

The Board of Trustees of the Howard County Junior College District met for an executive session and regular board meeting in the Board Room of the Student Union Building at the Big Spring campus of Howard College on Monday, December 11, 2023.

The following members of the Board and District Administration were present:

Dr. John Freeman, Chairman
Maxwell Barr, Vice-Chairman
Adrian Calvio, Secretary
Raul Marquez
Mark Morgan
Ben Zeichick

Dr. Cheryl T. Sparks, Ed.D., President
Dr. Amy Burchett, Ed.D., Executive Vice-President
Jeff Anderson, Interim Provost, SWCD
Pam Callan, Provost, San Angelo
Monica Castro, Executive Dean, Lamesa
Brenda Claxton, Chief Financial Officer
Eric Hansen, Chief Technology Systems/Data Security Officer
Rhonda Kernick, Chief HR Officer
Brenda Madore, Chief of Staff/Institutional Advancement Officer - recorder
Fabian Serrano, Chief Operations and Safety/Security Officer
Steve Smith, Chief Business Officer/Internal Auditor

Others present were:

Stephanie Bissonnette, Interpreter
Terry Deatherage, Security
Phil Furqueron, Architect
Terry Hansen, Chief Special Projects Officer
Renee Porter, Interpreter
Cindy Smith, Dean of Student Success/Public Information Office
Shannon Stuteville, Executive Assistant to the President
Mark Willis, Executive Director, Big Spring Economic Development Corp.

Chairman Dr. John Freeman called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Shortly after calling the meeting to order, the Board moved into Executive Session to discuss litigation, personnel, security, and economic development negotiations. Upon conclusion of the Executive Session, the Board recessed for lunch at 11:50 a.m. The regular meeting was open to the public in the Board Room on the Big Spring Campus and through remote connection utilizing a toll-free number. The regular meeting was recorded and will be available on the website. Minutes will also be available on the website.

After a short recess for lunch, Trustees convened for the regular meeting.

Chairman Freeman reconvened the meeting at 12:46 p.m. Mr. Barr led the invocation.

Next, the public was invited to address the Board. There were no comments.

Next, Trustees considered routine matters, including the minutes of the regular meeting on November 13, 2023, checklist for November 2023, monthly reports of auxiliary services, personnel matters, and an internal audit report. Mr. Barr made a motion to approve the routine matters. The motion was seconded by Mr. Marquez. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

Next, Trustees moved to New Business Visioning/Future Directions.

Next, Trustees considered amendments to two previously approved tax abatement agreements. The first focused on the Crusoe Energy Howard County Data Center agreement. Dr. Sparks explained that although the Board had passed the original agreement earlier this year, a subsequent review prompted discussions about the legal description of the property. The amendment incorporated that updated information. The second was linked to

the Recover Howard Project tax abatement, approved last year. Recover Howard had submitted a proposal requesting an expansion of the current abatement timelines. The Board had received this information and discussed the amendments earlier in the executive session with Mark Willis from the Economic Development Corporation of Big Spring. Mr. Zeichick made a motion to approve the amendments to both agreements as discussed. Mr. Marquez seconded the motion. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

Next, Dr. Sparks briefly updated Trustees on the upcoming Howard County Summit. The Summit will be held on Wednesday, February 7, 2023, in the Coliseum East Room. She asked Trustees to please add the event to their calendars.

Next, Trustees deliberated on the distribution of votes designated for Howard College in the upcoming election of members to the Howard County Central Appraisal District's Board of Directors. Trustees discussed allocating all of Howard College's 580 votes, which are calculated based on the 2022 tax levies, to candidate Jordan Partee. Mr. Zeichick made a motion to allocate all 580 votes to Jordan Partee. Mr. Marquez seconded the motion. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

Next, Dr. Sparks informed Trustees that after the meetings with dual credit partner Superintendents, Principals, Counselors, and other school district education leaders that it had been determined to move forward with implementing the new Financial Aid for Swift Transfer or FAST Program in the Spring of 2024. The FAST Program came about as part of HB8 and the new funding model for community colleges in the state in the last regular legislative session. It provides state tuition funds for low-income high school students who enroll in dual credit courses. However, it required multiple considerations and new processes to implement the program in such tight timeframes. She reminded the Board that they had preemptively passed an update to tuition for dual credit students in anticipation of this decision and that decision would now be implemented in the spring.

Next, Trustees moved to Monitoring.

Next, under Purchasing, Trustees considered a recommendation to accept Columbia Advisory Group for governance risk and compliance services. Dr. Sparks explained that they offer services such as a part-time Chief Information Officer would provide. In the data security environment that we operate in, this is an important addition. This purchase was quoted through an interlocal agreement and previously budgeted. Mr. Zeichick made a motion to approve the recommendation. Mr. Barr seconded the motion. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

Next, Trustees considered a request to purchase security cameras from Avigilon that had been discussed in previous meetings. These were quoted through an interlocal agreement and were previously budgeted. Mr. Barr made a motion to approve the request. Mr. Marquez seconded the motion. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

Next, Fabian Serrano provided Trustees with an update on the ongoing gas project, outlining the recent challenges faced and the steps taken to address leaks. The aging infrastructure triggered a "domino effect" on the system, resulting in an emergency that posed safety concerns and disrupted student labs. Much of the work has been completed, and the final stages involve replacing the interior lines of the McKinney Building.

Dr. Sparks mentioned an additional issue with a leak in the 4-pipe system providing heat to the Big Spring campus, leading to a lack of heat in most buildings. Parts had to be ordered from out of state, and repairs were expected to be completed after the week's end. Space heaters were not allowed because of fire safety concerns. Dr. Sparks sought Board authorization to release the entire district at noon on Friday for an early holiday. She also requested approval for Big Spring staff to dress down the rest of the week to help stay warm. Given the forecast of wet and colder weather later in the week, she indicated a potential need for further actions to ensure employee health and safety.

Next, under Handbook and Catalog Changes, Trustees considered an update to a policy in the Board Handbook that relates to how Board Agendas are posted. The policy aligns with updated law. Mr. Zeichick made a motion to approve the policy update as presented. Mr. Barr seconded the motion. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

Next, under Construction/Renovation Projects, Terry Hansen gave the final report on the Anthony Hunt Library renovation project. He related that all the punch list items are clear, with the exception of just a few minor items that have experienced shipping delays. The building looks great, there has been an incredible upgrade to

technology and interior finishes, and functionality for students has vastly improved. Terry told Trustees that retainage is ready to be released on both the library and music building projects.

Next, Terry continued his report by discussing the Music building renovation. It is just as complete as the library, however, they have not yet moved back in. The dedication for that building is January 17, 2024. There was a brief discussion by Trustees about the budgets for both projects. Terry confirmed that they had stayed within the contingency on both projects and were not overbudget.

Next, College Architect Phil Furqueron presented plans for the San Angelo Health Professions Renovation project to Trustees. Dr. Sparks reminded them that during their June tour of the San Angelo campus, they learned about the pressing need for a new space. Phil provided a historical overview of the discussions and ideas considered before arriving at a solution. Initially, constructing a new building was contemplated, but this need diminished when San Angelo ISD decided to free up space in the West Texas Training Center. This allowed for more cost-effective plans, costing less than half of what a new building would entail. Phil shared the proposed blueprints with Trustees, estimating the cost to be approximately \$3.2 million dollars to include equipment. Dr. Sparks emphasized that the next phase involves fundraising.

Next, an update on the student information system project implementation was presented by Eric Hansen. The project base implementation is at its end. They continue to work through customization of business processes. They are moving to a ticketing system and have a transition plan in place. Dr. Burchett added that the weekly meetings with CAMS support are ending, although certain departments will still meet one-on-one. Users are learning how to maximize the system and become more efficient. They related that this will be the last report on the project to the Board.

Next, Dr. Sparks provided the President's Report by providing an overview of the Board calendar, highlighting significant events. Final exams are occurring this week and the winter graduation ceremony for the San Angelo campus will be held on Thursday. There are multiple ball games and winter break is upcoming. Offices will reopen on January 2, 2024. The Spring 1 semester begins January 16, the first day to file for the Board of Trustees election is January 17, and the next Board meeting is January 22.

Next, Dr. Sparks gave Trustees the exciting news that the SWCD bus was delivered that morning and that the Big Spring buses would be here by the end of the week. We received word that PracticalNursing.org ranked our Big Spring LVN program #4 in the state. We are very proud of them. Mark Watt, our Associate Professor of Music received the honor of being chosen as the Guest Conductor for the holiday performance of the Big Spring Symphony.

Dr. Sparks also related that we received the very exciting news that Texas Workforce Commission recognized our AEL program for being 2nd in the state for co-enrollment. Co-enrollment means that AEL students also receive some type of service from Workforce Solutions or Vocational Rehabilitation. Tammy Alexander and team received a nice trophy and \$50,000. In addition, the College Livestock Show Team members exhibited the Reserve Champion Ewe Overall at the Meridian Christmas Classic at Clifton, TX on December 2, and finally, Pam Callan received the Spirit of the Cadre award from the Concho Cadre, which is the volunteer ambassador arm of the Chamber in San Angelo. She was also promoted to Colonel and recognized as #5 in attendance at ribbon cutting and other events.

Next, Dr. Sparks gave a brief legislative update.

There being no other business, the Trustees adjourned at 1:34 p.m.



Dr. John Freeman, Chairman



Adrian Calvio, Secretary
By Brenda Madore