



**Gila County Provisional Community College District  
Governing Board Meeting  
Electronic (Zoom) Meeting  
Wednesday, February 21, 2024  
\*\* DRAFT \*\***

**1. The meeting was called to order by President Brocker at 9:02 a.m.**

**Board Roll Call** – Vice President Pollock - present, Treasurer Shipley - present; Secretary Cockrell - present; Member Knauss – present; President Brocker - present. A quorum was present.

**Pledge of Allegiance** – led by Secretary Cockrell – President Brocker thanked Secretary Cockrell and Member Knauss and recognized other board members who have served our country.

**Also Present:** Janice Lawhorn, GCPCCD Interim President; Jessica Scibelli, Gila County Deputy Attorney; Mary Springer, Procurement Specialist; Lauri Avila, HR Specialist; Anthony (Tony) Contente-Cuomo, GCPCCD Attorney; Ron Carnahan, IT, Erin McCord, Administrative Assistant

**Guest(s):** Pete Aleshire; Aja DeZeeuw; Jesse Leetham

**2. Call to the Public – Waived by President Brocker**

Pursuant to A.R.S. 38-431.01 (H), this is an opportunity for the public to comment on any issue within the jurisdiction of the Gila County Community College Provisional District Governing Board. The Board President may determine reasonable time, space, and manner limitations. At the conclusion of an open call to the public, individual members of the Board may respond to criticism made by those who have addressed the Board, may ask staff to review a matter or may ask that a matter be put on a future agenda. Members of the Board will not discuss or take legal action on matters raised during an open call to the public unless the matters are properly noticed for discussion and legal action.

**No one approached the Board.**

**3. Interim President and Board Member Reports**

**A. Interim President Report – Dr. Janice Lawhorn**

- Dr. Lawhorn indicated that a revised 4<sup>th</sup> quarter invoice from EAC has been received for \$559,997.61 with the following adjustments as well as noted concerns.
  - A \$66,059.76 credit based on 107.5 online credits at the overload rate of \$806.00 per credit was given. This credit is to compensate Gila for paying the faculty for teaching online courses even though the FTSE is going to EAC. A total FTSE amount the online courses generated, although requested, was not provided by EAC. Additionally, EAC indicated that they will not allow any Gila employees to teach online courses during 2024-2025.
  - A \$107,682.33 credit was given based on a review of the payroll and administrative expenses after discovering EAC faculty flex benefits and wages were being paid with GCCPCD funds. According to VP Heston Welker, the payroll credits were adjusted for FY

2022 and FY 2023 by an additional 48% to cover any taxes and benefits, ensuring EAC covered the incorrectly charged amounts.

- A detailed expenditure report for non-payroll accounts that shows dates, vendors, and amounts was requested but not received. According to VP Welker, this information is not required by the contract.
- The final numbers are being reviewed and Dr. Lawhorn is concerned EAC's delay in providing the invoice will cause the audit to be late. She and Sara Kirk, GCPCCD's CPA, have been in contact with the auditor, John Dominguez, with CWDL. Sara has also contacted EAC again to request the backup for the Q4 capital items which she originally requested in December.
- President Bocker asked if anyone had questions and asked if the invoice will be on the agenda next month. Dr. Lawhorn advised that Tony wants to ensure all those invoices are approved by the Board going forward.
- Dr. Lawhorn said she was told the EAC budget meetings would be scheduled at the end of January and was told we would receive the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> invoices by the end of January. These have not been received to date.
- Dr. Lawhorn and the other consultants met with a vendor this week regarding a student information system (SIS). She believes we do not need an entire ERP system to start, and she will be meeting with the consultants to prepare an RFQ for Board approval.
- Dr. Lawhorn indicated the fence has been repaired at the Globe/Miami Regional Training Center (RTC).

#### **B. President Report – Dr. Jan Bocker**

- President Bocker Indicated that the goal for accreditation had always been to work with the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). However, because the accreditors are no longer considered regional accreditors, the Board has options.
- President Bocker has been focusing on accreditation with the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) which was originally associated with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). In 2013, WASC was split into three organizations. Dr. Bocker stated that when she requested information from ACCJC, she was immediately contacted and stated the following reasons for the recommendation:
  - Recognized by the US Department of Education and the Counsel on Higher Education Accreditation, which is exactly like HLC
  - Reorganized in 2012/2013 specifically to work with community colleges
  - Compared to HLC, it is a much smaller organization (approximately 140 vs. 1000+ institutions)
  - Less expensive
  - Extremely responsive staff
  - More fluid timeline
- President Bocker stated that she will continue to pursue accreditation as her main focus. Treasurer Shipley asked if ACCJC is nimble. She stated that ACCJC is nimble and would be excited to work with us if the Board approves.
- Member Knauss asked about the timeline of ACCJC as compared to the HLC timeline of approximately five years. What is the difference? Dr. Bocker stated that any prediction about a timeline could jeopardize the entire process and it depends on four main factors:
  - EAC honors their contractual obligation to support our process for independence. We will need access to our people and our data, our records and reports which in many cases we do not have now.
  - We have a five-year IGA with the Gila County Board of Supervisors which enables us to hire our own consultants. This \$250K allows us to move toward accreditation. The money

doesn't fall under the expenditure limits. The continued support from the county will be a significant factor.

- Leadership of the Board and college infrastructure remains in place.
- Gain back the trust of the communities so they can understand and share the vision and offer the continued backing to have an independent college in Gila County.
- Dr. Lawhorn interjected that at the March board meeting a request will be brought forward for an SIS. The Board is going to need to hire additional employees and/or consultants. These include an Accountant, Records and Administration, CRM, Financial Aid, etc. The Gila County funds can support those individuals too.
- President Brocker asked Lauri Avila, HR Specialist to provide an update on the Section 218 agreement.:
  - Lauri indicated that the AZ Department of Administration Social Security liaison stated that the Section 218 modification agreement application had cleared the committees with the federal government. The liaison will be receiving the Section 218 modification agreement but we have yet to receive it. Lauri is reaching out for a timeline. These documents which allow GCC to hire its own employees and contribute to Social Security were submitted in August 2022.
  - Once the Agreement is received, Lauri will build a robust benefits package that future employees want. Treasurer Shipley asked about ADP. Lauri advised that it is a payroll platform and we are considered a start-up organization. There are numerous state and federal requirements like workers compensation, unemployment insurance, etc. that GCC has never set up and she is in the process of setting these up.
- Member Knauss asked about the timeline again. Dr. Brocker stated that it could be much shorter if the most optimal conditions are met. She stated that we have found a much clearer pathway based on the research. Member Knauss said that we need to move forward with whatever we need to do, and we will have his support.
- President Brocker clarified that since the beginning of the year, her focus has been on accreditation. Dr. Lawhorn is focused on the organizational infrastructure that we need to be an independent college.

#### **C. Vice President Report – Preston Pollock**

- VP Pollock stated all of his efforts have not been fruitful.
- He summed up his findings with the following:
  - A partnership with EAC under the current circumstances is not an option.
  - A partnership with another AC4 school is not likely
  - Any possible future partnership with a non-AC 4 school is not likely
  - A question was asked about the ASRS statute that indicated we have to partner with another community college. What will be the plan if we don't find one? Attorney Contente-Cuomo suggested this be discussed in an executive session.

#### **D. Treasurer/CFO Report/Advisory Committee Liaison – Fernando Shipley**

- Treasurer Shipley and VP Pollock attended the advisory committee meeting. Treasurer Shipley stated that VP Pollock may not have had a lot of good news but he believes bad news can be good news. Going back over the bridge is not an option; this is not all bad news. He was waiting to see if the county could be in the middle of it and it didn't help to mediate with EAC.
- Treasurer Shipley asked how we move forward. He stated that it appears ACCCJC may be more nimble. He mentioned that Supervisor Christensen has heard some negative talk from the community although faculty and staff at the Payson Campus are in support of the Board. The committee will meet again next week. They questioned GCC's financials. We have no bills and are in good shape financially. There appears to be some misinformation in the community about

raising taxes. GCC has paid for all employees, faculty, staff, and the overhead. Without the overhead cost we are giving EAC, GCC would be in a better situation. The Board needs to continue to do what is in the best interest of the Gila County students and taxpayers.

- Dr. Brocker explained a PowerPoint slide on GPCCD's Net Position 2010-2022. Dr. Brocker wanted to assure the public that we are very sustainable financially.
- Member Knauss said there used to be more money from the county. With the goal of the advisory board being to support accreditation efforts, is their role to bring solutions to the table on how we move forward. Dr. Brocker said that was her understanding. Dr. Brocker will be giving a presentation to the Gila County Board of Supervisors on April 30<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m. She will be able to provide them with additional information at that time.

**E. Secretary Report– Connie Cockrell**

- Secretary Cockrell stated she had nothing to report.

**F. Member Knauss**

- Member Knauss visited Yavapai College and toured their workforce development programs. There is a lot of interest in our community from a lot of entities. He is looking at other community colleges because there is a need for an educated workforce in Gila County. The hospital needs nurses and there are shortages everywhere. If you home-grow your own skilled people, they tend to stay. Any business will tell you that you don't want to lose people based on training costs alone. We need trained people in our community.

**4. Staff Reports were included in the packet from:**

- A. Senior Dean Report – Dr. Phil McBride**
- B. Associate Director Report - Gila Pueblo (Globe) Campus – Andrea Renon**
- C. Associate Director Report – Payson Campus – Ann Knights**
- D. Financial Report – Trae Morris**

President Brocker indicated that pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(3), the Board may, upon a vote of a majority of the members, elect to go into Executive Session, which will not be open to the public, for discussion or consultation for legal advice with the attorney or attorneys of the public body contracts subject to negotiation.

**Motion made by Treasurer Shipley, seconded by Member Knauss, to move into Executive Session at 9:59 a.m.**

*Call for the question:* In favor – 5; Opposed – 0; Abstained – 0. Motion carries to approve.

**The Board reconvened at 10:57 a.m.**

**5. Action Items**

**A. Initiate Formal Accreditation Eligibility Application Process – Dr. Brocker**

President Brocker requested approval from the Board to move forward with the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) and submit the eligibility application.

**Motion made by Secretary Cockrell, seconded by Treasurer Shipley to initiate the formal accreditation eligibility application process.**

*Call for the question:* In favor – 5; Opposed – 0; Abstained – 0. **Motion carries to approve.**

**B. 2024 Leibowitz Solo Purchase Agreement, PR Consulting Services – Dr. Lawhorn**

Dr. Lawhorn requested that the contract between GCPCCD and Leibowitz Solo, which is scheduled to end on June 30, 2024, end instead on March 21, 2024. In a review of the current contract, Sections 4 and 5, Term of Agreement and Agreement Termination, it states that the contract may be “terminated for convenience without default by either party by providing a written 30-day notice of termination to the other party.” She requested Board Approval to send a 30-day notice of termination to David Leibowitz of Leibowitz Solo. She has spoken to David, who is amenable to the termination. He will transfer the permissions for the Website to her and is open to contracting with GCPCCD in the future as the Board deems necessary.

**Motion made by Secretary Cockrell, seconded by Member Knauss to terminate the contract on March 21, 2024, with Leibowitz Solo.**

*Call for the question:* In favor – 5; Opposed – 0; Abstained – 0. **Motion carries to approve.**

**C. RFQ for Professional Engineering Services, Observatory Project -Mary Springer**

Mary Springer worked with Attorney Anthony Contente-Cuomo and Russ Genet on the proposed RFQ for Professional Engineering Services for the Observatory Project at the Payson Campus.

**Motion made by Treasurer Shipley, seconded by Member Knauss to approve the issuance of the RFQ for Professional Engineering Services for the Observatory Project at the Payson Campus.**

*Call for the question:* In favor – 5; Opposed – 0; Abstained – 0. **Motion carries to approve.**

**D. Erin McCord, Administrative Assistant– Lauri Avila, HR Specialist**

In Lauri Avila’s absence, President Bocker and Dr. Lawhorn had the pleasure of introducing Erin McCord as the recently hired Administrative Assistant to Dr. Lawhorn and the Board. Several interviews were held, and the hiring committee recommended the approval of Erin McCord. Erin holds a BA in Sustainability from ASU and has varied experience as an Executive Assistant. Erin is GCPCCD’s first part-time employee. Erin’s resume was included in the packet. Erin thanked Dr. Lawhorn, President Bocker, and Lauri Avila for the amazing opportunity.

**Motion made by Treasurer Shipley seconded by Member Knauss, to approve the hiring of Erin McCord as the Administrative Assistant and to offer her a contract.**

*Call for the question:* In favor – 5; Opposed – 0; Abstained – 0. **Motion carries to approve.**

**E. The Alliance – Worker’s Compensation Contract – Dr. Lawhorn**

In Lauri Avila’s absence, Dr. Lawhorn explained that these governing documents will allow GCPCCD to establish a Worker's Compensation account through The Trust with The Arizona School Alliance. All employees of Gila County Provisional Community College District must be covered under a worker's compensation plan. GCC has hired its first employee, and GCPCCD will need to establish this account. The recommendation is to go through The Trust to capitalize on an established relationship and obtain the best price for this insurance.

**Motion made by Secretary Cockrell seconded by Treasurer Shipley, to approve The Alliance – Worker’s Compensation Contract.**

*Call for the question:* In favor – 5; Opposed – 0; Abstained – 0. **Motion carries to approve.**

6. **Consent Agenda –**

- A. Minutes from the January 17, 2024, Regular Meeting
- B. GCC Annual Drug- and Alcohol-free Environment Notification
- C. Resolution for Designation of Fernando Shipley as Chief Fiscal Officer for Officially Submitting the FY 2024 Expenditure Limitation Report to the Arizona Auditor General

**Motion made to approve the Consent Agenda by Treasurer Shipley seconded by Vice President Pollock.**

*Call for the question:* In favor –5; Opposed – 0; Abstained – 0. **Motion carries to approve.**

7. **General Information and Discussion of the Same –**

The next Regular Governing Board Meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, March 13, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.**

8. **Adjournment –** The meeting was adjourned at 11:13 a.m. by motion of Member Knauss and seconded by Secretary Cockrell.

**Respectfully submitted,**

*Janice Lawhorn*

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Janice Lawhorn, Ph.D.  
Interim President, Gila County Provisional  
Community College District

**Attest:**

*Jan Bocker*

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President Jan Bocker  
GCPCCD Governing Board President

**Attest:**

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Secretary Connie Cockrell  
GCPCCD Governing Board Secretary