

DRAFT

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF  
THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
OF MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Conference Rooms S-173bcd  
Warrick Student Center  
August 7, 2025, 5:30 p.m.

Present: Lynette M. Dowler, Nicole R. Goodman, Julie M. Edwards, Aaron N. Mason, Linda M. Roberts, Kristy Svatek-Whitson, Mary Kay Thayer

Also Present: Jenna Bazzell, Scott Behrens, Ned Birkey, Bonnie Boggs, Phillip Borawski, Mary Bullard, Catherine Calder, Parmeshwar Coomar, Paula Cooney, Mark Ferris Tom Gerweck, Melissa Grey, Mike Kiefer, Joe Joly, Stephanie Kasprzak, Helen Kourous-Harrigan, Aaron Lavender, Bill LaVoy, Michelle LaVoy, Sharon McNeil, Richard Morin, Joshua Myers, Joan Mumaw, Bob Neely, Jackson Pahle, William Parker, Darcy Piedmonte, Sandie Pierce, Kojo Quartey, Jack Ready, Maggie Sandefur, Jeffrey Schmidt, Jay Schumacher, Mick Valentino, David Vensel, Joe Verkennes, Cynthia Vincent, Bonnie Weber, William Wilt, John Wyrabkiewicz, Grace Yackee, Penny Dorcey

CALL TO ORDER

1. Call to Order 5:36 p.m.
2. Polling of audience for delegation recognition. There were 20 delegations present.
3. Maintenance & Replacement Renewal

*It was moved by Trustee Mason and supported by Trustee Edwards that the Board authorizes that the following ballot language be placed on the November 4, 2025, general election ballot:*

*WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees has determined that, in its exercise of its statutory duties and in order to best serve the needs of the College, a zero-increase renewal of .85 mill be levied by Monroe County Community College for a period of 5 years (2026–2030) to be used for renovation and upgrade of the College's infrastructure and facilities, which will include safety projects, accessibility projects, technology projects, learning environment projects, and maintenance projects.*

*WHEREAS, the Proposed Ballot Language will read as follows:*

*MILLAGE RENEWAL PROPOSAL*

*The millage proposal would allow the Community College District of Monroe County to levy a zero-increase renewal of .85 mill for a period of 5 years (2026–2030), for*

*renovation and upgrade of the infrastructure and facilities of Monroe County Community College which will include safety projects, accessibility projects, technology projects, learning environment projects, and maintenance projects.*

*Shall the total limitation on the amount of taxes which may be assessed against all taxable property in the Community College District of Monroe County, County of Monroe, Michigan, except property exempted by law, be renewed by .85 mill (\$0.85 per \$1,000 of taxable value) and levied for a period of 5 years (2026–2030), to provide funds for renovation and upgrade of the infrastructure and facilities of Monroe County Community College which will include safety projects, accessibility projects, technology projects, learning environment projects, and maintenance projects? If approved, this millage would raise an estimated \$6.7 million for the College District in 2026 (this is a renewal of millage which will expire with the 2025 levy).*

*[ ] Yes*

*[ ] No*

*THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that this ballot language be submitted to the County Clerk of Monroe County, Michigan, for submission to the electorate of the Community College District of Monroe County at the general election to be held on November 4, 2025.*

*THAT IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that all other resolutions and/or all parts of other resolutions that conflict with this resolution are rescinded.*

Trustee Thayer thanked President Quartey for all of the information he provided the Board. She expressed concern about state and federal funding uncertainties. Trustee Edwards clarified that the vote is on the language to be placed on the ballot, not on supporting or opposing the millage. Trustee Whitson Svatek questioned the specificity of the language in the proposal, seeking more detailed descriptions of projects. Dr. Quartey explained that the details are included on the College website and that communication plans had been sent to the Board several weeks ago. Further, the ballot language is for the voters and was approved by the College attorneys. The finer details do not belong on the ballot, but will be provided through the website, presentations, and literature. Trustee Roberts expressed concern about the scope of the proposal, questioning the need for certain projects and the impact on taxpayers. Chair Mason explained the importance of the millage for the College and its role in supporting the community.

The motion carried five to two, with Trustees Roberts and Svatek-Whitson voting no.

4. Chair Mason made note of the prior vote on the millage language. He apologized for his previous “no” vote, clarifying it was not a reflection on the millage request but due to a perceived disconnect between the College and a group of public officials. He elaborated on his own vote, explaining his efforts to inform the public officials and his request for

scholarly support. He relayed the efforts made to address the issues and the lack of response from those signers.

Chair Mason introduced a motion to retain legal counsel to advise the Board on recent actions by public officials, including any discussions or proposals presented in the June 23, 2023 meeting that may have implications under the Elliott-Larson Civil Rights Act. He clarified that his request for legal review is simply to ensure that when matters come before the board, especially ones that have already been the subject of prior legal opinions, the Board addresses them responsibly and within the law.

*It was moved by Chair Mason and supported by Trustee Thayer that the Board authorize the chair, in consultation with the President, to obtain legal counsel to advise the board regarding recent actions by public officials, including any discussions or proposals presented in the June 23, 2025 meeting of the MCCC board of trustees that may have implications under Elliot Larson, Civil Rights Act, Michigan ethics laws, criminal statutes or other applicable state laws.*

The motion carried unanimously.

## 5. Delegations

1. Jackson Pahle, Chief of Staff, Legislative Director, Campaign Manager and Treasurer for Michigan State Representative, Reggie Miller, addressed the Board on behalf of State Representative Reggie Millage to express her strong support for the Monroe County Community College millage renewal proposal.

Mr. Pahle explained that this is not a new tax, or an increased cost. It is a renewal of the millage voters first approved in 2016. Since then, MCCC has used those funds to modernize its buildings, expand programming, improve, and maintain its facilities. This renewal will allow that progress to continue.

Mr. Pahle noted that Monroe County Community College is essential to the community. It is where students prepare for good jobs in nursing, public safety, the skilled trades, and more. It serves recent high school graduates, working adults, veterans, and parents who want to build a better future without leaving home. Allows the issue to be decided by the voters of this county.

Mr. Pahle added that thanks to this millage, the college was able to update its labs and classrooms, strengthen partnerships, with local employers, and keep tuition affordable.

This renewal helps the college keep pace with the changing workforce demands. New industries and technologies are emerging fast, and Monroe County Community College needs to stay competitive with other community colleges across the state and the Ohio border. Without this funding, it will be harder to maintain the programs and facilities our students rely on.

When we support MCCC, we are supporting education, economic development, and local opportunity. We are giving people the tools they need to succeed and helping Monroe County grow stronger.

Mr. Pahle stated that Representative Miller supports this renewal and hopes the board allows this issue to be decided by the voters of this county. He implored, “Let’s keep our community college strong and our future bright.”

2. David Vensel noted that, for full disclosure, he is the chairman of the Monroe County Board of Commissioners, but is speaking tonight as an individual. Mr. Vensel has lived in Monroe County his entire 66 years, and I have come to respect and admire and value what the college does and continues to do for the community. He said that he is glad that the Board voted to put the ballot language forward. He will be wholeheartedly supporting the renewal of the millage in November. He knows there have been issues that have caused consternation in the last couple of years. He is encouraged by the dialog that has recently been taking place, and would encourage continued dialog, so that we can reach a balance on what is fair for everybody. Mr. Vensel mentioned that many times he has heard Dr. Quartey talk about the importance of fairness, the importance of treating people with respect, the importance of being kind, and so, he hopes that everyone can proceed in that manner, continue to have a dialog with those that have concerns, and then work to find solutions. In closing, Mr. Vensel said that he supports this millage, and will be a strong supporter.
3. Stephanie Kasprzak, the Executive Director of Monroe County Opportunity Program, addressed the Board regarding the millage renewal proposal and the MCOP’s longstanding and productive partnership with Monroe County Community College, which she spoke about a couple months ago. Other collaborations with the College include Ned Birkey’s urban farm and the food pantry managed by Joshua Myers and his and coworkers.

Ms. Kasprzak noted that since then, two really cool new projects have evolved that she thinks speak to the innovation and the collaboration between MCOP and the College. Those two projects are the Momentum Adult Learner Program, Scott Behrens, Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Success, Scott Dr. Myers, and Amanda Althouse, Director of Student Success, have all been working with the MCOP staff on this project. Momentum kicked off in June, and there has been tremendous enrollment from that so far. So just in two short months, we have been able to enroll adult learners working through the Opportunity Center with huge success already. So wonderful program and great start for Momentum.

Secondly, Ms. Kasprzak mentioned that MCOP and MCCC are also collaborating on working on the chairperson of the Monroe County network on homelessness. Melissa Grey, Professor of Psychology, Jenna Bazzell, Associate Professor of

English, and the MCCC Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA) group are assisting with this project. This gives youth and students a voice in our homeless network and some of the movement going forward over the next several years to develop more resources in our community for youth who fall into homelessness. Ms. Kasprzak wanted to make sure that everybody is aware that those innovative programs that are happening because she is a taxpayer, and will support the millage and the language wholeheartedly, and roll her sleeves up to help along the way. She asked that the Administration please give her a call to help out with the millage. Ms. Kasprzak added that none of this could happen without good leadership. She commented that “we are so lucky to have Dr. Kojo at the community college because he is at every community event, and he has supported us hands down in her 20 years as executive director,” and she truly appreciates that. Dr. Kojo steps up and is a true partner in the community.

4. Tom Gerweck addressed the Board regarding what the College has meant to him and in support of President Quartey. Mr. Gerweck graduated from high school in 1970. While in high school he rode the school bus past the college property daily and watched the college being built from the ground up. He also saw Monroe County Community College classes being held in the high school classrooms in the evenings before the campus was finished. Mr. Gerweck started his college education at MCCC in the fall of 1970. He has known all of the presidents of the College, and he has known President Quartey since he has been at MCCC. He is at the Board meeting tonight to voice his approval of the job President Quartey is doing.
5. Sr. Joan Mumaw addressed the Board to share with the why she believes it is important to affirm the language of the millage proposal, as they just did a few moments ago. Sister Mumaw is representing herself today, but stated that she is also a member of a congregation of IHM sisters. Sr. Mumaw stated that, she was “present in Monroe from the earliest days of Monroe Community College. We had Marygrove College and the Monroe campus, and our staff, our professors, worked closely with Dr. Campbell to make sure that this college took off, and look what's happened; 20,000 degrees granted since that time. What a gift.

The IHM congregation, which is now known as the IHM Senior Living Center, depends on the college for the training of its healthcare staff. Following up on the renovation of the facility in 2003, and certification by the state of Michigan, we sent our healthcare staff to the College for their upgrading as certified nursing assistants and healthcare professionals. Our healthcare center today has a five-star rating. We depend on what is taught here for our success at the healthcare center.

The latest statistics for the county that I could find indicate that only 32 percent have a secondary diploma. 24 percent a BA. The needs are great, especially the dual degree program. Sixty-five percent of workers in the county are employed by private companies. You know them. It's important that the college continue as a center of excellence for upgrading and certifying the personnel for these

businesses and companies. The synergy between business and education is a plus for the county, for the 150,000 people who live here, and for the College. And the fact that older students, part-time students, are able to study here on a part-time basis with the flexibility that is provided, is important. And over 50 percent are women. That's a great thing.

So, thank you for approving the language of the renewal for the millage proposal. There should not be a partisan issue, but rather an issue of importance to every resident in the county. So now, the voters of the county will have the opportunity to decide on the millage. We will be there supporting whatever efforts are needed to get that millage passed.

6. Sr. Paula Cooney addressed the Board regarding the manner in which the June 23, 2025, MCCC Board of Trustees meeting was conducted. Sr. Cooney submitted that, “if had been properly conducted, this special meeting would not have been needed.

Having served on a College Board of Trustees, and aware of the rules of order that govern **this** body, I was appalled at the manner with which Laura Perry’s comments (4:30) and letter were handled.

1. The content of the letter was not about the agenda item of PLACING on the November ballot the wording for the millage proposal  
My experience would suggest that a proper response would have been, ‘thank you ...we will review the letter carefully.’
2. (1:17) When it looked like the content of the letter was going to be addressed, appropriately, Trustee Edwards addressed the chair with the question: “‘Aren’t we getting off topic...we are here to vote on putting the wording of the millage on the November ballot...this is strategy discussion – to which the chair responded, “it is but...”
3. Following the motion and second to open the item for discussion there **were** clarifying questions regarding the millage.

(1:21) The chair then turned the conversation to **strategy and** engaged the content of the letter:

- What faculty is on board
- What is the campaign – etc.
- Lot of issues in the letter – larger set of issues –
- Signs that were posted etc.
- Referred to a ‘Series of events’ etc.
- And a Trustee added further comments that were clearly political in nature.

None of this had to do with the wording of the proposal, which had already been agreed on, nor the November date for it to appear.

Agreeing that another meeting would be necessary, the vote was taken and the proposal was defeated. I cannot help but believe that the engagement with the letter provided during the public comments, a breach of basic the general rules of Roberts Rules of Order and this body did not distract from the purpose of the vote and add to the reason it was defeated.

As you noted at that meeting this board is trained by the Association of Community College Trustees who state that your fiduciary duties consist of three principal obligations: \*\*

- The Duty of Care = to always work in the best of interest of the college
- The Duty of Loyalty – to prevent conflicts of interest
- The Duty of Obedience – that requires that all board members obey all requisite laws.

These include certain responsibilities among which are:

- To represent the common good of the communities that have elected them
- To support and be advocates for the college
- To lead a thoughtful educated team.

I don't think their review of that meeting would give them much confidence in your ability to consistently conduct the affairs of the college at these meetings in accordance with these responsibilities. I **want** to trust that each of you comes with the desire to serve this great institution with the best of yourselves with no hidden agendas or self-interest and the inner freedom to not let any group threaten or hold you hostage.

I look forward to watching your own growth as a board and the continued presence of MCCC as a source of educational excellence in our County.

\*\*Taken from the website of the Association of Community College Trustees  
\*\*\* All # references are to the time on the recording of the meeting on June 23, 2025

7. William Parker, citizen and President of the Monroe County NAACP, addressed the Board in support of Monroe County Community College. Mr. Parker stated the following: “about 12 years ago the College hired President Kojo. If you look at the body of work that has happened in these last 12 years, it speaks volumes, as some of these speakers have already mentioned. Look at the activity and how active he is in the community and bringing partnerships to the college that benefit our children and our grandchildren. We need to move away from the partisan

politics because this division is going hurt future generations of children here in Monroe. I have been married for 32 years. My wife and I do not always agree on everything, such as raising the kids, but we have learned how to compromise and come together as one for the betterment of our children.

This is what this is all about, our children, and what we have to do is learn and come together for our children, because the decisions we make now will hurt future generations to come. That's what the most important part of this whole process, our kids. We need to get out of ourselves and leave behind the negative things that our generation went through, because we have two other generations coming up that are going to need support from us.

When you look at these generations they see the bigger picture. They don't see color, they don't see politics, they see content of character. If you're not a good person, they look at the content of your character, not the color of your skin, not what your gender is, none of that. They look at the concept of your character, what are you as a person, how you perceive and how you treat other people. We can learn a lot of lessons from these generations, but if we make bad decisions now, 20 or 10 years from now, our children will feel it. So, I thank all the speakers tonight, and we need to start working together here in America.

8. Karen Koek, citizen, addressed the Board in support of the millage renew for the community college. Ms. Koek stated that, “I started my education at community college, and it makes all the difference financially and in terms of getting people back into school. I think that community colleges are the way to go, and I appreciate your efforts to keep this one going. It's, as others have said, it's for the future of our children and grandchildren, but also our society and our civilization.”

9. Ned Birkey, citizen and MCCC Farm Coordinator, addressed the Board on the benefits of Monroe County Community College to the community. He stated:

“I consider Monroe County Community College a diamond, and I've worked intensively with this institution for the past nine years. There's been an ag program with Michigan State. I consider the Whitman Center a diamond in the rough, and I hope to polish that diamond down the road.

Part of my job for the past 45 years in Illinois or Michigan extension, and since then, has been to work with all the commodity groups, the Ag groups, not necessarily as a member, but as a partnership, and so, I can tell you right off the bat, the bathroom issue is an undercurrent in all the Ag organizations. If all you can say that the bathroom issue has been put to rest, I think that's perfect.

Having said that, the ag program here, farmers, all the commodity groups support the ag program here, and by virtue of them, the Community College, okay, there will be numerous instances in the next few months for good publicity to get out to



support the millages, and the ag community does support the college and the millage renewal. On August 19<sup>th</sup>, the corn growers are going to be meeting here. The Monroe County Conservation District board meets on the 19<sup>th</sup>. The Ag Advisory Council is going to meet on the 25<sup>th</sup>, and the Farm Bureau board's going to meet on August 26<sup>th</sup>. There will be a field day here at the College on September 11<sup>th</sup>. On September 20<sup>th</sup>, there will be the Farm Bureau annual meeting. So, there will be a number of times when positive things can come out about the millage renewal for the college.

We used to have Congressman John Dingell who said the farm vote is not enough to win you an election that you're always losing, but it may be enough to keep from losing an election that is otherwise close, because the farm vote is not just farmers, it's the family and the community around that. So, I would say the same thing to this, that the farm vote can be a small part of the population there, but the impact can be large, and I think it can be helpful to the college.

10. Aaron Lavender is a citizen and a community organizer, and has been and part of the community forever. And I have to say something, I think sometimes we take for granted the great things that we have in our community because of outside pressure from politics. If we're not careful, we're going to lose all that.

Let me say this. This is very important. It's something that I haven't heard you guys talk about. It should be highlighted, it should be celebrated, and that is the community college here at Monroe is number one for nursing in the state of Michigan. Number one, not two, three, four, or five, number one. That says a lot. You guys have an important role in making sure that we stay number one. All right. Dr. Kojo is a man of integrity. He's a man of class. He's a man that I will stand by for the rest of my life, because I see what he does in the community. Not only does he represent this community college, but he represents the whole community at large. And like I said, I'm a community organizer, so he represents the board very well. He represents our community very well. In fact, just like Aaron Mason. So sometimes we take for granted the men that we have and women that we have serving this board. Sometimes we forget that because of the outside noise. Let's not forget why you serve in the first place. It's for our children, it's for this community. Let's not forget that. Let's not get bogged down by silly arguments and things that divide us. Let's continue to come together as one community, as one college. We have a man that's leading that way. Do not turn your back on it, because you will make a huge mistake.

Let me tell you another thing before I get out of here. My daughter, she wants to go to school for radiology, and she was going to Michigan to follow in her brother's footsteps. But guess what? She heard about this being a number one school. Guess where she's going? She's a junior high school right now. She is a straight A student, always has been, but because of this school right here, her mom went here, and her mom is now the principal at Arborwood School, and my daughter is going to go here when she graduates. That's what she told me, because

of this, because of the school here. I do not want you guys to get caught up in a mess. Support this community college, because it's number one. All right? Number one!

11. Sharon McNeil, community member, addressed the Board in support of the millage renewal. Ms. McNeil stated the following:

“Community Colleges change lives. I know this, because Lansing Community College changed mine, during a difficult time in my life. I was a student at Lansing Community College when I lost both of my parents within two years. My teachers showed me compassion I'll never forget. After my father's sudden death, a no-nonsense teacher excused a failed biochemistry exam with the words, "We'll drop that test."

When my mother was dying, my clinical instructor urged me, ‘Go home; you have only one mother.’ Three of my nursing instructors came to her funeral. That kind of support doesn't happen in a crowded university lecture hall. At the community college, I wasn't just a student number. I was a person. And my story is only one of many. Every day, community colleges give people lifelines -- helping them pursue education, recover from hardship, and build better lives. It did for me. MCCC is one of those schools and it is number one.

I respectfully ask you to give our community the chance to decide on this millage -without political drama and without fear. To withhold it, would be to deny our neighbors the opportunity to choose their own future. The impact of your decision will reach further than we can ever measure. Please put the millage on the November ballot so that Monroe County Community College can continue changing lives.

Your yes and support for the millage, will impact generations.

12. Sandie Pierce, citizen, addressed the Board on the millage renewal. She said, “Thank you for your vote to put to move this millage request forward. We have a caring community. The Community College is such a vital part of who we are as a community, and I don't think you need any more kudos Dr. Kojo, but I'm right there. If there's not an event I go to, and as the director of the Monroe Senior Center, I'm at a lot of the community functions, and your president is there also advocating for everything in the community.

Our college is vital. It provides opportunities that our children and young adults might not otherwise have. At the Senior Center, we use the Safe Serve program to keep our cooks certified and keep our license for our cooks. At the at the Senior Center, we provide nutritious meals, so we're cooking meals every day. We have a licensed kitchen.

This millage, is an investment in our community. It's an investment in the infrastructure to ensure that it continues. Maintenance is expensive. Believe me, I have a 47-year-old building I'm living in, and I'm living in it because that's my work. I know it's expensive, but I hope the steps coming into this building are part of your plans.

It takes a village, and I just wanted to be here tonight to say, I 100 percent support putting the millage on the ballot. Support the military, yes, and I will also bring the message back to the Senior Center and help educate the Senior Center, the senior citizens, the people that actually vote about the importance of this millage. So, thank you for this opportunity, and again, thank you for putting the proposal forward.”

13. Bob Neely, citizen, addressed the board on the value of the college. He said, “I have a little bit of a personal story as well about Monroe County Community College. I grew up in Monroe. I spent my entire life here. I went to Monroe High School. I was a rock-solid B minor student when I came to the college. We had some great teachers at the time, Jack Campbell, Jack McDonald, Dave McKay, Don Hyatt, and others. When I came here, I was without direction, and these gentlemen and all the teachers I had. helped mold me into making decisions that would last me for the rest of my life.

When I started working at Monroe Bank and Trust, I was still going to the community college, and I graduated from here in 1969. The Vietnam War was going full tilt, my draft number was almost up, I didn't know what was going to happen. In the meantime, my fiancé decided we should get married. So, we got married, was going to community college, I was working at the bank, I had a part time job at Kroger trying to decide what I wanted to do with my life, but I stayed with the community college, I took classes after work, and I went on to higher education, I continued my education. Through my lifetime, I've had the opportunity to serve on a lot of boards. One of those was Mercy Memorial Hospital. Dick Filch was the president of the organization, and I was the chairman of the finance committee and I was treasurer. We decided we wanted to explore using the nursing program at Monroe County Community College, whereas Mercy Memorial Hospital was instrumental in working with the college to develop that partnership. We hired 100 percent of the nurses that graduated from here that wanted to work in Monroe.

In everything I have done in my life, the Community College has been a common denominator. In addition to be in banking for 36 years. Dave McKay came to the bank, Monroe Bank and Trust at the time, and said, ‘We want to start a program here to help educate people about banking opportunities.’ Dave McKay, Bill Myers, and myself worked with the American Bankers Association, and created a banking program here. We developed that and we've had hundreds, and hundreds and hundreds of bankers and people from outside banking that wanted to learn about banking, come to this school and be a part of it. In addition to helping create

that program, I taught out here part time and also had the opportunity to serve as trustee on the board. Mary Kay, I think I was here in the beginning in your day. I have been a supporter of this College since the day I read about it in the newspaper that it was being formed by a group of local business people who went out and hired Ron Campbell, who's been a personal friend, a lifelong friend, he's a great guy; he and I served on the hospital board for many years. The acquaintances, the friends, the relationships I've had over many years have been absolutely fabulous. This institution is the foundation of Monroe County.

I have two children., Both of my children wanted to go into higher education. One wanted to go to Western and one wanted to go to the University of Michigan. The only rule my wife and I had was that, we would pay for it, if they went to the community college for two years. They are both in their fifties and every time I talk to them, they thank me for that opportunity. Vote for this millage, it's the greatest thing.

14. Helen Kourous-Harrigan, citizen, spoke in strong support of the millage renewal and thanked the trustees who honored their fiducial duty to support the community college by putting this millage on the ballot. She said, "This is a zero-increase renewal. You all know the facts of that case. In the past, the voters have supported this investment because they knew that MCCC plays a crucial role in developing our local talent, from healthcare to welding to cybersecurity and AI, the future.

The College offers debt free education through the Monroe County Opportunity Program, including career training and skilled trades, one of the most urgent workforce needs in our region. This is not news to you, but this is especially important in light of pending and impending federal and state funds that may be in jeopardy for this College in the current climate and the emphasis on building and trades in America.

Some community members not elected to this board have raised concerns about state laws and curriculum. That's absolutely their right, and those conversations should happen, but let's be careful not to hold the College's future hostage to disagreements that are outside its legal authority. MCCC, like every public institution in Michigan, must comply with state laws such as the Elliott Larson Civil Rights Act. We may not all agree on how those laws should be written, but the college is not the author of those laws. It's following them as required and as we as citizens would expect our taxpayer funded institutions to do, follow the law.

We can support the millage and continue asking questions about transparency, curriculum, governance. These are valid issues, but let's not jeopardize funding that keeps the building safe, new single use bathrooms to be built, classrooms open, and the skilled trades programs running, especially when this proposal simply renews existing support that voters have trusted before This Board of Trustees fiduciary role is to give voters a chance to weigh in. I urge you to adopt

the proposed ballot language tonight, and thank you for doing so, and then trust Monroe County voters to decide what kind of future they want for our county, for jobs, and for our local treasure of a college. Thank you.”

15. Mark Ferris, citizen, address the Board on the impact of Detroit Edison on the community. He passed out some literature pertaining to their “reneging on our property taxes.” He stated, “Undoubtedly, that's what got us where we are right now. They have reneged on their property taxes; we're talking many millions of dollars.

You know, the nuclear plant was the second one to renege on the property taxes. And maybe you've been paying attention that Detroit Edison has gotten a 20-year extension on the license. Their taxes should go back up retroactive to when they applied [for the] permit to get the extension. They've also stated that they want a 20-year extension, on top of that 20-year extension, the coal burner, it's got the scrubbers. It's not going anywhere.

Detroit Edison owes the community some big bucks. Also, Detroit Edison is storing high level radioactive waste on the shore of Lake Erie. You all probably realize Yucca Mountain out in Nevada was the waste repository of a couple 100 billion dollars, and it was a failure, because when they got about 1500 feet down in the desert, and they hit an aquifer. So, they're storing high level radioactive waste in Monroe, and their taxes should go up because of that, on top of everything else.

Education is very important. What you learn from books, from a good teacher, it's going to get you ahead in the world, but we've got to teach our children to struggle a little bit. If you explain to the voters, no telling where the economy is going to be in a few months. This millage may be temporary. It might not have to go a full term, depending on how a lawsuit against Detroit Edison turns out. The county and the city should pool their money again, like they did when this was initiated, and put up a fight and tell Detroit Edison come up with the money. I know for a fact that Detroit Edison, in the past, has been busted giving 10s of 1000s of dollars to people in Detroit to bribe people to get up and speak in favor of Detroit Energy. The reason I say that is because I've been talking for a couple years that I was going to send this story to 60 Minutes, unfortunately, 60 minutes has been co-opted by the push of the Trump administration. This story is going to go to Rachel Maddow and I'm gonna put this all together. I've got about 30 more pieces of literature to put the whole story together. That's what I'd like to see happen. Education is very important. But let everybody know that you're gonna put up a fight and make the corporate world pay their taxes? The story would be about monopoly capitalism. The problem we have here is Detroit. Edison is in control of Monroe County and the elected officials.”

16. Bonnie Weber, citizen, addressed the board on the value of Monroe County Community College. She thanked the Board for the time they spend working for our college, stating that, “and yes, Kojo is everywhere. He pops up everywhere.”

Ms. Weber said. “When I first graduated from high school, I most certainly could have used a college like this, and I went literally from the bean field to Michigan State University, so it really would have helped me. What I have to say is the many benefits that I, as just a plain ordinary citizen, have had from this college since 1974 since when I moved here. We had two of our children who attended on band scholarships for two years here, and they still talk about the good times playing with the community band. Every single one of their credits transferred, one to Michigan State, one to Eastern and now we have grandchildren in the Middle College. I mean, that's a big deal.

One of the places I worked is down the road at Community Mental Health, and we had a great volume of direct care staff that we needed to train, especially when Ypsilanti State Hospital closed. So, we had regular training sessions. They were two weeks long, and we did them more than once a year, like two, three times a year, in this very room here. We trained not only our direct care staff, but our providers that we had contracts with. I mean, that's a lot of people, and the college was very cooperative in providing the space for us. I myself, have taken classes here to earn CEUs (continuing education credits) to keep my state license. I try to take part in the community education events that happen monthly here. Penny usually sends out a flyer on them, and not only are they interesting, but they were a big deal during COVID, when we were all rather isolated. I mean, it was a very, very service minded thing to do. Also, the College Foundation provided books for a long time. I ran a book club at the Monroe County Youth Center, and they provided books for the community read to the children at the at the Youth Center. Many of them couldn't read very well at all, but we worked with it. That was a very nice service. Now I think of they talk about lifelong learning.”

17. Mary Bullard, addressed the Board in support of the millage renewal. She stated:

Since 1964, Monroe County Community College has offered students not only the opportunity to obtain a college education locally, but to be certified in numerous trade programs. In recent years the college has also provided credit courses in area high schools and satellite sites around the county.

I joined the college staff in 1980 as a reference librarian. Our services and resources were initially focused on university level academics; however, with the advent of internet technology we became part of a learning team: free tutoring, entry level classes aimed at students needing to refresh basic skills, writing assistance, and a wealth of online resources in all content areas.

I loved interacting with students of all ages and backgrounds. I worked under each of the college presidents: Ronald Campbell, Gerald D. Welch, Audrey M.

Warrick, David Nixon, Dr. Kojo Quartey. I retired after 39 years, but I continue to be involved with such worthy college programs as the annual One Book One Community Read.

When I visit campus, I am amazed at how the buildings - both new and original- have kept current. The Campbell Learning Center offers open-flow learning space. Heritage Hall has opportunities for group and individual study. The Health and Science Building is environment-friendly.

I am most proud of how the college continues to be inclusive. All buildings are handicapped accessible and by Michigan law there are gender neutral restrooms. Students are encouraged to have input into courses and instructional styles. I am extremely proud to say I have been a part of this treasured community resource throughout my work career and as a county resident.

To quote the website: "Monroe County Community College has remained a constant within the community, evolving with the times to adapt to changing needs and continuing a record of excellence and service."

18. Cynthia Vincent, citizen, addressed the Board on the value of MCCC to the community. She stated, "As someone who's lived in Monroe County for many years, I've seen firsthand the changes and growth in our community. It's been a pleasure to watch new businesses pop up, breathing life into our local economy and bringing a renewed sense of pride and energy to the area.

Whenever I talk to friends or family who live elsewhere, I always find myself bragging about Monroe County. We've got so much to offer-from our historical landmarks and great locally owned restaurants to our beautiful parks and, of course, our outstanding library system. My husband and I especially love the Blues Series each year in celebration of Black History Month -- it's one of the cultural highlights of our community.

But one of the true gems of Monroe County is Monroe County Community College. I can speak from personal experience - as someone who returned to school in my 50s -MCCC gave me the chance to earn credits toward a degree in my chosen field. More importantly, it opened my eyes and ears to new perspectives. Sitting beside younger students, learning with them, talking with them - It reminded me that growth doesn't stop at any age.

MCCC continues to be a vital resource. Programs like Michigan Reconnect are a lifeline for many adults over 25 who are looking for a fresh start or a new direction. And the Lifelong Learning classes? They're a real gift for people of all ages who want to keep learning, exploring, and growing.

There's a saying I love: "When you 're green, you grow. When you 're ripe, you rot." Well, MCCC helps keep this community green. It's preparing tomorrow's entrepreneurs, professionals, and leaders - right here at home.

So, I'm here today to say loud and clear: I fully support the continued growth and success of Monroe County Community College. It's more than a school - it's an investment in our people and our future.

Thank you-and keep shining, MCCC.

19. Mike Kiefer, citizen, addressed the Board on the value of Monroe Community College to the community. Head said that, "In memory of the late Dr William McCloskey, a former Monroe County Community College faculty member, including dean of the humanities and social sciences division for 11 years, I approached the current dean, Beverly Tomek for the purpose of forming a collaborative to promote the visibility, connectivity, and sustainability of the Monroe County fine arts community. Of those initial conversations with Dean Tomek and other MCCC representatives served as a catalyst for the formation of the soon to be announced Monroe County Fine Arts collaborative. To date, over 25 arts, fine arts related entities have expressed interest in participation, and the proposed collaborative will officially honor Dr McCloskey, an exemplary member of the Monroe County and regional fine arts community.

The collaborative will unite artists, arts organizations, educational institutions, and community stakeholders in fostering a vibrant fine arts environment throughout the county and region. Participation in the collaborative will require no financial obligations, dues, or monetary contributions from any individual organization or institutional member. Its foundation rests on the shared commitment to open communication, creative exploration, and mutual support, the catalytic role of Monroe County Community College and the collaborative formative months exemplifies the broader community impact that makes MCCC an indispensable community asset deserving of continued public investment. The proposed millage a continued investment in sustaining Monroe County Community College's innovative community centered programming that makes the College a cornerstone of economic growth and cultural enrichment, ensuring that hands on support for transformative initiatives like the fine arts collaborative will serve and strengthen our entire community for generations to come."

20. Catherine Calder, Head of School at Meadow Montessori, addressed the Board on the college's impact on the youngest students in the community, as well as the older ones. Ms. Calder said. "We work really closely with the college's early child development program, and they place interns and observers in our program. Then they go out and work in childcare centers and educational centers throughout the county. So, the impact of those programs is essential, especially because early childhood education is so important in the world today. At the other end of the educational spectrum, but still within young people, we have a high school



program, and our high school students are dually enrolled here at the college, and I cannot thank The College enough for the opportunities that they get to use the facilities to involve themselves in really higher thinking classes and those dual enrolled credits transfer in addition to our advanced placement classes. So, a recent graduate who's going to pursue a doctoral program in physical therapy will be able to graduate within five years, in part because of his work here at the college. So, it's an amazing thing that you do.

I'm also a trustee of the Merrill County Library, and I've been on the board for 30 years. Some of us know about longevity, I consider the Monroe County Library and the community college to be the two most vital institutions in Monroe County. You touch more people's lives and give opportunities to those who might not otherwise have them. So, I thank you for your collaborative efforts over the years with the library, and I do remember when a small group of very vocal people tried to undermine the library. We had to struggle through several millage votes. They were armed with a lot of misinformation, and their goal was to close down the library. Luckily, it didn't happen. That institution remains strong.

Thank you for allowing the citizens of Monroe County to make that decision for Monroe County Community College. Thank you. And I have one other last note, one question. I don't know who does your pond work out here, but you have the most beautiful, immaculate pond I've ever seen. It's gorgeous.

5. *It was moved by Trustee Dowler and supported Trustee Edwards that the date of the May regular meeting of the Board of Trustees be amended as follows:*

*be moved from Monday, May 25, 2026, to Monday, May 18, 2026.*

The motion carried unanimously.

6. The Board discussed their self-evaluation. It was agreed by unanimous consent that they will come back together for a half-day retreat to discuss the evaluation in a more organized manner. Chair Aaron Mason asked the Trustees to do some homework before coming back to the meeting so that they can formulate questions and suggestion when they come back together. He suggested that they review their book, *Trusteeship* as well. Ms. Dorsey will send out a Doodle poll to determine the best day for the retreat.
7. *It was moved by Trustee Edwards and supported by Trustee Roberts that the Board go into closed session in accordance with section 8(a) of the Michigan Open Meetings Act to consider a periodic, personnel evaluation of, a public officer, employee, staff member, or individual agent, if the named person requests a closed hearing.*

A roll call vote was taken as follows.

Yes [7] Julie M. Edwards, Linda M. Roberts, Kristy Svatek Whitson, Mary Kay Thayer, Lynette M. Dowler, Aaron N. Mason

No [0] None

The motion carried and the Board moved into closed session at 7:46 p.m.

The Board moved back into open session at 8:35 p.m.

8. President Quartey made note that he will get the employee turnover numbers to the Board as soon as possible
9. *It was moved by Trustee Svatek-Whitson and supported by Trustee Dowler that the meeting be adjourned.*

The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Aaron N. Mason  
Chair

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Nicole R. Goodman  
Secretary

/prd