



Minutes for * Meeting Book - March 10, 2022 Special Meeting

03/10/2022 | 05:30 PM - (GMT-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)

Knox Law

College/Other Attendees

President Dr. Chris Gray; Vice President Guy Goodman; Dean Keri Bowman; Solicitor Tim Wachter

Call to Order

Meeting called to order by Chair DiNicola at 5:32

Roll Call

Trustee	Roll Call
Tom Benson	Y via Zoom
Justin Gallagher	Y via Zoom
Dave Mitchell	Y via Zoom
Rev. Dr. Charles Mock	Y via Zoom at 5:46 p.m.
Vice Chairperson Cheryl Rush Dix	Y via Zoom
Kathryn Sintal	Y via Zoom
Secretary Christina Vogel	N
Dr. Annette Wagner	Y via Zoom
Chairperson Ron DiNicola	Y

Pledge of Allegiance

New Business-Approval of tentative FY '23 Budget projections

Trustee Gallagher described budget assumptions (increased staff, enrollment). Vice Chairperson Rush Dix asked for clarifications on enrollment assumptions. Dr. Gray shared assumptions that there will be a 40% increase in incoming class and a 50% retention rate.

Trustee Sintal asked for clarification on YTD financials document that is shared during normal meetings of the board, Trustee Gallagher shared that it was not prepared for this special meeting but will be presented soon at the March board meeting.

Chairperson DiNicola described the state budgeting process including the Governor's proposed budget, the difference between operating, capital, and process. Chairperson DiNicola turned the floor over to Trustee Gallagher to discuss. Trustee Gallagher shared that the budget has many moving parts and that the numbers are projections and therefore uncertain.

Vice Chairperson Rush Dix asked how the College's proposed budget aligned with Governor's proposed budget. Dr. Gray described that the current practice for funding operating budgets for community colleges carries forward the previous year operating budget. In EC3's case that would carry forward an operating budget of \$1.38M leaving a gap of approximately \$1.5M from the College's proposed operating budget of \$2.9M.

Solicitor Tim Wachter shared that Senator Laughlin raised this issue in the budget hearing. Chairperson DiNicola shared that the college continues to see support from the Governor's office.

Trustee Mock asked if the County Government capital is connected. Trustee Gallagher shared they are separate revenue items.

Trustee	Motion 2	Vote
Tom Benson		Y
Justin Gallagher	2	Y
Dave Mitchell		Y
Rev. Dr. Charles Mock	1	Y
Vice Chairperson Cheryl Rush Dix		Y
Kathryn Sintal		Y
Secretary Christina Vogel	Not Present	Not Present
Dr. Annette Wagner		Y
Chairperson Ron DiNicola		Y

New Business- Enter into an agreement with a registered lobbyist/lobbying firm

Chairperson DiNicola asked the solicitor to provide background for the new business item.

Solicitor Wachter shared the process of obtaining the bids. The request for qualifications (RFQ) was advertised in the newspaper and sent to companies with known connections to Erie. Four proposals were received, and their qualifications were shared with board as well as recorded interviews.

Solicitor Wachter shared with the Board that Vice Chairperson Rush Dix's son is associated with Luminous Strategies, which is one of the entities that submitted a proposal, and, as such, she has a conflict of interest, and has abstained any deliberation, and will abstain from the vote, on the agenda item. (Vice-Chairperson Rush Dix also submitted a memorandum detailing this conflict which is attached to the minutes) Further, Solicitor Wachter shared that Trustee Rush Dix will abstain from any vote for Luminous Strategies and as such, will abstain from discussion.

Chairperson DiNicola proposed that each trustee take 2-3 minutes if they'd like to discuss what they gathered from packages and discuss firms.

Dr. Gray shared the need for a lobbyist to assist with the budget process and specifically the necessary language changes needed in codes to help EC3 as the current language is written for existing community college. Further, Dr. Gray shared the importance of having "boots on the ground" to work with the various caucuses, elected officials, and elected officials' staffs.

Trustee Benson asked if we are looking for a 12-month term. Chairperson DiNicola shared that would depend on the negotiation and the selection of the firm.

Trustee Wagner asked how long the scope of the work being done by the lobbyist was needed.

Chairperson DiNicola responded that it would be a short run concerning the budget. Dr. Gray added that there is an immediate need for the budget process, which is occurring now, and then a need to reassess for longer term issues.

Trustee Mock asked for clarification on the different caucuses that would need to be interacted with. Dr. Gray responded that there are caucuses at the executive, senate, and house levels that were all important in the budgeting process.

Trustee Mock asked if the College should be concerned about cost from one firm to another.

Chairperson DiNicola said it depended on who is hired but there could be division of responsibilities.

After discussion Trustee Mock motioned to hire Luminous Strategies and Ridge Policy Group and that we ask Ridge Policy Group to reconsider the decision to work with another group. If they decline, then go with Long Nyquist & Associates in addition to Luminous Strategies. Trustee Benson seconded the motion.

There was an addition of a friendly amendment to authorize Dr. Gray to negotiate on behalf of the Board. Trustee Mock motioned for this, and Trustee Mitchell seconded.

Trustee	Motion 1 w/ Amendment	Vote
Tom Benson		Y
Justin Gallagher		N
Dave Mitchell	2	N
Rev. Dr. Charles Mock	1	Y
Vice Chairperson Cheryl Rush Dix		Abstain*
Kathryn Sintal		N
Secretary Christina Vogel		Not Present
Dr. Annette Wagner		Y
Chairperson Ron DiNicola		Y

*See attached conflict memo

Motion to Adjourn

7:01

MEMORANDUM

TO: Christina Vogel
Board Secretary
Erie County Community College

FROM: Cheryl Rush Dix
Trustee

DATE: March 10, 2022

RE: Conflict of Interest Disclosure

On this date, the Erie County Community College Board of Trustees considered approval of a motion to engage government relations professionals.

In accordance with the Pennsylvania Public Official and Employee Ethics Act, 65 Pa.C.S. §§ 1101-1113, I abstained from any deliberation, and the vote, on the approval of this agenda item. I did so as Luminous Strategies, which submitted a proposal that was considered by the Board of Trustees, is a business with which my son is associated. Further, I announced my conflict during the meeting and request that this memo be made part of the minutes of the meeting.

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