

TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

Minutes of the Special Called Commission Meeting

WebEx: Virtual Meeting

October 3, 2023

[Link to recording](#)

Chairwoman Scarlett called the meeting to order at 11:08 a.m. CDT.

Member	PRESENT	ABSENT
Chairwoman Tara Scarlett	X	
Commissioner Whitney Allmon	X	
Commissioner Evan Cope		X
Commissioner Jacob Knight	X	
Commissioner Pam Koban	X	
Commissioner Jimmy Matlock	X	
Commissioner Jay Moser		X
Commissioner Vernon Stafford, Jr.	X	
Commissioner AC Wharton	X	
Commissioner Dakasha Winton		X
Secretary Tre Hargett	X	
Treasurer David H. Lillard, Jr.		X
Commissioner Sara Morrison	X	
Comptroller Jason Mumpower	X	

At the start of the meeting there were eight (8) voting members participating electronically, constituting a quorum. Commissioner Wharton entered the meeting at 11:15 a.m. Comptroller Mumpower exited the meeting at 11:15 a.m. At all times that voting occurred, there was a quorum established at the meeting.

STATEMENT OF NECESSITY

Board Secretary Rachel Hitt read the following statement of necessity:

All members are participating electronically today. As such, Tenn. Code Ann. § 8-44-108(b)(2) requires that the Commission make a determination that a necessity exists in order for a quorum of members to participate by electronic or other means of communication.

A “necessity” means that the matters to be considered by a public body at a meeting require timely action by the body, that physical presence by a quorum of the members is not practical within the period of time requiring action, and that participation by a quorum of the members by electronic or other means of communication is necessary.

In this case, two facts support a determination of necessity:

- First, today’s agenda item requires timely action by this Commission to address questions related to the search for a new Executive Director and to appoint committees prior to the next regularly scheduled Commission Meeting on November 16, 2023.
- Second, scheduling conflicts and other commitments prevented a quorum of members from being physically present today.

Commissioner Stafford made a motion to approve the Statement of Necessity. Commissioner Koban seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed with eight (8) ayes.

Adoption of Agenda

Commissioner Koban made a motion to adopt the agenda. Commissioner Matlock seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed with eight (8) ayes.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

AGENDA ITEMS

I. Presentation from AGB Search (*Action Item*)

Lou Hanemann, Chief of Staff, provided an overview of the Executive Director search process and the contract with AGB Search. Mr. Hanemann then introduced Dr. Janice Fitzgerald and Dr. James McCormick, Senior Executive Search Consultants, to provide an overview of the timeline for the Executive Director.

Dr. Fitzgerald stated that the application deadline for candidates was Friday, October 6, 2023. Additionally, Dr. Fitzgerald provided information on the timeline with an expected deliverance of the three (3) top candidates for the Commission to consider at the November 16, 2023, fall quarterly Commission meeting.

Board members asked questions, and a discussion was held.

Commissioner Stafford made a motion to approve the AGB Search timeline. Commissioner Allmon seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed with eight (8) ayes.

II. Advisory Committees (*Action Item*)

Dr. Steven Gentile, Interim Executive Director, first gave an overview of the current THEC committees: the Executive Director Search Committee, the Executive Committee, which has been dormant, and the Joint THEC-TSAC Audit Committee, which meets twice annually. Dr. Gentile then introduced the proposed advisory committees. The proposed committees are for an initial twelve (12) month period and would be the Access, Academics, and Student Success Committee and the Finance and Operations Committee. The Access, Academic, and Student Success Committee would be an advisory committee which may review and provide feedback for work related to the student experience and institutional effectiveness, including student access and affordability, student retention, completion, and success, review of the outcomes-based funding formula for institutional effectiveness, academic programming, workforce development, and research on academic and student needs in the field of higher education. The Finance and Operations Committee would be an advisory committee which may review and provide feedback for work related to funding and budgets, including internal agency budget requests, system and institution budget requests, capital outlay and maintenance budget requests, and binding tuition and fee ranges.

The proposed Access, Academics, and Student Success Committee would be comprised of Commissioner Winton, Chairwoman Scarlett, Commissioner Wharton, Secretary Hargett, Commissioner Knight, and Commissioner Morrison.

The proposed Finance and Operations Committee would be comprised of Commissioner Matlock, Commissioner Koban, Commissioner Moser, Commissioner Stafford, Treasurer Lillard, Comptroller Mumpower, and Commissioner Cope.

The Executive Committee, which is already in place, consists of Chairwoman Scarlett, Commissioner Winton, Commissioner Stafford, and Commissioner Allmon, and can inform on the strategic direction for the agency and inform the Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education for the state.

Board members asked questions, and a discussion was held.

Commissioner Koban made a motion to approve the advisory committees. Commissioner Stafford seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed with eight (8) ayes.

III. Other Business

Commissioner Matlock spoke on the interactions of Austin Peay State University and Chairman Ragan. Mr. Hanemann stated that THEC has been in communication with Chairman Ragan and ongoing communication will continue through the upcoming legislative session.

Chairwoman Scarlett adjourned the meeting at 11:43 a.m. CDT.

NEXT THEC COMMISSION MEETING:

Thursday, November 16, 2023, in Nashville

THEC Chairwoman Tara Scarlett

THEC Secretary Whitney Allmon