responsibility to act promptly if needed. He noted that, should circumstances require it, the Board would be prepared to convene a special meeting to consider any necessary actions. Chair Mason also cautioned that Board members must remain mindful of their role and avoid unintentionally speaking for the institution when expressing personal views.

Dr. Quartey continued his report by acknowledging that activity at the Whitman Center enrollment continues to increase. Trustee Roberts expressed concern about the enrollment numbers at the Whitman Center, noting that several classes are currently running with only three or four students. She observed that the College's past practice has been to run classes only when they reach an enrollment of at least ten students, except in cases of specialty offerings. If enrollment is low in General Education classes there are enough alternative options such as hybrid and online sections that it doesn't seem fiscally responsible to run those Whitman sections. Dr. Quartey explained that this is the rebuilding phase at the Whitman Center. Dr. Myers commended Dr. Yackee on her work at the Whitman Center and her willingness to make exceptions that we do not often make, running low enrollment classes at this level. He believes it is helpful for the College when going into a community that is asking why we aren't offering English or chemistry classes. Dr. Myers appreciates that we are running the classes, and saying there was no interest in them, which is a more difficult thing to say if we do not even attempt it.

Dr. Quartey went on to highlight the College's efforts to expand opportunities through Michigan Works and the pre-apprenticeship program, which ranges from 22 to 25 credit hours. He emphasized that trade-focused pathways and college education are not mutually exclusive, and that the College is working to demonstrate to young people that they can pursue skilled trades while earning college credentials. He referenced upcoming presentations on enrollment and facilities, including geothermal systems, building maintenance, and elevator upgrades, as well as the recently completed Health Education Building simulation laboratory.

President Quartey informed the Board that legal counsel, Dan Tukel, would be arriving shortly for the scheduled closed session. He also provided a brief update on the Turning Point matter, noting that a joint appeal committee exists and is expected to meet, though no additional information has been received at this time.

22. Chair Mason reported on his conversation with the College’s attorney regarding the PAC matter. He stated that, based on the guidance he received, the situation is considered a non-issue. Because the error had already been self-corrected and there was no actual use of public resources, there is no requirement for the Board to report it. He further noted that even if it were reported, there would be no basis for an investigation, as no expenses were incurred. The issue involved the use of a College address on a form, which was subsequently corrected, and there was no indication that College resources were used beyond that. There is no need for further discussion or action.
- C. 3. b. (2) 23. This item was addressed earlier in the agenda following the approval of the Consent Agenda.
- C. 3. b. (6) 24. *It was moved by Trustee Dowler and supported by XX that the Board meet in closed session according to Section 8(h) of the Open Meetings Act, to discuss material exempt from discussion or disclosure by state or federal statute to address existing threats or prevent potential threats to the safety of staff or students.*

A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Aye [6] Mary Kay Thayer, Kristy Svateck-Whitson, Lynette M. Dowler,  
Nicole R. Goodman, Linda M Roberts, Aaron N. Mason

Nay [0] None

The motion carried and the Board moved into Closed Session at 7:07 p.m.

The Board returned to Open Session at 8:09 p.m.

- C. 3. a. (4) 25. Scott Behrens, Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Success, and Quri Wygonik, Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Chief Data Officer, gave an update on the Winter 2026 enrollment.

Dr. Wygonik, joined by Dr. Behrens, provided an overview of the College’s institutional dashboards, highlighting their role in monitoring key performance indicators. She directed trustees to the Institutional Research webpage and the suite of KPI dashboards, noting that the Year-Over-Year Enrollment dashboard is one of the most frequently used tools by the Admissions team. The dashboard displays daily enrollment trends and defaults to the current semester, allowing comparison between Winter 2025 and Winter 2026. Dr. Behrens noted that the census-day comparison reflects a 4.4 percent increase in enrollment from Winter 2025 to Winter 2026, with stable post-census trends indicating strong student persistence.

Dr. Behrens emphasized the importance of this dashboard in supporting enrollment management, explaining that it allows staff to monitor daily fluctuations, evaluate the impact of specific initiatives, and identify patterns such as weekend enrollment slowdowns. The tool also supports disaggregation by enrollment status, race, gender, and age. Dr. Wygonik reminded trustees that, in accordance with data-privacy standards, any disaggregated group with fewer than ten students is suppressed in public-facing dashboards, though trustees may request suppressed data directly through her office.

Dr. Wygonik introduced a new initiative launched by President Quartey in which the Office of Institutional Research will provide a monthly “data highlight” to the Board. Working collaboratively with Dr. Behrens and Vice President Yackee, the office will identify a key data point each month to be shared in advance through the President’s Board Report, with opportunities for further presentation or discussion during Board meetings.

The data highlight for this month focused on fall-to-winter student persistence. Dr. Wygonik reported that the College’s persistence rate for the past two fall-to-winter cycles has remained near 80 percent, positioning the institution competitively among peer colleges in Michigan and nationally. Dr. Behrens noted that an 80 percent persistence rate is considered a strong benchmark and

reflects the coordinated efforts of Student Success, academic leadership, and support services. He emphasized that retaining currently enrolled students remains one of the most effective strategies for sustaining overall enrollment growth.

Dr. Behrens reviewed fall-to-fall retention trends, explaining that this metric represents a significant opportunity for continued improvement and aligns with the next phase of the D3C3 initiative. While the first phase of D3C3 focused on early advising and K–12 partnerships, the upcoming phase will emphasize strategies to support students through the full academic cycle, including addressing “summer melt,” in which students disengage between winter and fall terms. He noted that many students choose to work during the summer and do not return in the fall, underscoring the importance of targeted interventions and year-round engagement.

Dr. Wygonik added that, under the leadership of Amanda Althouse, Director of Student Success, the College has convened a new retention task force. The task force includes representation from all employee groups and has begun conducting robust discussions, forming subgroups, and examining disaggregated data to identify which student populations are contributing to retention gains or declines. This work will support the development of strategies to narrow gaps and improve outcomes across all student groups.

Dr. Behrens recognized the work of Omaira Ortiz and the Admissions team in contributing to recent enrollment gains. Ms. Ortiz has been coordinating “blitz days” with every high school in the region, providing on-site registration support and assisting students with all required steps for enrollment. This initiative, which originated at Bedford High School, has expanded across partner districts and strengthened early outreach efforts. Dr. Behrens also highlighted the continued growth of the College’s auto-admit program, now widely supported by D3C3 partner schools. Through this program, high schools securely transmit student data to the College, enabling automatic admission without requiring a formal application. He noted that national research shows that the most common reason students do not enroll in college is simply that they never complete an application, making auto-admit a high-impact strategy for increasing access.

Chair Mason commended the Enrollment and Student Success teams, noting the demographic challenges facing the region. He referenced population data indicating a 9.5 percent decline in the county’s 15-to-24-year-old population over the past 14 years, as well as data showing that nearly one-quarter of county residents have some college but no degree and that almost two-thirds do not hold an associate degree. Chair Mason emphasized that, despite these external challenges, the College continues to identify substantial opportunities for outreach and re-engagement. He expressed confidence in the institution’s long-term resilience and commitment to serving the community and shared additional demographic materials with trustees for context.

- C. 3. b. (5) 26. Joshua Myers, Executive Director of The Foundation and Director of Government and Alumni Affairs, gave an update on The Foundation.

Dr. Myers, provided several updates on recent community engagement activities and philanthropic initiatives. He reported that the College hosted nearly 1,000 guests on campus the previous day for a large community performance event, noting that the show was exceptionally well received. Mr. Myers commended Mark Felder and the performing arts faculty for their leadership and highlighted the debut of the College’s new symphony orchestra. He noted that all performers participate on a volunteer basis and emphasized the value of these events in strengthening community connection to the College. The Foundation funded lunch for the performers as part of its ongoing support for campus arts and cultural programming.

Dr. Myers shared that donor Don Roof, a long-time supporter of the College, has established a new Promise Program at Dundee High School. Under this initiative, every Dundee graduate who qualifies for the Achievement Scholarship will automatically receive an additional \$2,000 award, intended to help cover books and other educational expenses without affecting eligibility for other forms of financial aid. Mr. Roof contributes approximately \$100,000 annually to the College and has funded multiple scholarships over the years. Dr. Myers

expressed appreciation for his continued generosity and commitment to expanding access to higher education.

Dr. Myers also announced that the Alumni Association has elected a new board chair, Benjamin Capaul, following Wendy Abbott's decision not to seek another term. He further noted a significant in-kind donation from Foundation Board Member Keith Mazarin, who recently contributed approximately 800 pounds of ground beef to the College's food pantry—his second such donation. This contribution has helped increase usage of the Heck's Market by providing high-quality food options for students. He provided an update on the One Book, One Community program, noting that the Foundation serves as fiduciary for the initiative while fundraising is led by Elizabeth Hartig. La-Z-Boy continues to serve as a major annual sponsor, and the Community Foundation recently awarded an \$8,200 grant to support bringing the featured author to campus.

Mr. Myers reminded trustees that Capitol Day is scheduled for April 16 and invited interested board members to participate. He also announced that the grand opening of the Health Sciences Simulation Center will take place on March 11. The event will include a ribbon-cutting ceremony and tours for prospective donors and state legislators, recognizing that the facility was fully funded by the State of Michigan.

Finally, Dr. Myers provided an update on the Welch Center project. The College has moved from the design-development phase into the engineering and construction-document phase. He noted that the construction manager's cost estimate aligns closely with the architect's estimate, keeping the project on budget. The College is awaiting legislative approval of the state construction authorization; bidding and procurement cannot begin until that approval is granted. In the meantime, staff are preparing documentation anticipated to be required once authorization is received.

### 3. Board Member and Committee Reports

- C. 4. b. (1) 27. Chair Mason noted that Code of Conduct/Conflict of Interest forms board are going to be emailed out to the board members. So hopefully you can read it. Understand it, sign it and bring it to the next meeting if you have not already delivered before then. As we do that, we will have it on the agenda next month and discuss it in more detail. Penny Dorsey, Executive Assistant to the President and Secretary to the Board of Trustees, will email a fillable PDF of the form to the Trustees, or send a hard copy with a return envelope to anybody who prefers a hard copy.
- C. 4. b. (2) 28. Vice President of Finance and Administration Frank Thomas provided a brief presentation regarding the proposed tuition increase for the upcoming academic year. He explained that the projections incorporate billable-hour estimates prepared by the Office of Institutional Research for both the fall and winter semesters. The figures presented reflect the *dollar amount of the proposed increase* rather than the total tuition rate. Mr. Thomas noted that approximately 59 percent of students receive some form of federal or state financial assistance, meaning that a significant portion of the increase would be covered by external funding sources. He emphasized that these are dollars the College should not forgo, given the availability of state and federal support. Mr. Thomas indicated that the recommendation shown at the bottom of the first page of his handout represents the proposal he intends to bring forward at the next meeting, pending any updates. Trustees discussed the importance of reviewing comparative data from peer institutions, and Mr. Thomas directed them to the final page of the packet, which includes information from the House Fiscal Agency. This comparison reflects in-district tuition and fees based on 30 credit hours and highlights Monroe County Community College's position relative to other Michigan community colleges. He noted that from 2016–2017 through the current year, MCCC's cumulative increase is approximately 25.6 percent, and from 2017–2026 the cumulative change is approximately 27 percent, consistent with statewide trends.

Mr. Thomas also reminded trustees that the period under review included years of unusually high inflation—reaching 9 percent and 5 percent in some cycles—which has influenced tuition adjustments across the state. He encouraged trustees to review the materials carefully and to meet individually with President Quartey if they have questions or concerns prior to the next meeting. He emphasized that the upcoming vote will require the Board to determine the most appropriate path forward based on the

College's financial needs, peer-institution comparisons, and long-term fiscal sustainability.

Joshua Myers reported that the College's comprehensive master plan continues to advance on schedule. He noted that the third and final initial town hall session with the campus community is forthcoming. The day will begin with on-campus discussions with the architects to review key areas of focus, followed by an afternoon visit to the Whitman Center to conduct a facility assessment and begin conversations regarding long-term usage and planning for that site. Dr. Myers stated that the College is approximately six to nine months from submitting the final master plan and that several additional engagement opportunities with the architects will occur during this period to ensure broad input from faculty, staff, and stakeholders.

- C. 4. b. (3) 29. Dr. Myers addressed the upcoming selection processes for Supporter of the Year and Alumnus of the Year. He explained that the timeline for Supporter of the Year is flexible because the award is no longer tied to a specific annual event. In previous years, the recognition was presented at the Business Alliance event, which is no longer held. As a result, the College will need to determine an appropriate venue and occasion for recognizing the selected honoree. Chair Mason will appoint three trustees to serve on the nominating committee, which will initiate the Foundation's call for nominations.

Dr. Myers then reviewed the timeline for the Alumnus of the Year award, which is traditionally announced at commencement. To ensure adequate time for regalia and event preparation, the selection must be finalized by late March. He requested that the Board consider a potential change to the selection process. Under current policy, the Board appoints a committee and selects the Alumnus of the Year. Dr. Myers proposed that the Board consider delegating the vetting of nominations to the Alumni Association, established in 1992, which predates the creation of the Alumnus of the Year award in 1996. Under this model, the Alumni Association would review nominations and make a recommendation to the Board, while the Board would retain final approval authority. He noted that this change would require a policy revision and would only be pursued if the Board expressed interest in exploring the option.

- C. 4. b. (4) 30. This item was addressed above.

- C. 4. b. (5) 31. Trustee Mary Kay Thayer provided an update on February 7-11, 2026, Association Community College Trustees (ACCT) National Legislation Summit in Washington DC. Ms. Thayer noted that she had previously emailed the Trustees two ACCT documents for review. Ms. Thayer met with Congressman Tim Walberg and Senators Gary Peters and Elissa Slotkin as a group. Congressman Walberg has five community colleges in his district. All three legislators spoke in favor of supporting MCCC's requests. President Quartey put together a comprehensive packet for Ms. Thayer to give to Congressman Walberg, and Senators Peters and Slotkin.

ACCT asked attendees to our congress members and our senators about our local and state needs.

Examples include:

1. Allocating necessary dollars to the Pell Grant. Soon, the Pell monies will run out. They need to sustain the long-term fiscal health of the program. At this time our students must pay tax on their grants. There is a need to modify the American Opportunity Tax Credit. FAFSA submittal has reached an all-time high.
2. The Community College Agriculture Advancement Act provides grants to Community colleges for agriculture and natural resource programs that support the growing need for a highly skilled workforce.
3. Due to many changes happening to the Department of Education. The biggest impact for us is that grants will now be accomplished through inter-agencies. We will be asked to submit our application to Dept of Education/Dept of Labor. The Dept of Education/Congress, etc.

C. 4. b. (5) 32. Chair Mason noted the upcoming events.

C. 4. b. (6) 33. *It was moved by Trustee Roberts and supported by Trustee Dowler that the meeting be adjourned.*

The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Aaron N. Mason  
Chair

Nicole R. Goodman  
Secretary

pd/

These minutes were approved at the March 23, 2026 regular meeting of the Board of Trustees.