



**Board of Trustees**  
Executive Committee  
**January 19, 2022**  
**Minutes of Open and Executive Session**

**Meeting held virtually via Zoom**

In accordance with Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker's Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, § 20 dated March 12, 2020.

A live stream of the meeting for public viewing also took place on YouTube.

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**MEMBERS PARTICIPATING REMOTELY:** Committee Chair Dr. Robert Martin, Vice Chair Ali Salehi, Secretary Lydia Martinez-Alvarez, and Trustee Kevin Queenin

Dr. Linda Thompson, President, Stephen Taksar, Vice President of Administration and Finance, Daniel Forster, Vice President for Enrollment Management, William Connor, Director of Dining Services, and Jody Lemoi, Senior Financial Analyst, of Westfield State University were also participating remotely.

The meeting was called to order at 7:51 AM by Committee Chair Martin, who stated the purpose of this emergency meeting was to authorize the University to seek additional bonding from the Massachusetts State College Building Authority (MSCBA) to get a favorable interest rate to purchase additional equipment in the Dining Commons. It was announced that the meeting was being livestreamed and recorded. The names of all the meeting participants listed above were announced.

Additional Bond Approval from MSCBA. Mr. Taksar stated the emergency meeting was needed because the MSCBA is meeting later in the day to make decisions on bond applications. Although the approval for a new dish machine was made in December, this is an opportunity to take advantage of historically low interest rates to invest in the replacement of additional dining equipment that has exceeded their life expectancies. Mr. Lemoi and Mr. Connor gave additional information in support of this motion:

- Through additional borrowing, the MSCBA bond would be increased to \$1.4 million. This figure can be reduced before the bond is issued if we wish. This will increase the debt service by \$45,000 annually for a total annual debt service of \$160,000. Dining Services is comfortable carrying that debt forward.
- The biggest pieces of equipment needing replacement are the walk-in refrigerator and freezers, some of which are still the original units on the roof from the 1980s and are at their end-of-life cycle. Repairing these items is increasing the cost of operations. Without adequate refrigerators and freezers, food cannot be kept safe. Smaller, additional equipment to be replaced were also discussed.
- A long-range plan is being developed to identify equipment replacement at its end of life, so equipment is not being purchased in an emergency.

- The standard depreciation will be followed, which is to capitalize over a ten-year period. The bond is for ten years, and all pieces of equipment have at least a ten-year life span, with most exceeding that.
- The worst-case scenario would be for a refrigerator to break with an immediate replacement to be funded by reserves because it was not budgeted and waiting for delivery due to supply chain issues. Starting now will allow time to order the equipment to hopefully be received by summer.
- The University is not requesting additional funds, even though this is an opportune time, because it is a fine balancing act given the rates the University is proposing for next year. The CPI is over seven percent with food and labor costs increasing. An increase of 4-5% on rates for next year will be proposed, and more than that would be harder for students to absorb and cannot be justified. Everything is reflected in the rates that students pay. The Dining Services overhead is a giant fixed number. With more students and a bigger bandwidth, it could support taking on more debt, but it is important to acknowledge the capacity to repay the debt service.

**MOTION** made by Trustee Martinez-Alvarez, seconded by Trustee Salehi, as follows: On December 16, 2021, the Westfield State University Board of Trustees approved an FY22 capital project request for \$1,300,000 to replace the dish washing machine/conveyer system in Tim & Jeanne’s Dining Commons. One million funded from new bonding and \$300,000 funded from available campus capital funds.

The University seeks approval to increase the request of bond funding from the MSCBA from \$1,000,000 to \$1,400,000 for additional capital project needs in Dining Services. The total project cost would be \$1,700,000.

The additional \$400,000 in funding will be used to secure critical aging equipment as detailed in the supporting documentation. The final additional amount may be less based on any significant interest rate changes.

There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE** taken:

Trustee Martinez-Alvarez	Yes	Trustee Salehi	Yes
Trustee Queenin	Yes	Trustee Martin	Yes

**Motion passed unanimously.**

Approval of Open Session Minutes of May 11, 2021.

**MOTION** made by Trustee Queenin, seconded by Trustee Martinez-Alvarez, to approve the open session minutes of the May 11, 2021, Executive Committee meeting.

There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE** taken:

Trustee Martinez-Alvarez	Yes	Trustee Salehi	Yes
Trustee Queenin	Yes	Trustee Martin	Yes

**Motion passed unanimously.**

Chair Martin stated the committee will be going into executive session pursuant to Open Meeting Law, G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a) #7, M.G.L. chapter 214, section 1B-Right to Privacy and 940 CMR 27– Safeguard of personal information for the purpose of approving the executive session minutes of the May 11, 2021, meeting. Once the meeting enters executive session, the live stream will end. The committee will adjourn from executive session and will not reconvene in open session.

**MOTION** made by Trustee Martinez-Alvarez, seconded by Trustee Queenin, to enter executive session.

There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE** taken:

Trustee Martinez-Alvarez	Yes	Trustee Salehi	Yes
Trustee Queenin	Yes	Trustee Martin	Yes

**Motion passed unanimously.**

At 8:12 AM, the committee entered executive session. With trustees remaining, all other participants except for President Thompson and Jean Beal left the meeting and the live stream ended. Each person affirmed that no other person was present or able to hear the discussion at their remote location.

Approval of Executive Session Minutes of May 11, 2021.

At 8:13 AM, **MOTION** made by Trustee Queenin, seconded by Trustee Martinez-Alvarez, to approve the executive session minutes of the May 11, 2021, Executive Committee meeting.

There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE** taken:

Trustee Martinez-Alvarez	Yes	Trustee Salehi	Yes
Trustee Queenin	Yes	Trustee Martin	Yes

**Motion passed unanimously.**

There being no further business, **MOTION** made by Trustee Martinez-Alvarez, seconded by Trustee Queenin, to adjourn.

**ROLL CALL VOTE** taken:

There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE** taken:

Trustee Martinez-Alvarez	Yes	Trustee Salehi	Yes
Trustee Queenin	Yes	Trustee Martin	Yes

**Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:14 AM.

Attachments presented at this meeting:

- a) Draft minutes of May 11, 2021 – Open Session
- b) Draft minutes of May 11, 2021 – Executive Session
- c) Motion – Approval of Additional Bonding from Massachusetts State College Building Authority (MSCBA) for Dining Hall Equipment
- d) MSCBA Additional Bond Approval (Memo)
- e) MSCBA Additional Bond Approval (Equipment List)