



(APPROVED)

**BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS**

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL TRUSTEES MEETING
March 16, 2026**

CONVENING

A special meeting of the Board of Trustees of Berkshire Community College was held on Monday, March 16, 2026, at 4:30pm, in-person at BCC in SBA G-12. Chair Bowen called the meeting to order at 4:03PM and noted that a quorum was present.

PRESENT: Chair Bowen; Trustees: Chacon, Gonzalez, Culyer, Hughes, Kiely, Myers, Rivers
Murphy, Zaffanella
ABSENT: Vrabel
ALSO PRESENT: Assistant to the President, Heather Seely; G. Yarbrough and A. Thrasher from
General Counsel's office, N. Crimmin from Academic Search, members of
media and several BCC employees.

Chair's Remarks

On September 3, 2025, President Ellen Kennedy formally announced her intention to retire at the end of the 2025–2026 academic year, initiating the presidential search process. In early September, the Board Chair consulted with General Counsel and the Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges (MACC) to review DHE requirements and establish a projected timeline. The DHE Commissioner was notified on September 8, 2025, of the anticipated vacancy and the Board's intent to have a new president in place by July 1, 2026.

The Board's Executive Committee met on September 10 to review the overall search process, define parameters for the search committee, and approve a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a search firm. The RFP was issued on September 17, with the President's Office serving as the primary point of contact.

At a special meeting on September 23, the BCC Board of Trustees received an overview of the search process, approved the search budget, and delegated authority to the Executive Committee to select both the search firm and the search committee. Following the RFP's closure on October 6, the Executive Committee reviewed submissions and selected Academic Search as firm to assist the College.

The Board reviewed and approved the Search Committee charge and a draft position description at its October 28 meeting, delegating final approval to the Executive Committee. The selected search firm conducted on-campus listening sessions from November 12–14 to gather stakeholder feedback and refine the position description. The final prospectus was subsequently reviewed and approved by the DHE Commissioner and the Executive Committee in November.

The presidential vacancy was posted on December 15, to ensure a robust and diverse candidate pool. Following the start of the Spring 2026 semester on January 20, the Search Committee began reviewing applications. In late January candidates selected for first-round interviews were identified and shared with the DHE Commissioner and the local Board of Trustees.

First-round interviews were conducted via Zoom between February 2 and February 11. The Search Committee then selected finalists, conducted due diligence, and submitted an unranked list of three to five finalists to the Board of Trustees. Finalists participated in on-campus interviews from February 25 through March 10, with opportunities for engagement with campus stakeholders and participation by the BCC Board and Board of Higher Education and the Commissioner.

The BCC Board of Trustees meeting on March 16 is to put forth a recommendation to the Board of Higher Education, with a new president anticipated to assume office on July 1, 2026.

Board Deliberations and Vote

Chair Bowen stated the presidential selection decision will include two phases. First, the Board will deliberate over the finalists with each Board member being called upon in alphabetical order and having an opportunity to identify and discuss their top candidates for the position. During this phase, no vote will be taken. Following the Board's deliberation phase, a vote would be taken to select who the board will recommend to the BHE as the next President of Berkshire Community College (phase 2).

H. Seely proceeded by calling on the Trustees in alphabetical order to begin the deliberative process.

Trustee C. Chacon, member of the Presidential Search Committee, noted that all four finalists represent what we want at BCC and Finalist Hara Charlier was the one that stood out.

Trustee J. Cuyler thanked the staff for engagement in process and that Finalist Hara Charlier rose above others

Trustee D. Gonzalez noted that Finalist Hara Charlier showed commitment to and enthusiasm for BCC. Additionally, noted that Finalist Karen Hynick was also a solid finalist.

Trustee J. Hughes thanked everyone for their engagement in this process and recommended Finalist Hara Charlier, who bring good community college experience and understands issues.

Trustee L. Kiely noted that she met all candidates but Finalist Hara Charlier but after reviewing all feedback for all finalist recommends her.

Trustee M. Myers noted this has been an incredible ex and that the experience by all finalist was impressive but recommends Finalist Hara Charlier for her breadth of experience overall

Trustee M. Rivers Murphy noted that all candidates have skills, but Finalist Hara Charlier brought laughter and enthusiasm. Noted that she had chance to listen to the student sessions with all finalists, which were wonderful to see engagement.

Trustee C. Zaffanella noted that he missed interviewing A. Lewis but reviewed in depth all the data collected for all finalists. The position profile asked for a lot and Finalist Hara Charlier brings it all and in the campus survey data had strong support. Noted that Finalist Karen Hynick had strong support as well.

Chair J. Bowen noted that Finalists Hara Charlier and Karen Hynick are both strong candidates. Finalist Hara Charlier is preferred, noting that she did a lot to know the area and campus before visiting and knew the hard questions to ask and is an experienced community college leader.

Chair Bowen asked if Trustees had anything additional to share. She also noted that she would like to thank all those that provided feedback for the board's review and consideration, especially with a strong pool of candidates.

Chair Bowen requested a motion that the Board of Trustees end its deliberations and proceed to a vote to select the final candidate for appointment as President of Berkshire Community College. Motion moved by M. Myers with second by J. Hughes. The motion passed unanimously via roll call vote conducted in alphabetical order.

Chair Bowen stated a second recorded roll call vote shall now be taken to conduct the actual vote to select the next President. A majority vote is required to select the final candidate for recommendation for appointment.

Trustee Chacon – Dr. Charlier
Trustee Cuyler – Dr. Charlier

Trustee Gonzalez – Dr. Charlier
Trustee Hughes – Dr. Charlier
Trustee Kiely – Dr. Charlier
Trustee Myers – Dr. Charlier
Trustee Rivers Murphy – Dr. Charlier
Trustee Zaffanella – Dr. Charlier
Chair Bowen – Dr. Charlier

Chair Bowen announces Dr. Hara Charlier has been selected as recommended candidate for President.

Chair Bowen called for motion to unanimously recommend to the Board of Higher Education the appointment of Dr. Hara Charlier as the next President of Berkshire Community College and requested the Trustees authorize her to negotiate with Dr. Charlier over the terms and conditions as President including start date and salary. Motion by M. Myers and seconded by M. Rivers Murphy, then approved unanimously by the full Board of Trustees.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:04pm with motion by M. Myers and a second by J. Cuyler

DATE:

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Seely

Approved:

Julia Bowen, Board Chair