

TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

Minutes of the Special Called Meeting

Electronic / Remote Location

June 26, 2020

Link to recording:

<https://sts.streamingvideo.tn.gov/Mediasite/Play/169573bc57964b588cb7a054958943721d>

Chairman Evan Cope called the meeting to order at 2:01 P.M.

Member	PRESENT	ABSENT
Chairman Evan Cope	X	
Commissioner Nancy Dishner	X	
Secretary Tre Hargett	X	
Commissioner Jimmy Johnston	X	
Commissioner Pam Koban	X	
Treasurer David Lillard	X	
Commissioner Sarah Morrison	X	
Commissioner Jay Moser		X
Commissioner Vernon Stafford	X	
Commissioner Celeste Riley	X	
Commissioner Frank Watson	X	
Commissioner AC Wharton	X	
Comptroller Justin Wilson	X	
Commissioner Dakasha Winton	X	

At the start of the meeting, there were thirteen members present, who all stated they were alone at their locations, constituting a quorum.

ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION NECESSITY

Board Secretary Shauna Jennings read the following statement:

Chairman Cope and Commission Members,

In Executive Order No. 16, Governor Bill Lee suspended Tennessee's open meeting laws as necessary to allow a governing body to meet by electronic means and conduct essential business under certain conditions if the governing body "determines that meeting electronically is necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of Tennesseans in light of the COVID-19 outbreak." The conditions are:

- Live access to the meeting by the public, if possible;

- No adjustment to existing quorum, meeting notice, or voting requirements;
- Clear notice to the public of the meeting agenda and how to access the meeting in a manner reasonably accessible to members of the public;
- Each part of the meeting subject to the Open Meetings Act must be audible to the public;
- Each member participating electronically must be able to simultaneously hear each other and speak to each other during the meeting;
- Any member participating electronically shall identify the persons present at the location from which the member is participating;
- Each member participating electronically must be provided, before the meeting, with any documents that will be discussed at the meeting, with substantially the same content as those documents actually presented;
- All votes taken during a meeting shall be by roll call vote; and,
- Electronic participation allows a member to vote but does not make a member eligible for a per diem.

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) has ensured that each of the required conditions have been met. For purposes of this THEC meeting, we are using a global conference line that accommodates 300 participants with a listen-only code for members of the public and a guest code for Commission Members and Commission Staff with items on today's agenda. The guest code allows users to hear all participants and make comments when necessary. Notice of the meeting, agenda, materials, call-in number, and applicable codes were posted to the THEC website and emailed to members of the Commission last week. All votes will be by roll call and there have been no changes to existing quorum, meeting notice, or voting requirements. Each member has introduced themselves and listed all persons at their respective location. Lastly, members will be considered present for voting purposes but not for purposes of a per diem.

All conditions listed in Executive Order No.16 having been met, the only remaining item needed to ensure compliance with the Open Meetings Act and Executive Order No.16 is for the Commission to determine that meeting electronically is necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of Tennesseans in light of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Commissioner Stafford moved that meeting electronically was necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of Tennesseans in light of the COVID-19 outbreak and that Ms. Jennings's comments be included in the minutes of this meeting. Comptroller Wilson seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously, with 12 ayes.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chairman Wharton made a motion to adopt the agenda. Comptroller Wilson seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously with 12 ayes.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Chairman Cope delivered his report, including recognizing Commissioner Riley for her service given that it was her last Commission meeting.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT: Director Krause provided his report, also recognizing Commissioner Riley's service to the Commission and giving her the opportunity to provide comments. Commissioner Riley thanked the Commission for the opportunity to serve.

AGENDA ITEMS

I. 2020-21 Tuition and Fees

A. Range for 2020-21 Tuition Fees

Dr. Steven Gentile presented information regarding the binding rates for tuitions and fees which are applied to all universities, community colleges, TCATS, and their respective in-state undergraduate rates. In November the Commission approved a 0 to 2% guiding range, a non-binding range intended to help institutions plan as the Governor and General Assembly consider our recommendations. This guiding range was made in concert with the \$38 million THEC requested to fully fund growth in outcomes and an estimated 2% salary increase. Initially, the Governor proposed fully funding the growth outcomes as well as a 2.5% salary increase. In March, due to early stages of COVID-19 and financial uncertainty, the Governor's amended budget reduced the salary increase to 1.5% but maintained fully funding the formula. The amended budget was passed in March, although the General Assembly announced its intention to convene in June to reassess. Last week, the Governor and the General Assembly passed a budget removing most cost increases across the state, including the \$38 million in new funding to our formula units and the 1.5% salary increase. Ultimately the range was informed by three considerations: student affordability, projected enrollment patterns and inflation, and of course, state support. In prior times, the removal of additional state support would have pushed us to increase our range. Dr. Gentile noted that the conversation this Commission has put forward over the last few years as well as the great recognition of the uncertainty our students are facing call for us to recommend keeping our ranges at 0 to 2%. A 0 to 2%

range allows Tennessee to have the sixth lowest growth in tuition over the last five decades, a record we are all proud of as we want Tennessee to be the most affordable for higher education in the South.

Dr. Gentile also noted that all institutions are slated to have no growth in tuition and fees. Five of the eight governing boards have already voted on no new growth in tuition and fees, including ETSU on April 24th, MTSU on June 16th, TTU on June 23rd, TBR on June 19th, and the University of Tennessee System on the date of the meeting. The other three universities, APSU, TSU, and the University of Memphis, have announced their intention to not increase tuition and their boards will vote on those proposals in the coming days.

Dr. Gentile recommended a 0 to 2% range for tuition.

Commissioner Stafford made a motion to approve. Secretary Hargett seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously, with 12 ayes.

B. Range for 2020-21 Combined Tuition and Mandatory Fees

Dr. Steven Gentile also recommended a binding range of 0 to 2% for the combined tuition and mandatory fees.

Secretary Hargett made the motion to approve. Comptroller Wilson seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously, with 12 ayes.

Adjournment

Commissioner Stafford asked whether the Commission would meet in-person for the next Commission meeting due to the Governor's social distancing order expires on June 30, 2020. Executive Director Krause stated that it was the intention of the Commission to hold the next meeting in-person at Middle Tennessee State University.

Commissioner Winton asked whether state budget cuts will have any effects on the Commission. Executive Krause stated that staff would present at the next meeting on how the budget cuts will affect the Commission.

Chairman Cope adjourned the meeting at 2:29 P.M.

NEXT THEC COMMISSION MEETING:

Thursday, July 23, 2020 at 9 a.m. CT in Nashville

THEC Chairman Evan Cope

THEC Secretary AC Wharton, Jr.