

**Approved Minutes of the Retreat Meeting**  
**Alpena Community College Board of Trustees**  
January 30, 2024  
665 Johnson Street, Alpena, MI 49707

On Tuesday, January 30, 2024, the Alpena Community College Board of Trustees held a retreat meeting at the Alpena Campus in the Board Room, 400 Natural Resources Center, 665 Johnson Street, Alpena, MI 49707.

The meeting began at 8:00 a.m. Trustees present in person for the retreat: John Briggs, Teresa Duncan, Joseph Gentry II, Lisa Hilberg, Susan Stender, Florence Stibitz, and Tom Townsend. Absent trustees: none.

Also present in person: ACC President Dr. Don MacMaster and Board Secretary Denis “Jay” Walterreit.

President MacMaster led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Introduction of Guests and Public Comment**

Guests attending the meeting in person or via Webex were: Temi Fadayomi, The Alpena News; Lexi Young, ACC staff; Dr. Nick Brege, ACC administration; Mark Grunder, ACC administration; Aaron Bussy, ACC security staff; and Officer Terri Curtis, Alpena Police Department.

No public comments were made.

**Discussion Topics**

Chair Briggs stated for the record that no motions or actions would be taken during the retreat; the meeting was strictly for discussion.

Topic #1 — Student Housing Update

President MacMaster referenced materials he had already sent to the trustees which outlined parameters of the student housing expansion project as currently envisioned. The College has received a solid cost estimate from Spence Brothers. The cost of the project is estimated to be \$4 million, which would be for a 32-unit facility and does not include a student activity center.

Trustee Townsend asked about the building specifications and materials encompassed in the estimate. Other trustees asked questions related to specifics of the construction, such as whether fire suppression sprinklers were required.

President MacMaster then gave an outline of potential funding sources for student housing:

ITEM funding from the state:	\$450,000
Grezlak estate	\$485,000
Federal earmark	\$1,750,000

Based on the potential funding sources listed, President MacMaster estimated ACC would need to procure \$2 million more to fully fund the project. He mentioned that he had already broached the topic of a fundraising campaign with the ACC Foundation; if the Foundation took on a \$1 million campaign, the College would need to find a source for the remaining \$1 million.

President MacMaster then discussed the project timeline. He anticipated the actual building process would take approximately 10 months, and there may be up to four months of prep work before building could start. Completion of the project by the beginning of Fall Semester 2025 would be optimistic. The timing of the federal earmark is a large question.

Chair Briggs stated that he thought student housing would be a better fit for the ACC Foundation than any building renovation projects that might be coming in the foreseeable future.

Trustee Gentry asked about the possibility of contracting with an outside company to build and manage the new student housing. President MacMaster stated that there were companies which do that type of thing but that they can be problematic when it comes to managing Title IX considerations.

President MacMaster stated the current student apartments are generating positive revenue. The debt associated with the apartments is the only debt the College is carrying now.

Trustee Duncan asked about a rough timeline for the anticipated renovation of the Natural Resources Center. President MacMaster pointed to the next round of capital outlay grants given by the state; ACC does not currently have a project approved for capital outlay by the state and the next round of capital outlay may not be for several years. Also, the College needs to determine how the two primary teaching spaces in the Natural Resources Center would be used now that the Nursing Program has moved to Van Lare Hall.

Trustee Townsend noted that inflationary costs will have to be factored into the Natural Resources Center renovation cost estimate due to the anticipated wait for funding.

## Topic #2 — Property Use

At 8:25 a.m. the discussion turned to the topic of property use. President MacMaster distributed copies of satellite maps showing where a proposed 6-acre solar panel array could be placed on the ACC Campus. Based on his research, the solar array could generate between 1.5 and 1.8 megawatts of electricity a year. ACC uses approximately 1 megawatt of electricity each year. ACC could use the electricity from the solar array and sell the remainder, or sell all of the electricity produced. The project would align with the state's goals related to renewable energy, and it is also supported by Alpena Power Company. The solar array would also augment the College's Electrical Systems Technology bachelor degree program.

Trustee Townsend asked if the College would have to get approval from the Besser Foundation related to the use of the property. President MacMaster affirmed that the College would have to get approval from the Besser Foundation. Townsend then asked who would own the property and the array. MacMaster said the College would own both.

Chair Briggs asked if there was a way for ACC to collaborate with Holcim's solar farm. President MacMaster said that the College would have to pursue the grant funding process in the next 3-4 weeks.

The trustees all expressed excitement about the solar array project.

President MacMaster then mentioned the ACC property between Van Lare Hall and Besser Company along the river. MacMaster noted that it was beautiful property and he would like to place some ACC signage in that area to welcome visitors coming from east of the Alpena Campus.

### Topic #3 — ACC Foundation Memorandum of Understanding Discussion

At 8:48 a.m. the discussion turned to the topic of a memorandum of understanding between the ACC Board of Trustees and the ACC Foundation Board. Three documents were distributed to the ACC trustees: an MOU template and two articles about MOUs. President MacMaster worked with consultant Lisa Gilbert to learn more about MOUs and the ways in which college and foundation boards can work together and solve challenges. After discussing the first draft MOU with Gilbert, MacMaster determined that having an MOU in place between the ACC Board of Trustees and the ACC Foundation Board would be beneficial to both entities. He believes the MOU could help clarify boundaries and reduce friction.

President MacMaster reviewed the events that have led up to this point in the process. ACC Foundation trustee Augie Matuzak had created a first draft MOU for consideration. MacMaster determined there were some parts of that first draft that were not acceptable; MacMaster then wrote a revised version of the MOU for consideration by the ACC Foundation board. He hopes to answer the main questions of the MOU, including "who pays for what" and "who is the chief fundraiser" for the College.

Chair Briggs noted that the ACC Board of Trustees is responsible for managing a lot of money, accountability, and liability for the College, and the MOU needs to take that into consideration.

Trustee Hilberg asked a question about the funding for the ACC Foundation executive director, the alumni relations director, and the executive assistant positions.

President MacMaster replied that the College pays half of the compensation and all of the fringe benefits for the executive director. One half of the alumni director's total compensation is paid by the College; the other half is supplied by the SIP grant. SIP funding expires at the end of September 2024. Part of the funding question relates to how the alumni director position will be funded after the end of the grant.

President MacMaster also mentioned that many ACC Foundation funds were under water due to the recent downturn in the stock market, which impacts the amount of money the Foundation is able to distribute. The consultant suggested calculating the funds available based on a 3-year rolling average, which would require more accounting work; current ACC staffing levels are not able to handle that additional workload. There are still questions about how that situation could be addressed and how much it might cost.

Chair Briggs brought up the topic of how the ACC Foundation funds itself. President MacMaster suggested that the Foundation may be able to increase the percentage amount it takes from donations to help pay for more expenses. Trustee Duncan noted that the Foundation has concerns that increasing fees would dissuade some donors from giving.

Trustee Stibitz asked President MacMaster how he thought the process of developing an MOU should go. President MacMaster suggested that two ACC trustees and two ACC Foundation trustees could form an ad hoc committee to discuss details and write a final version of the MOU. Trustee Duncan volunteered to be on the committee; Chair Briggs also said he would participate.

Trustee Townsend asked if the final version of the MOU would need to be approved by the ACC Board. Chair Briggs said yes, and it would also need to be reviewed by ACC's legal counsel.

Trustee Gentry asked if there is a desire to use an external facilitator for the MOU process. President MacMaster suggested the consultant [Lisa Gilbert] could act as facilitator and she is open to doing that.

At 9:20 a.m. the trustees ended the MOU discussion and took a 15-minute break.

#### Topic #4 — Granum Theatre Usage

At 9:37 a.m. the trustees reconvened the meeting and began discussion of usage of Granum Theatre. President MacMaster gave an overview of the theatre space and how it is currently being used. He then referenced the Granum donation which was given to support the facility and programming.

President MacMaster noted that the donated funds were invested but were under water for a period of time due to a downturn in the stock market. Recently those funds have recovered and there is money available to support programming in the theatre space. The activity coordinator position is not currently filled, so the College would need to fill that spot. MacMaster has spoken with a current employee who is interested in taking on the activity coordinator responsibilities. The next step would be to activate the committee responsible for finding events.

Trustee Stibitz asked about the process for finding events; would the College search for events to host, or wait for inquiries? President MacMaster said the College would do both.

Trustee Gentry asked about the structure for getting the word out about the programs. President MacMaster replied that there was money in the grant to pay for event promotion.

Chair Briggs asked about the process for approving events in Granum Theatre. President MacMaster said that requests flow through the Facilities Office and are eventually approved by him. Briggs noted that he would like to see all public events posted.

Trustee Hilberg noted that it would be nice if Zoom meetings could be hosted in Granum Theatre. President MacMaster suggested that a list of proposed improvements to the theatre space could be compiled. Hilberg asked what expenses could be paid through the Granum grant. MacMaster said there were some stipulations for what the College was responsible for maintaining, but that shouldn't stop us from collecting suggestions and making improvements.

Chair Briggs agreed that the theatre should keep up with the latest available technologies so that Granum Theatre could be a premier performance place. He went on to say that anything that brings people on campus and gives them a good experience is a good thing for the College.

President MacMaster noted there were expenses related to paying technicians.

#### Topic #5 — Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Discussion

At 10:12 a.m. the topic of discussion turned to a recent Michigan Community College Association meeting which focused on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging [DEIB] efforts being undertaken by Michigan community colleges. Trustees Stibitz and Hilberg participated in the MCCA meeting.

The DEIB discussion began with Trustee Stibitz giving an overview of the MCCA DEIB presentation.

Trustee Stibitz asked how ACC is publicly stating its views on DEIB. President MacMaster noted that DEIB is not a federal mandate; ACC does include mentions of diversity in its values and goals statements.

Trustee Stibitz asked the trustees to review the DEIB inventory list document she had supplied.

Regarding question #1, Chair Briggs noted that ACC is welcoming to everyone and read the College's values and goals statements. Trustee Hilberg said that since she attended the MCCA meeting on DEIB she has become much more aware of DEIB subjects. She suggested the College should collect data from students about how they feel about DEIB issues.

Regarding question #8, Trustee Stibitz wondered if ACC needed a policy about contracts with minority-owned businesses. She asked if ACC needs a policy about that. Chair Briggs noted that we do have a policy for local bidders which has been used occasionally.

Regarding question #2, President MacMaster asked if the trustees thought the composition of the ACC Board of Trustees reflected the student population. Trustee Gentry said he believes that the trustees did reflect the student population, while also having a higher percentage of women on the board. President MacMaster said that a proactive DEIB approach would suggest that it was incumbent on the board to seek a member of a marginalized group to be on the board. He asked if that was what Trustee Stibitz was proposing; she was unsure about whether that was necessary. MacMaster went on to say that DEIB issues have become minefields at other community colleges.

Chair Briggs reiterated that everyone has an opportunity to succeed at ACC.

Trustee Townsend asked about the reliability of IPEDS data. President MacMaster said that ACC does rank highly in IPEDS reports. Some argue that IPEDS represents only a narrow swath of students and measures every school the same way. DEIB advocates say that IPEDS reports are not especially sensitive to factors like gender and do not recognize barriers that some students face. Different schools come to different conclusions on how to address perceived DEIB needs.

Chair Briggs noted that ACC has a student success center that already addresses some of these issues. He added that there is a large amount of help available to students. There are also a number of student groups on campus. President MacMaster noted the Pride LGBTQ+ group and some of its history. Supporting this group would be a way to do more in DEIB without fully going down the road of making DEIB an institution-wide priority. MacMaster cited Jackson College as an example of a school that has fully embraced DEIB, including four employees fully involved in DEIB. Issues have arisen out of Jackson's efforts that have aroused the community and the campus and those issues have required a lot of ongoing institutional focus. Jackson is devoting a ton of time to their issues.

Chair Briggs asked "What is the need, and how can we address it?" Trustee Gentry suggested there is training available; the training isn't totally immersive but it helps people recognize issues. President MacMaster noted that several years ago the College employees did some training on implicit bias. Briggs added that he thinks bringing staff up to a certain understanding of the issues would be good before moving forward with other actions.

Trustee Stibitz asked if the College could conduct staff training in the fall. President MacMaster said yes. Chair Briggs said he thinks the trustees could use some training. Stibitz asked how that training could happen. Trustee Gentry talked about the training he's taken. MacMaster noted the College uses an online training tool [Vector Solutions] that probably has a DEIB component.

Trustee Hilberg asked if we have any tools that we could use to do student surveys with students and staff? President MacMaster said yes, we could do surveys. He mentioned two recent surveys. Trustee Duncan asked if the mental health survey results could be shared with the trustees.

Trustee Stibitz asked again about training for the trustees. Chair Briggs agreed the trustees should become more informed on the issues before the College moves forward. Online training like what Trustee Gentry went through would be good. Trustee Gentry said his training was good. President MacMaster said the College could find a source from training, or Trustee Stibitz could look into finding training, or someone could speak with Brandy at the MCCA about their training. Trustee Gentry mentioned a state-required training program that he will look into.

#### Topic #6 — Policies and Procedures

At 10:51 a.m. the discussion turned to ACC policies and procedures. President MacMaster gave a brief history of how ACC has handled policies and procedures. He said policies and procedures need to be periodically reviewed, and traditionally this has been done in the lead-up to Higher Learning Commission accreditation reviews. Following that model, Dawn Stone, Paige Gordier, Sarah Burt, and Dr. Nick Brege would be involved with reviewing ACC's policies and procedures before the next HLC visit [in 2027].

Chair Briggs asked how the Board would be involved in that process. President MacMaster said the Board should look at the governance section, Series 1000, which contains the Board bylaws. Trustees can also look at any other areas in which they are interested.

Trustee Hilberg asked if the HLC wants the Board to do a self-assessment. President MacMaster noted that ACC staff are attending an HLC conference in April we'll know more about the HLC's focuses after the conference.

Trustee Stibitz asked if the Board should look at Series 1000 before April. President MacMaster said yes. Stibitz then asked who the trustees should communicate with about questions or changes. MacMaster listed himself and/or Board Secretary Jay Walterreit. Chair Briggs agreed that the trustees can have a discussion about the Series 1000 policies if they are interested.

#### Topic #7 — Board Interactions with the Public

At 11:03 a.m. the discussion turned to the topic of interactions between the Board of Trustees and the public. This topic was also a part of the MCCA conference Trustee Stibitz and Trustee Hilberg attended.

Trustee Stibitz asked how the board interacts with the public. For example, she was aware that at one time ACC faculty sought input from local businesses about program curriculum. President MacMaster confirmed that ACC faculty still participate in advisory committees.

Trustee Stibitz mentioned that the ACC board had met with the Alpena Public Schools occasionally in the past. The College also held luncheons hosted by the president. President MacMaster noted that he participated in a Foundation-sponsored Lunch with the President last week; the theme of the meeting was ACC's growth in dual enrollment and early college. He also mentioned his participation in a recent Lions Club meeting.

Trustee Gentry mentioned that President MacMaster hosts the Talk of the Town show every Sunday morning on WBKB.

President MacMaster suggested the College could engage a consultant to conduct interviews with community leaders to gather feedback about how ACC is performing. MacMaster recently participated in a process conducted by the Community Foundation of Northeast Michigan in which a consultant was hired to reach out to 15 identified community members seeking information and input about CFNEM's strengths, weaknesses and strategic directions. This was part of CFNEM's strategic planning process.

President MacMaster also maintains regular communication with a variety of employees at partner K-12 schools.

Chair Briggs offered his opinion that interaction between ACC and the Association of Lifelong Learners is very positive, and that the relationship between ACC and ALL is an important way to bring people onto the ACC campus and educate the community.

President MacMaster said he and other ACC employees regularly hear the high regard the public has for the College. The community feels proprietary about ACC. The most important thing the College can do is stay relevant and connected to the community.

Trustee Hilberg liked the idea of working with a consultant to ask the public for feedback. She also asked if there was a way to link to the videos of Talk of the Town.

At 11:34 a.m. Chairman Briggs stated he would work with Trustee Duncan to organize a discussion of the MOU with the ACC Foundation leadership.

### **End of Retreat Meeting**

With no further business to discuss, Chair Briggs ended the retreat at 11:36 a.m.

### **Next Regular Meeting**

The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 15, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. in Room 400 of the Charles R. Donnelly Natural Resources Center. Virtual attendance will be available through Webex.

### **Adjournment**

The retreat was adjourned at 11:36 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by  
Denis J. Walterreit,  
Secretary of the Board of Trustees  
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