



The Peninsula's Community College

Budget and Finance Committee
Special Called Meeting
Thursday, November 18, 2021

Members Present: Mike Kuhns, Mary Bunting (via Zoom), Dr. Linda Riviera, and Mr. Curtis Bethany

College Staff: Steven R. Carpenter, Steven Felker, and Geraldine Mathey

Mr. Kuhns called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the athletics program introduced during the annual localities luncheon held Monday, November 8th. During that meeting Dr. Brannon proposed using locality funds, previously earmarked toward the bond payment for the Peninsula Workforce Development Center (PWDC), to enhance the athletic program at Thomas Nelson. This program could be structured to include all students, young and older, as well as structured and intramural programs.

Ms. Bunting, as City Manager, questioned the use of funds for an athletics program versus workforce development. She felt some localities may prefer the funds be used to provide more workforce training since that is how the money had been used in the past. She felt localities would need more data on how an athletics program would benefit their citizens and the College.

Mr. Felker gave a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights are as follows:

- An athletic program would have a positive impact on the community in six major ways. However, a lot of coordination would be needed to ensure the programs are working.
- Thomas Nelson currently sponsors NJCCA sports programs in basketball (men's and women's) and baseball (men's). New sports to be considered include soccer (men's and women's), track and field (men's and women's), and volleyball (women's). Creating new sports program may generate interest in new college programs, such as sports manager.
- There is very little data on community college students and athletics. Based on Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) data, the more students are engaged outside the classroom, the more likely they are to graduate.
- Thomas Nelson will need to track this data to ensure the program is working. Both traditional and nontraditional students might be interested in both academics and athletics.

- The current budget for athletics is \$100K with about 40 students participating. The anticipated future annual cost is estimated at \$450K; this annual cost would be split between Thomas Nelson (\$240K or 53%, including the \$100K currently budgeted) and the localities (\$210K or 47%).
- It is anticipated that up to 120 students might participate if the program does go forward. Increased participation in athletics has the potential for increased revenue for the College; on the high end it could be \$520K and \$255K on the low end.

Other comments:

- Coaches do not need to have academic credentials.
- The head of the program would be a full-time employee, and the salary is included in the \$450K budget.
- Full funds would not be available before July 1, 2022, and although the full program would not be ready by the Fall 2022 term, there should be good foundation.
- Consider asking Foundation to provide the start-up costs, which could then be reimbursed.
- More information is needed to determine whether this proposal, or some other, is the best way to grow enrollment. Investing in sports would be larger than just increasing enrollment; this proposal would involve the larger community and enhance student morale and enthusiasm.
- Any further presentation to the localities would need to be packaged and presented thoroughly.
- It was suggested Dr. Brannon speak with other community colleges to see how they handled using locality contributions after a debt service had been paid off.
- Optimal method is to ask localities to give Dr. Brannon one year to come up with a strategic plan on how best to use the PWDC funds.
- Workforce training may be a higher priority for localities, as workforce provides a broader service to the community than does athletics.
- Next steps including sharing issues and concerns raised with Dr. Brannon; talking to the Foundation about potential funding assistance; and putting together a strategic plan to be shared with the localities.
- If Foundation is able and willing to provide funds, localities might be approached for in-kind support, such as the use of baseball fields, track fields, and the use of gyms.

There being no further discussion, the meeting ended at 10:55 a.m.