

WILLIAM RAINEY HARPER COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT #512
COUNTIES OF COOK, KANE, LAKE, AND McHENRY, STATE OF ILLINOIS

Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of Wednesday, October 8, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

The Committee of the Whole meeting of the Board of Trustees of Community College District No. 512 was called to order by Chair Bill Kelley on Wednesday, October 8, 2025, at 3:59 p.m. in the Wojcik Conference Center, 1200 W. Algonquin Road, Palatine, Illinois.

ROLL CALL

Present: Members Bill Kelley, Eric Knox, James Meyer, Walt Mundt, Nancy Robb, Pat Stack, and Student Member Adekunbi Aransiola

Absent: Member Diane Hill

Also present: Colleen Rice, Executive Assistant Board of Trustees; Dr. Michelé Smith, Vice President of Workforce Solutions

Present via phone: Attorney Phil Gerner, Robbins-Schwartz.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

FORMAL ACTIONS

Member Robb motioned, Member Mundt seconded to enter closed session to discuss OMA section 2(c)(1): The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body... at 4:01 p.m. In a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Michelé Smith and Colleen Rice left the room.

Present: Members Bill Kelley, Eric Knox, James Meyer, Walt Mundt, Nancy Robb, Pat Stack, and Student Member Adekunbi Aransiola.

Absent: Diane Hill

Member Robb motioned; Member Stack seconded to adjourn the closed session and re-enter the regular meeting at 4:55 p.m. In a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

ROLL CALL

The regular meeting began after a 5-minute recess at 5:00 p.m.

Present: Members Eric Knox, James Meyer, Walt Mundt, Nancy Robb, Pat Stack, and Student Member Adekunbi Aransiola

Absent: Member Diane Hill, Bill Kelley (left after closed session)

Also present: Dr. Jason Altmann, Interim Dean of Students; Mike Barzacchini, Director of Marketing Services; Dr. Yolonda Barnes, Dean - Business and Social Science; Dr. Dennis Baskin, Associate Provost of Student Affairs; Dr. Courtney Bolhaus, Associate Dean - Career and Technical Programs; Tony Butler, Director of Risk Management; Orlando Cabrera, Tech Support Specialist; Scott Cashman, Senior Manager, Community, Career and Corporate Education; Nicci Cisarik De Jesus, Director - Student Recruitment and Outreach; Amanda Duval-Norwood, Chief Human Resources Officer; Marcia Frank, Senior Director - Innovation and Development; Dr. Kathleen Gorski, Associate Provost - Curriculum and Instruction; Bob Grapenthien, Controller; Erika Hartman, Administrative Coordinator; Michelle Harrell, Dean - Resources for Learning; Bob Hayley, Assistant Controller; Dr. Joanne Ivory, Dean - Career and Technical Programs; Dr. Tamara Johnson, Vice President - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Dr. Derek Leiter, Dean of Health Careers; Barry McGreer, Director - Infrastructure Services; Matt McLaughlin, Director of Insights, Planning and Decision Support; Nancy Medina, Executive Director of Facilities Management; Bob Parzy, Associate Provost Enrollment Services; Steve Petersen, Campus Architect; Gloria Plaza, Director, Business Operations and Security; Dr. Avis Proctor, President; Colleen Rice, Executive Assistant Board of Trustees; Bronwyn Schlaefel, ASL Interpreter; Darlene Schlenbecker, Vice President of Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness; Dr. Michelé Smith, Vice President of Workforce Solutions; Dr. Anna Strati, Director Institutional Research and Analytics; Brian Thomason, Director of Client Systems; Darice Trout, Senior Director of Workforce Solutions and Job Placement; Michael Vanlandingham, Registrar; Dr. Sandra Villanueva, Dean - Teaching and Learning; Dr. Roderica Williams, Dean of Student Success and Retention; Dr. Ruth Williams, Provost; Riaz Yusuff, Chief Information Officer.

DISCUSSION OF FOLLOW UP ITEMS

Bob Grapenthien, Controller, provided an overview of the FY26 budget and forecast, focusing on tax-capped funds and key financial indicators.

Minimal activity has occurred so far in FY26. The College is awaiting final tax extension details from Cook County. Compared to FY25, property tax disbursements are significantly lower (\$1 million vs. \$32 million).

Through a waterfall chart, Grapenthien walked the Trustees through the Fiscal Year 2026 forecast of tax capped funds. Grapenthien emphasized that projections are more closely aligned with the actual budget than in previous fiscal years, and therefore there is limited flexibility for unplanned expenditures in FY26. The federal revenue uncertainty may require reevaluation of the current operating budget.

Also, Harper College is monitoring potential risks to federal grant funding. If grants are reduced or eliminated, there is no room in the operating budget to absorb those costs. A contingency plan may involve earmarking surplus funds to temporarily support critical initiatives or grants. Grapenthien stated that while the College has a high-level strategy to address potential grant losses, the specific timing and impact remain uncertain. He also stated that the Governor has signaled the need for budget caution due to broader state and federal challenges.

The presentation concluded with an invitation for questions and comments. One clarification was made regarding adult education funding. Grapenthien reported it remains active and has not been cancelled.

Grapenthien next presented on the 2025 Property Tax Levy. He began by emphasizing the importance of understanding the institution's property tax strategy through a historical lens, noting that past board decisions have had a significant impact on the college's financial health and future planning, including referendum strategies.

First, Grapenthien explained that Illinois' Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL), enacted in the 1990s, restricts annual property tax levy increases to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) from the previous year. For 2025, the December 2024 CPI-U will set the cap. He clarified that new property, such as new construction and expiring TIF districts, is exempt from PTELL, as are taxes levied for bond repayment, which require voter approval through referendums.

The annual tax levy process begins with the CPI-U announcement in December, followed by the presentation of a five-year financial plan to the board in January. The board reviews budget assumptions and passes the annual budget in May, and the administration presents the proposed levy in August. The board votes on the estimated levy in October, posts it on the college website in compliance with the Truth in Taxation Act, and votes on the final levy shortly thereafter. Levy documents are then submitted to the relevant counties in November.

For the 2025 tax year, the College's estimated tax-capped levy is \$80,429,683, representing a 3.4% increase over the 2024 extension amount of \$77,784,993.

Grapenthien noted that the board has taken a conservative approach in recent years, opting not to take the maximum allowable increase to provide taxpayer relief. For example, choosing not to levy up to the CPI-U in 2021 and 2022 resulted in significant long-term savings for taxpayers, though it also meant the college forewent millions in potential revenue.

A 1% change in property taxes equates to a \$780,000 change in college revenue, impacting both current and future years. For homeowners, this means a \$3–4 change in property taxes on a \$400,000 home. Grapenthien explained that such changes could be offset by adjustments in tuition, enrollment, or expenditures.

The board reviewed a comparison of property tax rates among Illinois community colleges, noting that Harper College's rate is in line with peer institutions. The college's position in the rankings is influenced by voter-approved referendums and the relative property values in the district.

Board members expressed appreciation for the clarity and detail of the presentation, especially for new members. The discussion reinforced the importance of communicating the impact of levy decisions to taxpayers and maintaining compliance with state law. With no further questions, the board moved on to the next agenda item, fraud mitigation, and prevention.

Nicci Cisarik De Jesus, Director of Student Recruitment and Outreach and Bob Parzy, Associate Provost Enrollment Services, began by highlighting the growing national trend of fraud in higher education, noting that such cases have been observed in the Common Application and can be identified at various stages of the enrollment process. In response, Harper College has established a dedicated Fraud Squad Taskforce to address these challenges.

Fraud impacts multiple areas across campus, including admissions, financial assistance, IT, registration and records, testing, and faculty. Since February 2025, Harper College has identified 203 cases of suspected fraud. Of these, 182 cases remain under review, pending further evidence, verification, or student conduct follow-up. Three cases have been cleared as not fraud, while 19 cases have been confirmed as fraudulent.

Looking ahead, Harper College is considering several innovations and future strategies to strengthen fraud prevention. These include implementing fraud detection software, centralizing records in the CRM system, expanding ID requirements, enhancing legal language on applications and college materials, suspending records when necessary, and establishing a final reviewer role to support the process.

Trustee Meyer asked which software programs they are currently looking into and how much they cost. Parzy and Cisarik De Jesus responded that they are in conversation with LightLeap AI, Voyatek, and Safe and that these range in price from \$40,000-\$50,000 per year.

Colleen Rice, Executive Assistant to the Board of Trustees, then gave a brief presentation regarding the Board of Trustees newly implemented Board management software, BoardEffect.

Rice explained that one of the main goals of implementing a Board management software is security. Board software enhances security through features like data encryption, multi-factor authentication, and access controls, ensuring only authorized users can access sensitive information. This reduces the risk of data breaches and unauthorized access, protecting confidential board materials.

Rice displayed BoardEffect and navigated the platform for the Board. She highlighted important features including the events page and the library, where Board documents are stored for easy access and review.

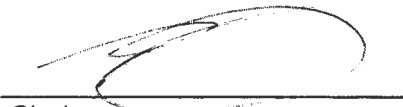
Vice Chair Mundt emphasized the importance of the Board adopting this new system.

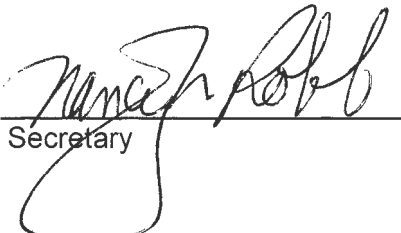
Dr. Michelé Smith reviewed the Board Packet.

ADJOURNMENT

Member Stack moved, Member Meyer seconded, adjournment at 5:59 p.m.

In a voice vote, motion carried.


Chair


Secretary