



(APPROVED)

**Salem State University Assistance Corporation
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
September 19, 2022**

Present In-Person Meeting: Helen Corbett, Tom Daniel, Beth Debski, Kim Driscoll, Beth Haran, John Keenan, Anthony Nickas and Rinus Oosthoek. **Guests:** Laura Swanson and Rita Colucci, SSU General Counsel.

The Annual Meeting was held in-person and called to order by Vice Chair John Keenan at 8:03am.

A motion was made by Rinus Oosthoek and seconded by Beth Haran to approve the Board meeting minutes of May 16, 2022. All in favor, none opposed.

Swanson reported that due to the unexpected complexities related to the implementation of GASBY 87 there was a delay in presenting the FY22 audited financials for the September 19th meeting. She stated that a separate Zoom Board meeting had been scheduled for September 26, 2022 for presentation of the FY22 audited financials and would be held over Zoom.

Vice Chair Keenan reminded the Board that the September meeting is the Annual Meeting of the SSUAC and asked all Board members to review, sign and return the Conflict of Interest forms. Vice Chair Keenan introduced SSU General Counsel Rita Colucci for the purposes of discussing a real estate matter. It was determined that it was not necessary to go into Executive Session. Colucci reported that a survey performed when SSUAC purchased Central Campus discovered that several residential abutters had been encroaching on the purchased land. She stated this encroachment primarily consisted of the extension lawn and garden areas. To address this issue, long term leases were entered into with the abutters. However, when one of those properties is sold a new lease must be entered into with the new owner. Colucci stated that she received a request for a new lease from an abutter selling their property. A motion was made by Rinus Oosthoek and seconded by Beth Debski to enter into a new lease with the new home owner on all the same terms and conditions as the previous lease. All in favor, none opposed.

Swanson reported that the existing policy pertaining to the Extended Illness Bank Policy needed to be corrected because it was thought that employees could use their Sick Bank Hours to "top off" wages paid under the MA Paid Family & Medical Leave (PFML) Act. However, it was determined that employees could not do that and the Handbook language needed to be corrected along with several miscellaneous items that had been identified by the HR company. Swanson stated the revised policy language was prepared by their HR company. A motion was made by Helen Corbett and seconded Beth Debski to approve the changes to the SSUAC Employee Handbook. All in favor, none opposed.

Swanson also requested the Board waive the three-week vacation carry over requirement at the end of the calendar year as outlined in the Employee Handbook. She stated this would enable the organization to continue operations with appropriate staff coverage during vacation times. A motion was made by

Beth Debski and seconded by Helen Corbett to waive the three week vacation carry over requirement. All in favor, none opposed.

Swanson reported that throughout COVID, the EC staff served the tenant needs, building operations, pivoted programming and continued the mission of the Enterprise Center. She stated that the staff was in need of a respite and would like to recognize their hard work and dedication by closing the Enterprise Center during the Christmas break (starting Friday, December 23 – Monday, January 2nd). Swanson stated there would be one staff person covering the building from 7:00am-2:30pm during this period to ensure an onsite presence in case of an unexpected building repair or tenant need. She stated that covering employee would receive the equivalent time off to be taken at another time. The Board was in favor of the recommendation and did not feel a formal vote was needed.

President Keenan reported that the opening of the school year had gone well with approximately 1,600 students returning to the residence halls. Keenan report the SSU Speaker Series with Amal Clooney was a major success and Project Bold continues to move forward. He stated the University is in the process of developing its next strategic plan and expects to receive Hispanic Serving Institution designation in approximately three years. He stated that there has been no recent activity pertaining to the Salem Diner because of COVID. Keenan reported that SSU received a 10M gift for the School of Education from the Cummings Foundation to fund the James McKeown School of Education.

Swanson reported that as a result of their Finance Manager being out on medical leave since the beginning of summer and a number of unknown variables related to the financing of a capital improvement plan she would not be submitting an FY23 Final Budget at the September meeting. Swanson stated she expects to receive more information in the weeks ahead and plans to present the Final FY23 budget at the November Board meeting for approval.

Swanson reported the overall operating financials for the first two months of the FY23 budget have been stable and on track. She stated that the non-SSU tenant rental income has remained steady and they had seen an increase in new office space inquires. Swanson reported the majority of expenses were on or under budget. The Board reviewed the financial reports and credit card statements and did not have any questions.

Swanson reported that she would be postponing the Board Survey results as it would be helpful to have greater participation. She stated she would resend the survey and share the findings after additional responses were received. Swanson report that the IRS application for the Enterprise Center Foundation was filed in May and expect to receive a determination letter by the end of the calendar year.

Swanson reported that she had been selected to participate in the inaugural LEADS North Shore Fellows cohort began in September. She stated that LEADS (Leaders Engaged and Activated to Drive System-wide Change) is a 10-month Executive Fellowship program that is developed and delivered in partnership with Faculty/Staff from Harvard Business School. Swanson reported that LEADS fellows are diverse, cross-sectional leaders, already working in positions of influence and committed to making positive change in the greater Lynn, Salem, Peabody and/or Beverly communities.

Swanson stated that she accepted an invitation from Essex Tech to join their Program Advisory Council (PAC). She stated the role of the Council is to guide the school programs to ensure that they are teaching their students the skills and tools to be successful marketers and business professionals.

Swanson reported she spent a portion of the summer reaching out and meeting with leaders of business organizations to see how their organization has been impacted by COVID, what pivots they've made along with interim and/or permanent changes. She stated her primary focus for FY23 priorities was to build an action plan in the three areas of real estate, relevance and revenue. She said her plan was to spend several weeks talking with business owners about how the Enterprise Center was helpful to them, identify their current challenges they are facing, what kind of programmatic/resources would be of assistance and how can we best help them to sustain and growth their business. Swanson stated the goal was to use the feedback to develop and launch programs in January that will be relevant in the market place and have the potential for sponsorship support.

Swanson reported that in FY22, the Alliance received a REDO grant in the amount of \$360,000 of which \$60,000 was to fund Alliance specific activities and \$300,000 to fund four regional projects. She stated that the Alliance completed its FY22 REDO activities in June and that all four of the regional projects have continued into FY23 with MOBD approval. Swanson stated that the FY23 REDO Grant Program RFP has not been released by MOBD.

Swanson reported that in June, the Alliance completed its year-long, three-part survey with focus groups of North Shore businesses to learn how COVID impacted their business, current challenges they're facing and what type of support they need. She stated that workforce challenges, supply chain issues, e-commerce/technology and the changing the ways of doing business were major themes identified.

Swanson reported the Alliance launched its North Shore Small Business Diversity Directory which is hosted on its website. She stated that eligible businesses must be located within one of the 30 Alliance service communities and have at least 51% of the ownership team in at least one of the following categories: immigrant-owned, women-owned, minority-owned, service-disabled veteran-owned, veteran-owned, LGBTQIA-owned, disability-owned business enterprise. She stated the Diversity Directory is both an online and printable directory and a marketing tool for businesses that would like to offer their services or products to other businesses and institutions within the North Shore region. Swanson reported this website-based directory would allow for ongoing enrollment throughout the year and at no cost to the participating business.

Swanson reported that at the end of June the Alliance was notified that 104.9FM radio station that broadcast the Alliance's weekly radio show North Shore Conversations had been sold and the new format would not include weekend radio shows. She stated they were exploring other communication options to replace this effective communication tool and that she had spoken with the editor of the Salem News and was told they would welcome periodic columns from the Alliance.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Tom Daniel and seconded by Helen Corbett. All in favor, none opposed. The meeting adjourned at 9:24 am.