

**COCONINO COMMUNITY COLLEGE
DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD**

WORK SESSION

NOVEMBER 10, 2021



**COCONINO COMMUNITY COLLEGE
MINUTES OF A WORK SESSION
OF THE
DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD
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A Work Session of the Coconino Community College District Governing Board was held via interactive videoconferencing (Zoom). Board Chair, Dr. Nat White, called the meeting to order at 4:03 pm.

PRESENT: Eric Eikenberry
Patricia Garcia
Patrick Hurley
Joseph R. Smith
Nat White

ABSENT: None

Also Present: Ms. Alexis Knapp, Mr. Anthony Williams, Ms. April Sandoval, Mr. Brian Harris, Mr. Brian Wilson, Mr. Cheyenne Grabiec, Ms. Colleen Carscallen, Ms. Dianna Sanchez, Mr. Dietrich Sauer, Ms. Giovanna Macry, Dr. Jami Van Ess, Mr. Joel Fritzler, Ms. Kay Leum, Mr. Keith Becker, Mr. Kurt Stull, Mr. Larry Hendricks, Dr. Michael Merica, Dr. Nate Southerland, Mr. Nathan Schott, Ms. Sonni Marbury, and Ms. Suzzanna Rodriguez.

Reports, summaries, background material, and other documents referred to in these minutes can be found in the November 10, 2021 documents file.

Follow Up

- The Board would like to see an option in the presentation that included doubling the property tax rate.
- If the Board has additional items they have questions on and would like more information before the December 8, 2021 meeting, please send those items to Dr. Jami Van Ess or Ms. April Sandoval.
- If there are enough of these items, Dr. White will consider scheduling an additional work session to discuss them.
- Mr. Smith and Mr. Hurley would like to see an example of the pledge program that does not include front-loading tuition but keeps tuition at the rate of the students first semester.

1. DISCUSSION/INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Primary Property Tax Election Options – Dr. Jami Van Ess

Dr. White mentioned that this meeting was to review some of the financial information and answer questions related to a possible primary property tax election.

Dr. Jami Van Ess gave a presentation that reviewed the background on this issue, answered board member questions such as election costs and staff time, tuition options, what we can do with the money, what happens if we don't move forward, and additional revenue streams such as Proposition 207 and one-time rural funding. All of the options presented tonight are meant as discussion points, and the Board can provide direction and request more information at any time.

Dr. Nat White mentioned that the consultant suggested that the College stay away from doubling the property tax rate, so all options presented are below that amount.

Questions and discussion on the presentation included the following topics:

- Why the other costs for this election would be different for community education versus previous efforts.
- There would be limited presentations given by College personnel, and a lot of the community education would be done by the PAC.
- Suggestions to build a pledge program where you stay at the same rate students start at instead of pre-loading tuition at a higher rate.
- What happened to the Veterinary Technician Program? The program is much more expensive than initially understood. The cost of the program is the same as the Nursing program for staffing and supplies. There is also not a requirement to be licensed to be a veterinary technician in the state of Arizona.
- The three options presented relate to approximately at 25%, 50%, and 75% increase in the property tax levy.
- Facilities could include investments in facilities like standalone buildings, retrofitting or renovating facilities, etc. These investments would allow the College to expand on new program areas rather than depending on community partners to provide space. Relying on partners has been a great option but provides limitations in the ability to grow programs. The College has been able to find partners to get programs started but may not find partners to sustain full program growth.
- The Board discussed whether the Lake Powell water level would impact the Marine Technology program.
- The need for a workforce training facility in Flagstaff and how that would be a selling point for employers.

Dr. Nat White looked at the presentation from what the community would resonate with and the College's future abilities to make choices in line with providing services rather than what we cut.

Mr. Eikenberry stated that the presentation did not include figures for doubling the tax levy, and the consultant did not recommend that, but there was no survey to confirm this. This recommendation from a conversation with the consultant who said that if the figure is double, it becomes a rallying cry for folks against the proposal. Mr. Eikenberry thought it would be interesting to know if some folks would be okay with doubling the levy and doesn't see this as a data-based decision. However, he noted that there was probably no time for a survey.

Dr. White mentioned that the PAC would be having an introductory meeting with the consultant to discuss this and other topics.

Mr. Nathan Schott followed up on the direction from the last meeting about binding future boards. There are some considerations about binding future boards if the Board says they are planning on freezing tuition for some time versus an intent to hold tuition as low as possible. For some of these decisions, it could be considered binding a future board. The Board can set tuition for one year, and the Board of the following year can change the tuition in the next year. Where you violate the law is when you say tuition is going to be set for ten years.

Mr. Patrick Hurley noted that the last time the Board met and discussed the consultant, the plan was to have them work with the College and the PAC, and now we are talking about the PAC hiring the consultant. Dr. White responded that the consultant would be working with the PAC and doing the community outreach to get the vote out. The College can provide information. PAC members will know more after this Friday's meeting with the consultant.

Dr. Michael Merica explained that in the past, the strategy that has been taken in campaign efforts has been providing information and at no point directing people to vote or how to vote. This consulting firm and their strategy is entirely different. They tie information to voting and make efforts to persuade people to vote a certain way. The College cannot participate in this activity, so the firm will work with the PAC. Creating this separation makes it cleaner if the College does win and the win is challenged. The PAC may relay information to the College and request board members to speak. Mr. Schott supported this answer and reminded the group that the law prohibits spending public funds on influencing the election outcome.

Mr. Eikenberry commented that we are looking at Dr. Van Ess' data on the financial end of things, and he wondered if it was a forgone conclusion that there would be an election. Dr. White responded that the Board would not make that decision until the December 8, 2021 meeting, which will be the first time there will be an action item for the College to go out for a property tax reset

Ms. Patricia Garcia stated that all trustees are pro College but have different opinions and approaches to things. She has no doubt the College staff can do great things with more money. It may sound like a broken record, but the College's last ballot initiative was a request for a continuation that did not increase taxes at all and was a temporary increase. She would not favor a tuition freeze or tuition reduction, and you may ask about that because she balks at increasing tuition by even \$1. It would make more sense to her not to continue increasing tuition instead of a tuition freeze or reduction. Philosophically, she worries about a heavily digital campaign in a large county where many voters don't have access to good internet. She hopes that the consulting company will be data and research-driven to be successful here.

Dr. Merica stated that it was a great point that was raised. He shared the same stats the Board had seen previously that summarized past patterns by precinct were shared with the consultant. They responded that there is a significant amount of resources and buffer in areas that could be supportive. Some were rural areas with less connectivity, but there was quite a large pool for them to draw from outside of that.

Dr. White stated that the College's involvement with the consultant so far was considering, interviewing, and figuring out who to hire. However, the College has paid no money, and all discussion is outside any contract or payment.

Ms. Patrick Hurley complimented Ms. Garcia on her speech. He felt as a Board Member, he would be able to make decisions to keep tuition as is if the College were able to secure this funding. He also felt that workforce development is a better selling point than lowering tuition as he is not sure the community cares what tuition is.

Dr. White stated that the wording could be something as simple as making tuition more affordable. He invited and encouraged anyone interested in joining the PAC meeting at 10 am on Friday to send Gail Lowe a request to be invited. No more than two Board Members can attend without posting that as a meeting. CCC Employees would also need to attend on personal time.

The group discussed the best way to craft messages and input for any information campaign and how that information is passed to the PAC. Mr. Schott suggested that an open public meeting where anyone can sit in and listen would be an appropriate place to conduct this kind of brainstorming, and it would then be up to the consultant/PAC to craft messages. There is also some overlap where CCC employees can be involved in the PAC on their own time.

Dr. Nate Southerland asked if the PAC consider holding some of their meetings outside of regular work hours, so there is no perceived conflict if employees wish to participate. He also suggested a possible message based on something he's been hearing on the community - Train local so they will stay local.

The Board gave the following direction to College staff:

- The Board would like to see an option in the presentation that included an option for doubling the property tax rate.
- If the Board has additional items, they have questions about and would like more information about before the December 8, 2021 meeting, please send them to Dr. Jami Van Ess or Ms. April Sandoval.
- If there are enough of these items, Dr. White will consider scheduling an additional work session to discuss them.
- Mr. Smith and Mr. Hurley would like to see an example of the pledge program that does not include front-loading tuition but keeps tuition rate of the students first semester.

ADJOURNMENT: The Work Session Adjourned at 5:28 pm.

MINUTES PREPARED BY:

Ms. April Sandoval
Board Recorder

ATTEST and APPROVED:

Mr. Joseph R. Smith
Vice Chair/Secretary of the Board

Dr. Nat White
Board Chair