

**Roanoke Higher Education Authority**  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
Wednesday, June 6, 2025, 12:30 pm  
Roanoke Higher Education Center Room 409

**Minutes**

Members present: Chair Lyn Hayth, Lee Andes (Zoom), Amy Darragh, Katherin Elam, Shatenita Horton (arrived 12:47 pm, during the Executive Director's Report), Glen Mayhew, Joe McNamara, Angela Penn, Sam Rasoul, Susan Short, Veronica Shuford, David Suetterlein, and Elda Stanco Downey

Also present: Ryan Bell, Andy Bowman, Cynthia Bryant, Yvonne Campbell, Kay Dunkley, Carla James, Evan Malone, Jeremiah McMillan, Alexandra Thacker, Kaitlyn Van Buskirk, Lori Van Curen, Scott Weimer, and Dyamond Woods

Members absent: Sarah MacDonald, Tracy Nester, Robert Sandel, and Amy White

The annual meeting of the Roanoke Higher Education Authority's Board of Trustees was called to order at 12:02 pm by Lyn Hayth, Chair. With roll call, the quorum was confirmed.

Chair Hayth next asked guests in attendance to introduce themselves: Andy Bowman, ACP; Ryan Bell, RHEC; Cynthia Bryant, RHEC; Evan Malone, RHEC; Kaitlyn Van Buskirk, RHEC; Dyamond Woods, TAP; Scott Weimer, VT; and Yvonne Campbell, VWCC

Lyn Hayth shared that Elda Stanco Downey would be departing the Board at the end of June, following eight years of service. Kay Dunkley, Executive Director, recognized Dr. Stanco Downey's contributions over the years and gave her a parting present. Robert Sandel is also leaving the Board, as he will retire as President of Virginia Western Community College effective July 1. Although not in attendance, Dr. Sandel also received a gift that will be delivered by Yvonne Campbell.

Chair Hayth presented the minutes of the December 4, 2024, meeting for approval. **Joe McNamara moved to accept the minutes as distributed, and the motion carried unanimously.**

**Student Testimonial**

Carla James, Senior Director of Academic and Student Services, briefly introduced the student speaker, Dyamond Woods, a graduate of TAP's Certified Nursing Assistant (CCMA) program. Ms. Woods is currently employed at Woodland Hills and shared her experience of returning to Roanoke as a student looking for clarity and direction. She stated that RHEC's Student Services staff helped her put the puzzle pieces together and an RHEC Foundation scholarship made her dream of completing the CNA program possible.

**A request was made to alter the agenda, moving directly to the Executive Director's Report.**

This would allow time for Shatenita Horton, Treasurer, to arrive. There were no objections to the proposal.

**Executive Director's Report**

Kay Dunkley noted the new fact card that highlights key information about RHEC. This will be regularly updated and can be incorporated into one's elevator speech when discussing the Center.

RHEC has removed Goal 2 from the 2024-2027 strategic plan, following state and federal directives to eliminate DEI from all operations. Copies of the revised goals were provided to all present.

Invitations are in the mail inviting the Board to RHEC's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration on August 23, 2025, from 6-8 pm at The Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center. The evening will include Delegate Terry Austin presenting a resolution from the Virginia General Assembly and a student testimonial from Dr. Ken Nicely, Superintendent of Roanoke County Schools, who is a graduate of Virginia Tech Roanoke Center's Educational Leadership Program. We are hopeful that U.S. Senator Mark Warner will serve as a guest speaker.

Dr. Dunkley recognized those who attended the Buzz LIVE event at RHEC on May 29. Hosts Michael Hemphill and Becky Freemal interviewed RHEC leadership, member representatives, and students to illustrate the Center's 25 years of impact. PBS will air the show in July.

A workforce review was completed by Mease Consulting, LLC and will be shared with RHEC partners in the next month. The report synthesizes data from multiple sources to identify the top 25 jobs available in the Roanoke region, while forecasting the growth for the next three to five years. It also provides information about skill gaps and industry turnover. This report will help guide partnerships and new programming opportunities.

Jeremiah McMillan, Director of Facility Services, touched on RHEC's ongoing projects, including completion of the renovation of the building's sixteen restrooms, the status on the replacement of 309 fan coils throughout the building, renovation of both a current and a new surface parking area, and installation of an ADA ramp at the Jefferson Street entrance.

**These informational items required no motion.**

#### **Financials as of March 31, 2025**

Shatenita Horton, RHEA Treasurer, stated that she had the opportunity to review the financial statements with Lori Van Curen, Director of Finance and Administration, and would like for Lori to share highlights of the memorandum dated June 4, 2025. The unaudited financial statements for the month ending March 31, 2025, indicate the accumulated cash and cash equivalents total \$3,325,900, which is an increase of \$429k over the year prior. The increase is partially attributed to \$313k in capital maintenance reserves reimbursements due from the Commonwealth in March 2024.

Currently checking accounts show \$376,574, \$1,619,599 is invested in money markets, \$829,728 is invested in the Commonwealth of Virginia's Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP), and \$500,000 is held in certificates of deposit. Total net capital assets increased \$1.2M to a total of \$27,689,069.

The reserve analysis indicates that the current adjusted cash reserve is \$3,276,674, which is within the target minimum and maximum range.

A note was made that these numbers represent nine months, from the start of the fiscal year July 1, 2024, through March 31, 2025. Since the report was informational only, **no motion was required.**

#### **Budget Review Committee and Personnel Committee Report**

Shatenita Horton, Budget Review Committee chairperson, shared that the committee approved \$123,045 for employee pay increases and recommends use of the approved monies toward employee pay increases. Elda Stanco Downey, Personnel Committee member, stated that her committee supported the recommendation of the Budget Review Committee.

The committees jointly recommended a 3% base increase for all eligible employees receiving a performance evaluation rating of “Meets Expectations” or higher. The recommendation also included an additional average 3% merit increase for all employees who received performance ratings of “Exceeds Expectations” and “Significantly Exceeds Expectations,” to be distributed at the Executive Director’s discretion.

Concern was voiced over the potential total percent pay increases for employees given the current economic uncertainty and possible revenue slowdown that the state government projects for next year. Ms. Van Curen reemphasized that the budgeted amount was not for base salaries; approximately two-thirds is an actual pay increase, with the other one-third going toward benefits. Dr. Stanco Downey provided a historical perspective regarding the Authority’s pay review comparisons throughout the region and the need to maintain quality staff relative to market values. Dr. Dunkley reminded the Board that RHEA does not receive funding under regular state employee pay increases; the Authority has to provide the revenue to cover the increases itself. Del. Rasoul suggested the Authority try to become aligned under state code to receive statewide salary increases. Upon vote, **the recommended pay increase and merit awards were approved with a majority vote and one abstention.**

#### **Recommend Approval of FY 2026 Budget**

With Ms. Horton’s endorsement, Ms. Van Curen presented the proposed FY 2026 budget. The budget includes a modest increase in state appropriated funds and an increase in lease income due to the annual CPI-U increase, as well as from additional tenants.

**Ms. Horton confirmed that the Budget Review Committee approved the FY 2026 budget as proposed, and the motion to accept the FY26 budget carried with a unanimous vote.**

#### **Approval of RHEC Foundation Board of Directors**

Lyn Hayth shared that MaryJean Levin was approved by the Foundation Board of Directors to serve a two-year term on the Foundation Board beginning July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2027.

**Susan Short moved to appoint MaryJean Levin to the RHEC Foundation Board of Directors for a two-year term. The motion passed unanimously.**

#### **Acceptance of Resignation**

Lyn Hayth asked for a motion to accept the resignation of Katheryn Pascal who joined the RHEC Foundation Board July 1, 2024.

**Joe McNamara moved to accept Ms. Pascal’s resignation from the Foundation Board effective immediately; the motion carried unanimously.**

Lyn Hayth shared that Jeanne Armentrout’s service on the Foundation’s Board of Directors ends June 30, 2024, and he recognized her contributions and dedication.

#### **Closed Session**

Katherin Elam called for the Board of Trustees to convene in closed session to discuss personnel matters pursuant to Section 2.2-3711. A.1, Code of Virginia (1950), as amended.

Discussion took place, followed by Lyn Hayth asking that the annual meeting reconvene.

The Roanoke Higher Education Authority’s Annual Meeting was again called to order by Lyn Hayth at 1:44 pm. Ms. Elam moved to certify the closed session, and the roll was called.

**Announcement of upcoming Executive Committee and Full Board meeting dates:**

Tuesday, November 18, 2025 at 2:00 pm	Executive Committee
Tuesday, December 2, 2025 at 12:30 pm	Full Board

Lyn Hayth asked if there were any other items for discussion. Susan Mayhew expressed appreciation for Dr. James and Dr. Dunkley who are partnering with Virginia Tech and The Hotel Roanoke to host a national conference in October that will entertain approximately 600 representatives.

There being no further business, **Ms. Horton moved to conclude the meeting. Upon unanimous consensus, the meeting adjourned at 1:46 pm.**

Recorder: Alexandra Thacker