

**Highland Community College**  
*Board Retreat*  
September 12, 2024  
Highland Community College Student/Conference Center  
Robert J. Rimington Board Room  
Freeport, Illinois

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Mr. Jim Endress, Board Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 11:04 a.m.

**Members Physically Present:** Mr. Doug Block, Mr. Jim Endress, Mr. Shawn Boldt, Mr. James Rhyne (arrived 11:09 a.m.), Ms. Sarah Kuhlemeier (arrived 11:04 a.m.), Ms. Mary Kaufman, and Mr. Daeshon Verner (arrived 11:55 a.m.; departed 12:55 p.m.)

**Members Virtually Present:** None

**Members Absent:** Ms. Pennie Groezinger

**Others Physically Present:** Ms. Chris Kuberski, President; Ms. Jill Janssen, Vice President/CFO, Administrative Services, Board Treasurer; Ms. Liz Gerber, Vice President, Student Development & Support Services; Mr. Pete Fink, Director, ITS; Ms. Tammie Beckwith Schallmo, PMA Securities; and, Ms. Terri Grimes, Board Secretary

**Others Virtually Present:** Mr. Scott Anderson, Vice President, Business, Technology, and Community Programs; Mr. Jim Phillips, Interim Vice President/ Chief Academic Officer, Academic Services and Dean, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Fine Arts; Mr. Pete Norman, Director, Athletics & Physical Education; Mr. Brett Swalve, Student Success Coach; Mr. Luke Norman, Head Coach/Coordinator, Athletic Operations; Ms. Heather Wagner, Student Success Coach; Mr. Dan Dick, Executive Director, HCC Foundation; Ms. Vicki Warthen, Director, Marketing & Annual Giving, HCC Foundation; Ms. Jodi Rogers, Office Coordinator, Athletics & Physical Education; Mr. Javier Jazo, Golf Coach; Ms. Casey Coon, Softball Coach, Coordinator, Upward Bound; Ms. Vicki Warthen, Mr. Colton Havens, Community Member; Mr. Chance Sharp, Head Coach/Coordinator, Athletic Compliance; Ms. Jennifer Smith-Norman, Coordinator, Student Success; Ms. Karla Giuffre, Faculty; Mr. Jeremy Bradt, Director, Enrollment & Records; Mr. Erik Walton, Assistant Men's Basketball Coach; Mr. Curt McIntyre, Assistant Cross Country Coach; Mr. Antwon Harris, Former Head Women's Basketball Coach; Ms. Katie Johnson, Community Member; and YMCA Representatives Ms. Leslie Schmidt, Ms. Stephanie Diehl, Mr. Aaron Greene, Mr. Rich Haight, and, Ms. Josee Pickard, and Ms. Dawn Reed

## **APPROVAL OF TRUSTEE(S) ATTENDING MEETING VIA ELECTRONIC MEANS**

There were no trustees who requested to attend the meeting virtually.

## **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Block moved and Mr. Boldt seconded the motion to approve the agenda, as presented. The vote being unanimous, the motion carried.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

## **OPENING REMARKS**

Ms. Kuberski reported that Monday's enrollment report showed that credit hours were up 4%, while headcount was up 1.3%. This is an increase from the 10<sup>th</sup>-day numbers and is probably reflective of more dual credit being registered. Dr. Misty Thrumman will provide an analysis of the 10<sup>th</sup>-day enrollment numbers today on Campus Connection, and Ms. Kuberski encouraged trustees to tune in, or she can send the link to trustees of the video of Dr. Thrumman's analysis if trustees would like to listen to it. The enrollment numbers will continue to vary, as dual credit gets entered.

## **UPDATE AND DISCUSSION: FEASIBILITY OF AN ATHLETIC, LEARNING, AND EVENT CENTER**

### *Financing Options*

Ms. Jill Janssen introduced Ms. Tammie Beckwith Schallmo of PMA Securities, LLC. The College uses PMA as our bond advisor. Ms. Beckwith Schallmo reviewed the College's existing debt and historical interest rates. She explained that when issuing tax-exempt bonds, there are IRS requirements to be considered: the College must reasonably expect to spend or contractually obligate 5% of a bond issue within six months of issuance; reasonably expect to spend 85% of the bond proceeds within three years; and diligently spend the bond proceeds. She explained that the College may invest the bond proceeds at higher yields than the bond yield. Ms. Beckwith Schallmo reviewed five potential bond scenarios, with equalized assessed valuations (EAVs) ranging from an increase of 2% to 3%, an increase in the tax rate up to 11 or 12 cents, and proceeds ranging from \$18 million to nearly \$31 million. This also assumes the ability to issue bonds every five years to address projects that may come up. She reviewed a potential timeline if trustees were to adopt a Resolution for the sale of Debt Certificates at the October 15<sup>th</sup> regular meeting. She reported that the College's debt capacity is \$62.6 million, which is the maximum the College can borrow, principal only. Mr. Block requested to see a scenario that would assume that the EAV only grew by 2%, and Ms. Beckwith Schallmo will rework the numbers and forward them to Ms. Janssen.

### *Responses from YMCA Board to Questions from HCC Board*

Ms. Kuberski reminded trustees that, at a past meeting, the Board had charged her with asking questions of the YMCA task force. She stated that in the shared space model, the College maintains the use of the main



gym, and the other gym is shared. The College does all the grounds work and snow removal. The YMCA covers 65% of the cost if something breaks, however, it is the College's staff who fix the issue. The YMCA and College complete facility requests but sometimes the requests from the YMCA may be a "blanket" for reserving the space, for example, reserving it from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, but they do not actually have people or activities in the space at that time. It had been suggested that the YMCA and College form a small group to discuss this, but that has not happened, and scheduling of space is currently challenging. Mr. Boldt asked if things were addressed regarding the feeling that the College was trying to take over the childcare facility. Ms. Kuberski explained that when she and Ms. Janssen met with YMCA representatives Mr. Rich Haight and Ms. Stephanie Diehl regarding lessening the years of the contract from three to two, with an additional year option, Mr. Haight and Ms. Diehl took it as the College's way of telling them they would not be able to use the facility. They were informed that it was not the message that was being sent, but that the College was trying to align the timing of the childcare contract with the main contract. The College has not made any decisions about the childcare building but the College has also been asked if it is starting its own daycare, which it is not. Ms. Kuberski also noted that, prior to the faculty member coming to speak to the Board, the faculty member had not had a conversation with their Dean. The College has not done a rebuttal or talked to the faculty member at this point. The College just completed its routine pool maintenance, including draining and refilling the pool, which was interpreted by some of the YMCA patrons as the College closing the pool, but this maintenance is done every Fall. The College has encountered issues with the current arrangement of completing facility requests, and the process is not functioning in a way that is best for both parties. Management of the facility and how costs would be divided up would be part of the contract negotiations. The YMCA has indicated that they would seek a third-party consulting group to aid in fundraising but they have not indicated what their time frame would be. Ms. Janssen has given them "nuggets of possibilities," so perhaps they are acting on that and we are not aware. Thinking about how their timing might align with our timing would be important. At one point, they talked about doing a feasibility study but to Ms. Kuberski's knowledge, they have not started that. It is hard to know whether their feasibility study or fundraising should start first. Regarding having children and youth in the new facility, the College wants students to feel like it is a college facility, not a child facility. The College has made it clear that it does not want the swimming pool, and some of the committee members believe the area might make a great fitness center area. If the pool remains, we may need to add on instead of refurbishing the space. Ms. Kuberski explained that when discussing the athletic facility, we have not talked about the childcare facility, but Ms. Kuberski has interpreted that to be that they may want to have the childcare facility and summer camp in the same place. Mr. Rhyne asked if the cost of the pool includes major upgrades, and Ms. Kuberski explained that the cost of \$524,000 is for what the College is doing now. The College has told the YMCA that it does not want to invest in the major upgrades, and if that was part of the partnership continuing, the investment would be the YMCA's. Ms. Gerber has worked with the full-time coaches to look at the space to see if there are aspects that the College could or would reduce to bring our costs under control. Ms. Gerber explained that the most expensive option includes the indoor track, but there are tradeoffs to eliminating the track. A track team could bring in 50 – 75 students. Ms. Kuberski noted that one thought that the administrative group had might be to draw up a proposed contract and take it to the YMCA and use that as a negotiating contract, but it is hard to know what the Board expects as a recommendation. Mr. Block noted that the College will not know what the facility will include until they know what the YMCA wants. This needs to be looked at as a business arrangement. The College also needs to know what the YMCA would contribute to the project.



Mr. Block noted that either the College can cheapen its cost by using the pool space or it would be reimbursed by the YMCA if they were using it.

#### *Communication Plan*

Ms. Kuberski has been working with Ms. Gerber and Ms. Jeniece Smith regarding a communication plan. They are aware of the miscommunication and misunderstanding about what is going to happen. They have been thinking about what needs to be done to help the internal community understand and how they can help the community understand why these discussions are happening. Ms. Gerber and Ms. Smith have put together a communication plan. Ms. Gerber explained that Ms. Kuberski spoke to the Foundation board and shared information. She will also share information with faculty and staff and at the Student Services division meeting. The Foundation will be setting up small groups of people in the community to make sure people understand. It is important to make sure members of the community have accurate information. There is also an internal meeting with Student Senate and communication for student-athletes, as well. Social media is monitored and inaccurate information is addressed. Public relations and community relations are trying to tell the story of the athletic department. The high school athletic fields have been geofenced with advertising about Highland. Information is being put out about what athletes contribute internally and externally. Ms. Kuberski is also speaking at service clubs. She will be speaking on the FreePod local podcast, and she noted that the Board has received the key talking points, which is the crux of what will be shared. She will also try to field questions. Mr. Rhyne noted that it might be helpful to have a timeline, as a lot of questions are being based on people's perceived timeline if the College moves forward with the project.

Ms. Kuberski explained that the College architect, Mr. Scott Johnson, has indicated it will take at least 18 months before the project is ready for a shovel. The bond process takes at least five months, but bonds will not fill the hole of where the College will land unless the project is greatly reduced. Ms. Kuberski does not think people understand that the College will not have a shovel ready until all of the money is in hand. Mr. Block suggested having a report of what the trustees have done at every meeting, such as "they met with Mr. Scott Johnson and looked at preliminary plans; today trustees looked at bond options and discussed going to the YMCA with a potential contract," and then adding discussion from each meeting. The community needs to have clarification on what the action is, and it was noted that there needs to be a combined communication plan that includes Board action items to let the community know where we are. If we are not setting out what we are doing, it is easy for anyone else to "make up and fill up the vacuum of information." The College will continue to move forward with the communication plan, and if trustees have thoughts, they should let Ms. Kuberski know. The topic will be revisited in Old Business each month, and steps will continue to be documented. Ms. Kuberski will try to create a rough timeline that trustees could review, knowing that the longer it takes to get to a decision, the more the time frame gets pushed out. The funding mechanism is clearly a piece of that. Trustees should let administration know what their "funding level comfort" is based on what they have heard most recently, which then gives an idea of what the funding gap may be, and also helps to better communicate with the YMCA what their funding gap might be.

#### *Next Steps*

Mr. Rhyne asked when the Board will make a decision, noting that it seems that they keep "kicking it down the road," and in his opinion, they need to come to a decision sooner rather than later. Mr. Boldt believes



there is pretty much agreement on the pool, renovating the existing facility with an addition, and figuring out what to do with the childcare building at some point. He agrees that, at some point, they need to start looking at architecture and how to make that work and bring the YMCA along, let them know the plan, and ask if they are in or out. Mr. Endress noted that the question is, how serious is the YMCA on wanting the partnership and helping us raise the dollars, and if they are not serious, are they prepared to pay “X” dollars for basically annual rent? Those questions need to be answered. Mr. Boldt noted that the “why” is to increase enrollment and every month we put it off is lesser enrollment. Mr. Endress believes the next step is to ask our potential financial partners what they can do to help us. Mr. Boldt noted that the College cannot know that until we know what the YMCA is committed to. Ms. Kuberski explained that the YMCA has indicated that they are unsure how much they can commit to until they know what the College commits to. She suggested perhaps we get an architect’s estimate of the pool to share with the YMCA. Ms. Janssen noted that Mr. Kurt Simpson might have an estimate of what it might cost to bring it up to where it needs to be. Mr. Rhyne believes trustees have to figure out what they are comfortable with and go from there. Mr. Block doesn’t believe the College should ask the YMCA to donate money to this project; it is unfair to expect the YMCA to give money to the project. They can have the pool and child care center, but it will cost “X” as an offset for the College no longer having use of those facilities and for use of the building itself. For example, “This is what we expect for using the building where the pool used to be, and this is what we expect for using the area where child care is” because now the College needs to build classrooms and a fitness area. Mr. Boldt noted that if the YMCA cannot afford that, then it is their choice. Ms. Kuberski stated that in this scenario, the College would need to present the YMCA with a cost to upgrade the pool, and she believes Mr. Kurt Simpson thought it might be five to 10 years before it needed major work. The College would need to figure out the offset cost for the pool and for renting the childcare facility. If the YMCA continues to rent and use the facility, the College needs to add on more space because we cannot add more programs without more space. Mr. Block noted that this lets the YMCA know where they stand.

At 12:41 p.m., the Chairperson declared a recess; the meeting resumed at 1:02 p.m.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

Mr. Block moved and Ms. Kuhlemeier seconded the motion to move into Closed Session for the purposes of discussing the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body or legal counsel for the public body under Open Meetings Act exception 2-C-1; and, collective negotiating matters between the public body and its employees or their representatives under exception 2-C-2, pursuant to the Open Meetings Act, and to return to Open Session for possible action. The roll call on the motion was as follows:

AYES: Endress, Boldt, Rhyne, Kuhlemeier, Kaufman, Block  
NAYS: None

Whereupon the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

Mr. Endress explained that the public attendees through Zoom would remain in the meeting, with the video and audio muted, while the Board was in Closed Session. The video stream and meeting would

resume after the Closed Session.

At 1:04 p.m., the Chairperson declared the meeting in Closed Session.

Mr. Boldt moved and Ms. Kuhlemeier seconded the motion to end the Closed Session. The roll call on the motion was as follows:

AYES: Boldt, Rhyne, Kuhlemeier, Kaufman, Block, Endress  
NAYS: None

At 1:54 p.m., the Chairperson declared the motion carried and the Closed Session ended.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES**

#### *Revised Job Descriptions and Emergency Operations Team Responsibilities*

Ms. Janssen explained that at the September regular meeting, a recommendation will be presented to trustees for approval to add one or two sentences to the job descriptions of the Emergency Operations Team members regarding their responsibilities related to emergency response. There are around 30 job descriptions that will be affected, so it was agreed that a list of the job descriptions affected will be included with the agenda item on the September agenda. It was explained that this does not change the employee's salary or salary range.

### **MAIN MOTION (ACTION)**

#### A. First Reading – Revised Policy 3.28: Prohibition of Sex Discrimination

Mr. Block moved and Mr. Rhyne seconded the motion to approve for first reading revised policy 3.28, Prohibition of Sex Discrimination, which is included in Chapter III, Student, of the policy manual. The roll call on the motion was as follows:

AYES: Rhyne, Kuhlemeier, Kaufman, Block, Endress, Boldt  
NAYS: None

Whereupon the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES** (Continued)

#### *Bike-Hike Trail*

Ms. Kuberski was contacted by the City of Freeport regarding partnering again on a grant for a bike-hike trail. This is a quick turnaround. The last time the grant was submitted, it was for \$3 million and included a shared cost of \$200,000 each for the College, City, and Freeport Park District but the grant is now \$4 million, so the cost per entity has increased to \$333,000 paid out over the three-year period. Highland's location would be the same as in the past, around the perimeter of the ball fields. Mr. Endress expressed his preference that the location go around the pond to reduce the amount of people walking on loop road. The HCC Foundation is still interested in transferring the bike path that they own. At the time of the last grant



application, the College did not have an athletic facility in mind. Ms. Kuberski will bring a recommendation to the Board at their September regular meeting and will share information on what the Park District said to their board.

*Follow-up on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Definitions on Website*  
Due to time constraints, this will be discussed at a future meeting.

### **ACTION, IF NECESSARY**

A. Appointment, Employment, Compensation, Discipline, Performance, or Dismissal of Specific Employees of the Public Body or Legal Counsel for the Public Body

1. Appointment: Interim Director, Athletics and Physical Education

Ms. Kuhlmeier moved and Mr. Rhyne seconded the motion to approve the appointment of Mr. Thomas Smargiassi as full-time interim Director, Athletics and Physical Education from September 23, 2024, to December 20, 2024, for an annualized salary of \$90,000 (biweekly salary of \$3,461.54) during the length of this appointment.

Mr. Boldt stated that he would be voting “no” because he believes the College needs someone with college experience; however, he would support the decision following the vote.

The roll call on the vote was as follows:

AYES:	Kuhlmeier, Kaufman, Block, Endress, Rhyne
NAYS:	Boldt

The vote being five ayes and one nay, the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Janssen reported that there is a new requirement that if the College does a Truth in Taxation notice, it must also be posted on the website for 30 days prior to the November Board meeting. If trustees anticipate needing to change the Board meeting date, it would be helpful to know as soon as possible. The meeting is currently scheduled for November 26, 2024, with the Audit & Finance Committee meeting before the regular meeting. The audit will also be adopted that day, as well.

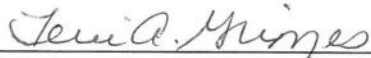
### **DATES OF IMPORTANCE**

A budget work session will be held at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 24, 2024, with the regular meeting beginning at 4:00 p.m. The October regular meeting will be held on October 15, 2024, in order to avoid conflicts with the Association of Community College Trustees Annual Leadership Congress. The November regular meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 26, 2024, and the quarterly Board retreat is currently scheduled for Thursday, December 12, 2024, at 11:00 a.m. Mr. Endress reminded trustees of the Foundation's Scholarship Awards brunch on Sunday, September 29. Trustees should RSVP to Ms. Grimes by September 20. The Illinois Community College Trustees Association's Northwest Region meeting is Tuesday, October 1, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. at Rock Valley College's Advanced Technology Center in Belvidere. RSVPs are due to Ms. Grimes by September 24.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Block moved and Ms. Kaufman seconded the motion to end the meeting. At 2:12 p.m., the vote being unanimous and there being no further business, the Chairperson declared the motion carried and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



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Terri A. Grimes, Board Secretary  
Illinois Community College District No. 519