

Roanoke Higher Education Authority
Executive Committee Meeting
Tuesday, May 20, 2025, 2:00 pm
Roanoke Higher Education Center Room 418

Minutes

Members present: Chair Lyn Hayth, Katherin Elam, Shatenita Horton, Joe McNamara, Tracy Nester, and Robert Sandel

Also present: Kay Dunkley, Carla James, Jeremiah McMillan, Alexandra Thacker, Lori Van Curen

The meeting of the Roanoke Higher Education Authority's Executive Committee was called to order by Lyn Hayth, Chair, at 2:05 pm. The presence of a quorum was confirmed following roll call.

Lyn Hayth shared that Robert Sandel and Elda Stanco Downey would be departing the Board at the end of June. Dr. Sandel is retiring as President of Virginia Western Community College, and Dr. Stanco Downey's second term, as appointed by the Governor, will end. Katherin Elam's first term is also ending June 30, and she has reapplied to serve another four-year term.

Lyn Hayth presented the minutes of the November 14, 2024, RHEA Executive Committee meeting. **Katherin Elam moved to approve the minutes as distributed, and the motion passed unanimously.**

Financials as of March 31, 2025

Shatenita Horton, RHEA Treasurer, shared that she and Lori Van Curen, Director of Finance and Administration, had reviewed the unaudited financial statements for month ending March 31, 2025. She asked Ms. Van Curen to present the highlights. 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.

Checking accounts currently 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. 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. This report was informational only, and **no motion was required.**

Budget Review Committee and Personnel Committee Report

Shatenita Horton, Budget Review Committee chairperson, reported that the committee approved \$123,045 for employee pay increases and recommends use of the approved monies toward employee pay increases. Tracy Nester, Personnel Committee chairperson, 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.

Discussion commenced, with concern expressed over the potential total pay increases for some employees under the current proposal. Ms. Van Curen emphasized that the budgeted amount was not for base salaries and included monies for increases in benefits, as well. Dr. Dunkley addressed the annual performance review process and stressed the worth of rewarding good work and the importance of employee retention. Chair Hayth commented that differences between RHEC and the private sector pay was discussed during committee conversations. Upon vote, **the committees' recommendations of a pay increase and merit awards passed with a majority vote and one abstention and will be presented to the full board for approval.**

Recommend approval of FY 2026 Budget

Ms. Van Curen presented the proposed FY 2026 budget as approved by the Budget Review Committee. The budget included an increase in state appropriated funds as approved by the General Assembly and an increase in lease income due to the upcoming CPI-U increase.

Ms. Horton confirmed that the Budget Review Committee approved the FY 2026 budget as presented, and the committee's motion to present the budget to the full board for approval carried with a unanimous vote.

Executive Director's Report

Kay Dunkley, Executive Director, brought members' attention to the new rack card that highlights key facts about RHEC. This will be regularly updated and should be referenced as talking points when discussing the Center.

Dr. Dunkley announced that a workforce review has been completed by Mease Consulting, LLC and will be shared with RHEC partners. The report synthesizes current data from multiple sources to identify the top 25 jobs available in the Roanoke region and forecasts growth for the next three to five years. This report will help guide the development of new partnerships and programming opportunities. Virginia Western Community College does have right of first refusal with RHEC for new workforce development programs.

RHEC's 25th anniversary celebration is August 23, 2025, from 6-8pm at The Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center. Board members will soon be receiving a formal invitation in the mail. 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.

The Board is also invited to the upcoming Buzz LIVE show on May 29 at 6pm in RHEC's room 409. Current and past RHEC leaders will speak with hosts Michael Hemphill and Becky Freemal to celebrate the Center's 25th anniversary. The show will air on PBS in July.

Jeremiah McMillan, Director of Facility Services, briefly spoke about RHEC's ongoing projects, including renovation of two parking lots, fan coil replacement throughout the main building, and new HVAC units at the Claude Moore Education Center. The capital funding request for building-wide window replacement was not included in this year's budget amendments. Delegate McNamara noted that capital project requests for higher education did not fare well this year; operating requests were prioritized.

These informational items from Dr. Dunkley required no motion.

Strategic Plan Goals revision

With state and federal directives to eliminate DEI from all operations, RHEC has removed Goal 2 from the 2024-2027 strategic plan. Copies of the revised goals are now available.

Robert Sandel moved to accept the deletion of Goal 2 from the Strategic Plan, as printed. The motion passed unanimously.

Appointment to RHEC Foundation Board of Directors

Lyn Hayth shared that MaryJean R. 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.

Katherin Elam moved to recommend to the full Board the approval of MaryJean R. Levin to the RHEC Foundation Board of Directors. The motion passed unanimously.

Acceptance of Resignation

Lyn Hayth asked for a motion to forward to the full board the Foundation’s request to accept the resignation of Katheryn Pascal who joined the RHEC Foundation Board July 1, 2024.

Robert Sandel moved to recommend to the full Board the acceptance of Ms. Pascal’s resignation; the motion carried unanimously.

Closed Session

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

Discussion ensued, followed by Lyn Hayth asking the regular meeting of the Executive Committee to reconvene.

The Roanoke Higher Education Authority’s Executive Committee was again called to order by Lyn Hayth at 3:22 pm. Katherin Elam moved to certify the closed session, and roll was called.

Announcement of upcoming Executive Committee and Full Board meeting dates:

- Wednesday, June 6, 2025 at 12:30 pm Full Board
- Tuesday, November 18, 2025 at 2:00 pm Executive Committee
- Tuesday, December 2, 2025 at 12:30 pm Full Board

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:27 pm.

Recorder: Alexandra Thacker