



(APPROVED)

**BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS**

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL TRUSTEES MEETING
September 23, 2025**

CONVENING

A special meeting of the Board of Trustees of Berkshire Community College was held on Tuesday, September 23, 2025 via Zoom. Chair Bowen called the meeting to order at 4:31PM and noted that meeting will be cablecast on Pittsfield Community Television. These meetings are allowed to be recorded under the MA Open Meeting Law and are not subject to editing. H. Seely conducted a roll call and noted that a quorum was present.

PRESENT: Chair Bowen; Trustees: Chacon, Cuyler, Hughes, Gonzales, Kiely, Myers, and Student Trustee Reyes, Vrabel, Zaffanella
ABSENT: Rivers Murphy
ALSO PRESENT: BCC President, Ellen Kennedy; Vice President for Students Affairs & Enrollment Management, Adam Klepetar; Vice President for Administration & Finance, Christina Wynn; Vice President of Academic Affairs, Laurie Gordy; Vice President of Strategic Initiatives and Community Engagement; Assistant to the President, Heather Seely
Additionally, R. Bucknell, C. Young, C. Johnson, N. Mooney, G. Yarborough. A. Thrasher, D. Papanikolaou
Media: PCTV

J. Bowen opened the meeting noting that the board has tremendous gratitude for President Kennedy, and her excellent leadership over the last 13 years, not only because she led the institution through some really difficult times nationally, locally, in higher education for our students, but also because of the capacity that she's built in the institution that is BCC, and the tremendous faculty, staff, and team that is in place. She also expressed gratitude for the Board of Trustees and the commitment demonstrated by all members, noting that this will be a year requiring even greater dedication.

PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH

Dena Papanikolaou, Chief Legal Counsel with the MA Board and Department of Higher Education, presented the guidelines and expectations for the presidential search process. She emphasized that the search and appointment of a president is among the most important responsibilities of a college Board of Trustees, noting the critical role and unique perspectives each board member brings to the process. D. Papanikolaou provided an overview of the legal framework, noting that both the Board of Higher Education (BHE) and the local board have statutory authority in the process. The relevant statutes are Chapter 15A for the BHE and Section 22 for local boards. She referenced the BHE's search and selection guidelines, which have been circulated to the board. The guidelines are designed to ensure a smooth process and avoid procedural issues. The Commissioner of Higher Education has delegated authority to expedite the process, including approving the position description, reviewing the applicant pool, and participating in finalist interviews. The Commissioner ensures diversity in the candidate pool and can request additional candidates if needed. The local board must recommend only one candidate to the BHE, which then interviews and votes on the appointment in open session. Terms of appointment, including compensation, are negotiated in collaboration with the BHE and must be clear to all candidates. There are several touchpoints along the process with the Board of Higher Education and Commissioner, including having a member of BHE/DHE staff on the presidential search committee.

Julia Bowen provided an overview of the planning process for the presidential search at Berkshire Community College. Her remarks emphasized transparency, appropriate pacing, and strategic delegation to the Executive Committee. The initial steps will be:

- Appointing a Search Committee – a 9–13 member group representing diverse campus stakeholders, including faculty, alumni, trustees, and a Department of Higher Education representative.
- Selecting a Search Firm – An RFP was released last week, coordinated by Heather Seely and Michelle Mellace in procurement. Proposals are due October 6, and the executive committee will review and select the firm before the full board meets again.
- Approving a Budget – A dedicated budget for the search process is required.

J. Bowen proposed delegating the selection of the search firm and appointing the presidential search committee to the Executive Committee to maintain momentum and avoid delays between full board meetings.

J. Bowen made a motion asking that the Executive Committee have the authority to plan for the initial phases of the presidential search, including selection and contracting with a search firm, and the selection and appointment of a search committee. M. Myers moved, and L. Kiely seconded. Motion passed via roll call vote.

Additionally, J. Bowen proposed a budget of up to \$100,000 to support the presidential search process. The budget is intended to cover the following expenses: search firm fees, recruitment advertisements, in-person meetings, semi-finalist interviews (virtual or in-person), finalist on-campus interviews including candidate travel, and other related expenses as recommended by the search firm.

Following the budget proposal, Julia Bowen requested a motion and second for approval for a \$100,000 presidential search budget. M. Myers moved the motion, and J. Vrabel seconded it. The motion passed via roll call vote.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:27pm with motion by M. Myers and seconded by C. Zaffanella and was VOTED unanimously. The next regular scheduled meeting will be held on October 28, 2025.

DATE:

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Seely

Approved:

Julia Bowen, Board Chair