BLUE RIDGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

Monday, July 13, 2026 ~ 11:30 a.m. ~ Patton Building, Workforce Development Room #120

Item	Description
MEMBERS PRESENT	Dr. John Bryant, John B. "Chip" Gould, Mike Hawkins, Dr. Jennifer Hensley, Nathan Kennedy, Dr. Jan King, Kelly Leonard, Dina Moffitt, Dr. Arthur Pearsall, Mike Pressley, Richard Rhodes, Cher Silvius, Brian Traylor, and Dr. Brian Weaver.
MEMBERS ABSENT	None.
OTHERS PRESENT	Carolyn Alley, Lorri Allison, Vivian Bolaños, Kirsten Bunch, Dr. Dolly Horton, Dr. Laura Leatherwood, Dr. Chad Merrill, Tammy Pryor, Ben Rickert, Jamie Wiener, Amy Williford, Dr. Connie Wolfe, College Attorney Dean Shatley.
CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME	Chairman Gould called the meeting to order at approximately 11:30 a.m. He welcomed Trustees, College staff, and guests to the meeting.
ETHICS STATEMENT	Chairman Gould read the Ethics Statement and asked Board members to identify any actual or potential conflicts of interest related to the agenda. No conflicts were reported.
SPECIAL RECOGNITION	Dr. Leatherwood thanked Trustees for their flowers, cards, texts, calls, prayers, and support following the passing of her father. Dr. Leatherwood recognized Vivian Bolaños for eight years of dedicated service to the College. Ms. Bolaños was appointed by the Governor of North Carolina in 2018 and served two terms, including service on the Facilities Committee, Finance Committee, Executive Committee, Nominating Committee, President's Evaluation Committee, and the Blue Ridge Community College Foundation Board of Directors. Ms. Bolaños addressed the Board and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve the College and community. Dr. Leatherwood introduced newly appointed Trustee Cher Silvius, whose four-year term began July 1, 2026. Dr. Leatherwood shared highlights of Ms. Silvius' professional, community, and volunteer background. Ms. Silvius addressed the Board and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve.
APPROVAL OF AGENDA	The meeting agenda was approved upon motion by Dr. Bryant and second by Mr. Traylor. The motion passed without opposition.
APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA	The Consent Agenda was approved upon motion by Mr. Leonard and second by Mr. Traylor. The motion passed without opposition.
COMMITTEE REPORTS – Curriculum Committee	**Curriculum Committee** Dr. Weaver reviewed the recommendation previously considered by the Curriculum Committee and Finance Committee regarding the Federal Direct Loan Program. By direction of the Curriculum Committee and Finance Committee, Dr. Weaver moved to approve the recommendation that the College withdraw from the Federal Direct Loan Program effective Fall 2027. No second was required. The motion passed without opposition.
COMMITTEE REPORTS – Finance Committee	**Finance Committee** Mr. Kennedy presented the Finance Committee report and noted that the Committee had no action items. Vice President Carolyn Alley reviewed the College's financial

	statements as of May 31, 2026, including state, county, and institutional funds. She reported that the College continued working to close out the fiscal year and that additional updates would be provided after June 30 numbers were finalized. Mr. Kennedy reported that the SAMTEC equipment had been removed from campus, requiring a non-cash accounting write-off of the remaining depreciated value as part of the year-end closing process. • State budget activity included additional reallocations and Faculty Recruitment and Retention funding awarded as a salary increase rather than a bonus. • Dr. Leatherwood explained that the State budget must first be allocated through the North Carolina Community College System before individual college allocations are distributed. Once Blue Ridge Community College receives its allocation, College administration will prepare the budget for Board approval. She noted that the College intends to distribute the legislatively approved salary increases and bonuses as quickly as possible after the funds are received. Trustees were advised that the increases will be effective July 1, 2026, for eligible employees and are not retroactive. • Henderson County funding for operations was reviewed, including remaining funds as of May 31. • Institutional cash balances and interest earned during the fiscal year were reviewed. • Mr. Kennedy and Ms. Alley provided an update on Hurricane Helene recovery reimbursements, including insurance and FEMA-related claims for debris removal, building repairs, vehicle damage, and administrative overhead. The Patton Parking lot project was not included as it was directly managed and paid for by FEMA. • Chairman Gould provided a brief update regarding the temporary storm debris operation lease at the College's Llama Farm property and noted that the lease arrangement with Henderson County was concluding.
COMMITTEE REPORTS – Facilities Committee	**Facilities Committee** Dr. Merrill provided an update on facilities projects and capital planning items. • County-funded capital projects were reviewed, including Henderson County and Transylvania County project allocations. • The Patton parking lot restoration project was completed through FEMA-directed work, with reopening planned for July 31, 2026. • Planning and review work continued for the new Facilities Maintenance Building, including site, utility, fiber, water, sewer, and permitting coordination, with a goal of breaking ground in Fall 2026. • Bat Fork Creek restoration began in June and includes wetland and stream restoration intended to support long-term flood resiliency. Trustees discussed the flood resiliency benefits of the Bat Fork Creek project and its relationship to future campus use.
COMMITTEE REPORTS – Nominating Committee	**Nominating Committee** Mr. Leonard reported that the Nominating Committee met on June 17, 2026, to discuss the 2026-2027 slate of officers and Executive Committee members. The June 17, 2026, Nominating Committee meeting minutes were approved by Committee members upon motion by Dr. King and second by Dr. Bryant. The motion passed without opposition. Mr. Leonard presented the Nominating Committee's recommended slate of officers for 2026–2027: John B. "Chip" Gould, Chairman; Dr. John Bryant, Vice Chairman; and Dr. Laura B. Leatherwood, Secretary. The floor was opened for additional nominations. There being none, nominations were closed by motion from Dr. Hensley and second. Because the recommendation for the slate of officers came from the Nominating

	Committee, no second was required on the slate. Trustees approved the slate by the required two-thirds majority vote. (Mr. Leonard noted that, due to unique circumstances, it was recommending Mr. Gould to serve an additional term as Chairman. Specifically, the Committee believed it was important to maintain continuity in Board leadership while the College continues its work with Transylvania County management and commissioners regarding budget and funding considerations for the Transylvania County campus, and until those efforts reach a conclusion.) Mr. Leonard then presented the Committee's recommendation for the two elected Executive Committee members: Nathan Kennedy and Kelly Leonard. The floor was opened for additional nominations. There being none, nominations were closed by motion from Mr. Traylor and second by Dr. Hensley. Because the recommendation came from the Nominating Committee, no second was required. The recommendation passed without opposition. Chairman Gould noted that Board committee assignments would be finalized and distributed soon.
COLLEGE REPORTS	**President's Report** Dr. Leatherwood referenced the written President's Report posted in the Board portal and highlighted several updates. • Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET): The College successfully hosted the Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission site visit on June 22. No findings were identified, and the Commission's final approval vote is scheduled for August 14, 2026. Pending approval, the College anticipates launching BLET in January 2027 and beginning other Commission courses after approval. • Federal Public Safety partnerships: Dr. Leatherwood reported that Henderson County Campus office space is being utilized through partnership agreements with agencies that support public safety collaboration. • Transylvania County outreach: Dr. Leatherwood reviewed ongoing meetings and engagement with county leaders, elected officials, candidates, community partners, the Transylvania Economic Alliance, and other stakeholders, and noted the strengthened College presence through the Transylvania County Campus Director. • State budget: Dr. Leatherwood reviewed significant statewide community college investments, including Propel NC, enrollment growth funding, salary increases and bonuses, apprenticeship support, technology investments, workforce programming, and other systemwide priorities. • Brevard Campus appropriation: Dr. Leatherwood reported that the College received a $2 million non-recurring special appropriation for repairs and renovations at the Brevard Campus and operating deficits related to enrollment loss at that campus. Trustees discussed the flexibility and strategic use of those funds. • Credentials and graduates: Dr. Leatherwood drew attention to handouts summarizing spring credentials awarded, graduate demographic information, customized training activity, and Small Business Center activity. **Advising and Career Services** Dr. Connie Wolfe and her team presented an overview of the College's work to strengthen academic advising and career services as part of the strategic plan. The presentation addressed the current advising model, desired future state, career exploration tools, integration of academic and career advising, continuing education considerations, implementation planning, assessment, and expected impact on student success. Trustees discussed the importance of employer engagement, connections with local

	high schools and universities, faculty training and accountability, career placement, workforce needs, and pathways to family-sustaining employment.
OLD BUSINESS	None.
NEW BUSINESS	Chairman Gould encouraged Trustees to participate in the Blue Ridge Community College Foundation's annual giving campaign, noting that full Board participation supports grant and philanthropic opportunities. Chairman Gould also noted that Board committee assignments would be distributed soon and reminded Trustees of required documentation and training items.
CLOSED SESSION	Mr. Gould announced that a closed session would not be needed and moved to the next agenda item.
COMMENTS AND ADJOURNMENT	After several questions were answered, and with no further business to be completed, Chairman Gould adjourned the meeting at approximately 1 p.m.

John B. "Chip" Gould, Chairman

Dr. Laura B. Leatherwood, Secretary