

**Board of Trustees Regular Quarterly Meeting**

**Paragould – PAC 128/129**

**February 4, 2021**

**12:30 p.m.**

Members present both in person and via Zoom: Carolyn Collins, Jeremy Baltz, David Coker, Doug Cox, Sue McGowan, Danny Moore, Bob Olvey, and Dr. Martin Eggensperger. Cabinet Members and Executive Directors attending: Dr. Brad Baine, Rhonda Stone, CPA, Jason Smith, J.D., Karen Liebhaber, Julie Edington, Sissy Gray and Priscilla Stillwell. Janna Guthrey was present to record the minutes of the meeting.

Carolyn Collins, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m., welcoming all those attending via Zoom and in person. The next regular quarterly meeting of the Board is scheduled for May 6, 2021, at Pocahontas.

**Approval of the December 17, 2020 Minutes**

Sue McGowan made a motion to approve the minutes from December 17, 2020; seconded by David Coker. Motion carried.

**President’s Report – Dr. Martin Eggensperger**

**Institutional Updates**

Dr. Eggensperger welcomed all those attending. The Spring 2021 semester is going well thanks to the continued commendable efforts of the faculty and staff. Bids on the berm will be opened Friday, February 5, 2021. Preparations are continuing on the new budget while Higher Education issues are being watched in the legislature.

**Academic Affairs – Dr. Brad Baine**

Dr. Baine, Vice President of Academic Affairs, referenced his summary contained in the information packet and asked if there were any questions. He shared one typo in the report. A request has been submitted to ADHE for the deletion of the AAS in Business Technology Applications due to lack of viability. Donna Statler was asked to relay information on recent interaction with Dr. Charles Watson, regional coordinator for the Strong Start to Finish Initiative. Dr. Watson was extremely complimentary of BRTC and the success shown with developmental students. BRTC was the only two-year college to reach the 75% mark for co-requisite placement. Progress continues with the University Center. Waiting for interested four-year colleges to submit necessary paperwork. Questions were discussed concerning the offerings of math classes and if the University Center offerings will be available to students attending in Paragould. Math classes are being held in both modalities and the U.C. is working to be effective in offerings for both locations. Long-expected laptops have arrived and are being distributed through the bookstores.

**Finance and Administration – Rhonda Stone, CPA**

Finance and Administration Office Vice President, Rhonda Stone, C.P.A., presented financial reports contained in the board materials and offered to answer questions. The Annual Certification of Solvency was shared.

*Board of Trustees Meeting*

*February 4, 2021*

*Page 2*

**Student Affairs – Jason Smith**

Jason Smith, Vice President of Student Affairs, began with recent COVID numbers. At the present there are 10 student quarantined (.8%) and 4 tested positive (.3%) Faculty/Staff have 2 quarantined (1.3%) and none testing positive. Numbers are continuing to follow a downward trend. Students will be able to receive a vaccine in April. Mandated health and safety reports are being submitted on a regular basis. Enrollment numbers show a 4.2% decrease with 3.3% of this being contributed to the lower numbers in LETA (due to CDC guidelines for social distancing.) Questions were discussed concerning recent information coming out regarding the possible suspension of student loans. BRTC has a very low default rate of less than 7%.

**Institutional Advancement – Karen Liebhaber**

Karen Liebhaber, Vice President of Institutional Advancement announced that the Be Pro Be Proud truck will be on the campuses next week to meet with students and community. Darenda Kersey was asked to share information about the event. The truck will be at Paragould on Tuesday, Feb. 9 and in Pocahontas on Wednesday, Feb 10. Local schools have been invited to attend. She has shared the registration form as well as a YouTube video about the truck.

Work has begun on switching the Annual Gala Auction to a virtual platform. Arrangements have been made with St. Paul schools to mirror their work done when they converted to this system for the annual bazaar (which proved to be very successful.) A date for this event will be shared at a later date. The Foundation Board has begun discussion on a lecture series and is continuing to meet virtually. Black History Month will be celebrated with a virtual presentation on Feb. 24 at 9:30 a.m. Meetings continue with state legislators. Statistics on social media interaction was also shared.

**Human Resources – Julie Edington**

Executive Director of Human Resources, Julie Edington and her office are continuing to work through issues and changes in COVID-19 protocol. A voluntary survey is being distributed, at the request of the Arkansas Department of Health and Arkansas Department of Higher Education, to help determine the need for vaccines in our area. Ramonda Housh was asked to update the Board concerning the three recent new-hires in Allied Health. One position was to fill an unexpected vacancy and the other two are grant funded. Another CDL instructor has been hired short-term through grant funds. While the lead instructor, Kenny Higginbotham, has one allowed student in the truck this instructor will meet with the other three in the classroom setting.

**Institutional Effectiveness – Sissy Gray**

Sissy Gray, Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness gave a brief update on assessment and accreditation work that has been accomplished. One highlight was an email she has received from the Higher Learning Commission asking that BRTC participate in their upcoming Accreditation Share Fair. This invitation came through our HLC Liaison, Dr. Linnea A. Stenson, based on BRTC’s past outstanding performance in this area. Sissy and Dr. Eggensperger will be attending on behalf of BRTC.

**Paragould Operations – Priscilla Stillwell**

Priscilla Stillwell, Paragould Executive Director, shared an update on recent activities on the Paragould location. She has been working closely with business and industry in Greene County. She has also been working with Dean Dickson on the Perkins Grant and with Darenda Kersey concerning CTC offerings.

*Board of Trustees Meeting*

*February 4, 2021*

*Page 3*

Dr. Eggensperger expounded on the enrollment report, sharing that BRTC is doing well and feels no budget adjustments will be needed at this time. He commended the efforts of all involved in reaching this point and getting things going in a positive direction. Transparency has been and continues to be the primary goal.

**Action Items**

Rhonda Stone presented four action items for the Board to consider. Details about each was shared with the Board. David Coker also informed the Board that the Finance and Facilities Committee had met to discuss these items and reached a consensus prior to their presentation for voting. Purposes and procedures involved in each policy was explained. The individual policies were shared in the board materials.

**A. Financial Reserves Policy #3121**

Chair Collins read the resolution and asked for motion. A motion to approve was made by David Coker; seconded by Jeremy Baltz. Motion carried.

**B. Student Accounts Receivable, Allowance for Doubtful Accounts & Bad Debt Expense Policy #3122**

Chair Collins read the resolution and asked for motion. A motion to approve was made by Doug Cox; seconded by Sue McGowan. Motion carried.

**C. Investment Policy #3132**

Chair Collins read the resolution and asked for motion. A motion to approve was made by David Coker; seconded by Sue McGowan. Motion carried.

**D. Resolution to Authorize Expense Reimbursement for Board of Trustee Members.**

Mrs. Stone explained that this is an annual resolution required by the State of Arkansas to provide for the reimbursement of expenses incurred by Board of Trustees members in the amount established for state employees to pay limited stipends for attending meetings and other expenses.

Chair Collins read the resolution and asked for motion. A motion to approve was made by Bob Olvey; seconded by Jeremy Baltz. Motion carried.

**New Business**

**A. Announcements**

No new announcements were made other than those covered in regular business.

**B. Investment Options**

Dr. Eggensperger explained thoughts on options being considered using staggered and laddered investment opportunities to keep cash flow available to the college. An outside investment expert will be consulted and all options will be presented to the Finance and Facilities Committee for consideration.

**C. Master Facilities Plan Update**

Graphic renderings of potential updates to the area facilities were shown and explained by Dr. Eggensperger and Rhonda Stone. These illustrations will be presented to an architect with current needs at each location. Also being considered is a way to keep current structures updated and renovated on a staggered basis with consistent color schemes and designs being incorporated. This should help preserve the life of existing buildings with this schedule.

*Board of Trustees Meeting*

*February 4, 2021*

*Page 4*

**Old or Other Business**

Chair Collins asked about signage showing BRTC’s partnership with local business/industries such as AMMC. Dr. Eggensperger said this is currently being worked on.

**Executive Session**

Chair Collins closed the regular meeting for the board to go into executive session.

**Adjournment**

Following executive session, a motion to adjourn was made by Jeremy Baltz; seconded by Sue McGowan. Motion carried. The next regular quarterly meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held on May 6, 2021, on the Pocahontas Campus.



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Robert G. Olvey, Secretary February 4, 2021

*Future Meeting Dates: May 6, 2021 (Pocahontas); August 5, 2021 (Paragould); November 4, 2021 (Pocahontas), February 2, 2021*