

TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

Minutes of the Special Called Meeting

Senate Hearing Room 1, Cordell Hull Building

425 Rep. John Lewis Way N.

Nashville, TN

December 12, 2022

Link to recording:

[THEC Special Called Commission Meeting 12/12/22 \(tn.gov\)](#)

Chairman Evan Cope called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

Member	PRESENT	ABSENT
Chairman Evan Cope	X	
Commissioner Whitney Allmon	X	
Commissioner Andrew Kingsolver	X	
Commissioner Pam Koban	X	
Commissioner Jimmy Matlock	X	
Commissioner Jay Moser	X	
Commissioner Tara Scarlett	X	
Commissioner Vernon Stafford, Jr.	X	
Commissioner AC Wharton		X
Commissioner Dakasha Winton		X
Secretary Tre Hargett	X	
Treasurer David H. Lillard, Jr.	X	
Nathan James, Designee for Commissioner Sara Morrison	X	
Comptroller Jason Mumpower	X	

At the start of the meeting there were nine (9) voting members physically present and three (3) voting members participating electronically, constituting a quorum. Commissioner Stafford, Commissioner Allmon, and Commissioner Moser participated electronically.

AGENDA ITEMS

I. Selection of Interim Executive Director

Chairman Cope gave an overview of Dr. Robert M. Smith’s career in education and then introduced Dr. Smith.

Dr. Smith spoke about his 54-year career in higher education and his interest in serving as Interim Executive Director while the Commission searched for a full-time candidate.

Commission members asked questions and a discussion was held.

Chairman Cope made a motion that pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-7-205(a)(1), the Commission selects Dr. Smith for the position of Interim Executive Director of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission under the existing terms and conditions of the position effective January 2, 2023. Commissioner Koban seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed with eleven (11) ayes.

II. Other Business

Chairman Cope stated that the THEC Rules of Procedure allow for the creation of advisory committees consisting of commission members for the purpose of making recommendations to the Commission. Chairman Cope stated that he would like to propose an Executive Director Search Committee charged with recommending a process by which the next executive director will be appointed, consisting of the following commission members: Commissioner Pam Koban, Commissioner Vernon Stafford, Jr., Commissioner Tara Scarlett, Secretary Tre Hargett, and Commissioner Andrew Kingsolver.

Chairman Cope stated that in order for the higher education systems served by THEC to have a voice in this process, he had asked Dr. Russ Deaton, Dr. Brian Noland, and Dr. Keith Carver if they would be willing to serve in an advisory capacity for the proposed search committee and they all agreed to serve.

Chairman Cope made a motion that the commission approve the formation of the advisory search committee as proposed. This motion would include the charge of developing a process for the commission's consideration at the January 27, 2023, meeting. Commissioner Scarlett seconded the motion.

A discussion was held. Comptroller Jason Mumpower made a motion to amend Chairman Cope's motion to add a member who had been appointed by the General Assembly. After further discussion, Comptroller Mumpower then amended his motion to instead add Commissioner Jimmy Matlock to the committee. Chairman Cope seconded the amended motion. No further discussion was held.

A roll call vote was taken, the motion passed with ten (10) ayes, and one (1) abstention from Commissioner Matlock.

Chairman Cope stated that Mr. Lou Hanemann, Chief of Staff, would be in touch with the committee members to schedule the first organizational meeting within the next few days.

Chairman Cope adjourned the meeting at 2:18 p.m.

NEXT THEC COMMISSION MEETING:

Friday, January 27, 2023, in Nashville

THEC Chairman Evan Cope

THEC Secretary AC Wharton, Jr.