

COLUMBUS STATE

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

MINUTES **BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

Thursday, July 23, 2026 | 6:00 PM
Mitchell Hall, Crane Room | 250 Cleveland Avenue

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBERS

Sandy Doyle-Ahern, Chair
Rick Ritzler, Vice Chair
John Ammendola, Immediate Past Chair
Corrine M. Burger
James Fowler
Jean M. Halpin
Traci L. Martinez, Esq.
Jerome Revish
Lorina W. Wise, Esq.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Sandy Doyle-Ahern called the Columbus State Community College Board of Trustees meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present:

- Sandy Doyle-Ahern, Chair
- Rick Ritzler, Vice Chair
- John Ammendola, Immediate Past Chair
- Corrine M. Burger
- James Fowler
- Jean M. Halpin
- Traci L. Martinez, Esq.
- Jerome Revish
- Lorina W. Wise, Esq.

CERTIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE

President Harrison advised that the record should show that notice of this meeting has been given in accordance with provisions of §121.22(F) of the Ohio Revised Code.

OPENING REMARKS FROM CHAIR DOYLE-AHERN

Chair Doyle-Ahern welcomed all faculty, staff and members of the public and shared that the agenda had been revised to adjust the order that items would be presented.

Chair Doyle-Ahern said that a possible operating levy, as reflected by the proposed Resolution of Necessity, would be the primary focus of the Board meeting. She said that college leaders have been engaged in dialogue with community leaders about the needs of Central Ohio and the role of Columbus State in expanding economic opportunity for all residents. That discussion has accelerated in the past number of weeks, she said, since the College announced that it was considering a possible operating levy for the November ballot.

Chair Doyle-Ahern said the Board will not be taking action on the Resolution of Necessity at this meeting but would be discussing the topic and different paths forward.

OPENING REMARKS FROM PRESIDENT HARRISON

President Harrison thanked the Board and College leaders for considering options to advance economic prosperity in Central Ohio. He said that Columbus State is building on a foundation of strength because of the daily work of the College to connect people in community to better jobs.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Member Martinez moved, **Member Fowler** seconded, that the minutes of the Planning Retreat held on Thursday, June 23, 2026 and the minutes of the Planning Retreat held on Wednesday, July 15, 2026 be approved as presented.

A vote was taken, which resulted in:

AYES: Doyle-Ahern, Ritzler, Ammendola, Burger, Fowler, Halpin, Martinez, Revish and Wise

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

CONSENT AGENDA

Chair Doyle-Ahern shared the consent agenda items, which were discussed at the July 17, 2026,

Committee of the Whole meeting:

- Curricular Items
- Approval of Bond Resolution
- Property Transfer to Columbus State Community Partners

Member Wise moved, Member Halpin seconded, that the consent agenda be approved as presented.

A vote was taken, which resulted in:

AYES: Doyle-Ahern, Ritzler, Ammendola, Burger, Fowler, Halpin, Martinez, Revish and Wise

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

INFORMATION-ONLY ITEMS

The following items were presented to the Board for information only:

- Capital Project Report
- Financial Statements as of and for the Ten Months Ended May 31, 2026
- Personnel Information Items

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

President Harrison deferred his report.

OLD BUSINESS:

No old business was presented.

NEW BUSINESS:

No new business was presented.

RESOLUTION OF NECESSITY

Chair-Doyle Ahern reiterated that the Board would be tabling action on the Resolution of Necessity and asked President Harrison to share information about the proposed ballot measure.

President Harrison said the College was considering a levy because of the need to take advantage of the economic growth in our region by connecting more people to good jobs. “A good job solves a lot

of problems,” he said, noting that Columbus State works directly with employers to meet their talent needs and prepare residents for job opportunities.

He shared that Columbus State does more with less funding than other large community colleges in Ohio because the College does not receive local operating support. In fiscal 2023, Columbus State received \$9,393 in unrestricted revenue per student, compared with \$24,092 at Cuyahoga Community College and \$12,382 at Sinclair Community College. Both of those institutions have long-standing operating levies.

President Harrison said Columbus State was considering an operating levy that would have a direct return on investment for taxpayers and the community by:

- Expanding job-focused education, allowing the College to keep pace with the region’s growth and ensuring highly skilled, work-ready graduates.
- Lowering the cost of college for all Franklin County residents through an expanded tuition-free education program for all new high-school graduates in Franklin County, building on the success of Columbus Promise, and reduced tuition for all other Franklin County residents.
- Scaling solutions for student success, affordability, and workforce.

President Harrison said that Columbus Promise has proven that tuition-free education works to expand opportunities and outcomes for students who otherwise do not have strong career options. Columbus Promise doubled the number of Columbus City Schools graduates who enroll at Columbus State, and these students are completing certificates and degrees in higher numbers than pre-Promise cohorts. Columbus Promise “really is about getting students through and into the workforce,” he said.

President Harrison shared the demographics of Columbus Promise students, 80.7% of whom are low-income and 72.2% of whom are first-generation college students. He showed demographic data showing that 60% of Promise scholars are Black, 17% are Latino, 13% are White, and 5% are Asian. He also noted that a program for all new high school graduates in Franklin County would serve many more students, including residents of the City of Columbus who live in “Win-Win” areas served by other suburban districts. President Harrison showed data showing that there are nearly as many district students in Win-Win areas as there are in the Columbus City Schools district.

The Resolution of Necessity would be the first action step needed to place a measure on the Franklin County ballot. If approved by the Board, the resolution would be submitted to the Franklin County Auditor’s office to certify the millage, currently proposed for 1.9 mills (\$95 million in revenue, costing \$67 per \$100,000 of home value). A second Board action would be needed to place an issue on the ballot.

President Harrison suggested three possible paths for the Board to consider: adopt the current plan, modify the plan while moving forward with a November ballot issue (by reducing the millage, means-testing the tuition-free program or both), or postpone consideration of a ballot issue beyond 2026.

Chair Doyle-Ahern thanked President Harrison for the report and shared that the Board is made up of

volunteers who care for this community. She said the trustees have a fiduciary duty to support the College and a broader responsibility to the Central Ohio community, and that each member takes these responsibilities seriously.

Several trustees spoke about the importance of expanding opportunities for students and the need for resources to keep up with the region's growth. Trustee Traci Martinez said the proposed measure could have a transformational impact on the community by helping students launch successful careers. Trustee Jean Halpin shared that employers are focused on finding good talent and keeping employees in this community. Trustee Fowler said that the Board has seen evidence over many years that many students don't complete because they can't afford to continue. He said the College needs to help more students attain great jobs in the community.\

The Board agreed to continue considering the proposed levy. Chair Doyle-Ahern said the College would continue to inform the community about next steps.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public requested the opportunity to speak.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Member Ritzler moved, Member Burger seconded, that the Board of Trustees adjourn to executive session in accordance with Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code to consider the appointment, employment or compensation of a public employee or official.

A vote was taken, which resulted in:

AYES: Doyle-Ahern, Ritzler, Ammendola, Burger, Fowler, Halpin, Martinez, Revish and Wise

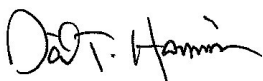
NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

The executive session started at 6:34 p.m. The public session reconvened at 8:10 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:11 p.m.



David T. Harrison, Ph.D. Secretary, Board of Trustees