

**WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**COMMITTEE: JOINT ECONOMIC GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT AND HIGHER EDUCATION/FINANCE**

**DATE: SEPTEMBER 11, 2020**

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**ECONOMIC GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT OTHERS PRESENT:**

**AND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPRESENTING SUNY ADIRONDACK:**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

SUPERVISORS WILD

BRAYMER

MAGOWAN

MCDEVITT

SEEBER

DR. KRISTINE DUFFY, PRESIDENT

ANN MARIE SCHEIDEGGER, VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES/TREASURER

FRANK E. THOMAS, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

RYAN MOORE, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

SARAH MCLENITHAN, DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD

SUPERVISORS BRUNO

DRISCOLL

**ECONOMIC GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT**

**AND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

TOSHA BROWNELL, COMPUTER HELP DESK TECHNICIAN

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

SUPERVISORS HOGAN

LEGGETT

DIAMOND

DICKINSON

TAMMIE DELORENZO, ASSISTANT TO THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

JEREMY SCRIME, SENIOR COMPUTER SYSTEMS ANALYST/PROGRAMMER

MIKE SWAN, WARREN COUNTY TREASURER

MEMBERS OF THE WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND

STAFF

**FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**PRESENT:**

SUPERVISORS FRASIER

CONOVER

GERAGHTY

BRAYMER

MCDEVITT

STROUGH

**FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**ABSENT:**

SUPERVISORS BEATY

MERLINO

SIMPSON

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*Please note, the following contains a summarization of the September 11, 2020 joint meeting of the Economic Growth & Development and Higher Education and Finance Committees; the meeting in its entirety can be heard on the Warren County website using the following links:*

<https://warrencountyny.gov/gov/comm/Archive/2020/economic/>

<https://warrencountyny.gov/gov/comm/Archive/2020/finance/>

*Note: As per Governor Cuomo's Executive Order 202.1: "Article 7 of the Public Officers Law, to the extent necessary to permit any public body to meet and take such actions authorized by the law without permitting in public in-person access to meetings and authorizing such meetings to be held remotely by conference call or similar service, provided that the public has the ability to view or listen to such proceeding and that such meetings are recorded and later transcribed". All of the Committee members participated via video or teleconference, aside from Supervisors Magowan and Geraghty, who were physically present.*

Mr. Wild called the Economic Growth & Development and Higher Education Committee to order at 9:30 a.m. and Mrs. Frasier called the Finance Committee to order immediately after.

Copies of the meeting agenda were distributed to those Committee members in attendance, those participating virtually accessed the agenda via the Warren County website; a copy of the agenda is on file with the meeting minutes.

Dr. Kristine Duffy, *President of SUNY (State University of New York) Adirondack*, and Ann Marie Scheidegger, *Vice President for Administrative Services/Treasurer*, proceeded a review of a Power Point presentation which consisted of updates regarding the Fall Restart, Enrollment, Budget and Capital Projects during which the Committee members posed questions that were answered by Dr. Duffy and Ms. Scheidegger; a copy of the presentation is on file with the meeting minutes. During the presentation Dr. Duffy showed a video that was created to assist with reminding the campus community about the College's Health and Safety Protocols.

Dr. Duffy advised a significant amount of work had occurred all across the campus, apprising she was present on move in day on Monday where she was pleased to observe that all of the students and their families followed the proper safety protocols. She said on occasion they had to remind individuals how to properly wear their face masks, but other than that the students had been incredible over the past several days of the first week of classes. She informed she would also like to take a moment to thank the Warren County Health Services Department for all of their assistance in implementing SUNY Adirondack's first testing protocol which allowed them to do twelve samples at a time. She apprised they had also developed an MOU (*Memorandum of Understanding*) with HHN (*Hudson Headwaters Health Network*) for when there were students who needed to be tested in between the times the College was doing some sample testing. She stated good community partnerships were occurring all over, apprising she was appreciative of the community effort it took to be able to reopen their campus back up again to students.

In regard to enrollment, Dr. Duffy stated they had done everything they could to meet their budgeted enrollment; however, she noted, the average Community College within the SUNY system had experienced a fifteen percent decrease in enrollment comparing year to year. She said their enrollment was currently down ten percent and they needed about two hundred more students to enroll in addition to meeting their College Academy enrollment which was the courses they offered to High School, but they would have a picture of enrollment figures by the end of September.

Ms. Scheidegger advised they may need to use as much as \$2.5 million of their \$4.9 million anticipated fund balance, apprising the reason the fund balance had significantly more funds in it than previous years was because the College had been awarded CARES (*Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security*) Act funding from the Federal Government which was allocated to the Fund Balance for use next year. She stated they had been notified by the State that any cuts the State made to their funding would likely be a permanent cut that grew from there and they were working to respond to that as best they could, however the only two areas they could cut back on were the offerings to students and personnel and benefits. Dr. Duffy remarked she was appreciative of both Counties support on the Colleges Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2020-21, as she was well aware this was not an easy decision to make.

In regard to Capital Projects, Ms. Scheidegger apprised this meeting was typically where they would present the Colleges Annual Capital Improvement Plan on which approval from both Counties was required; however, she noted, they would not be making this request this year given the current economic climate, lack of funding from the State and new Facilities Master Plan, but they would resume making requests in September of 2021. Dr. Duffy informed their focus was on what projects were currently in process and continuing to work through the COVID-19

pandemic while also maintaining their operations. She said the purpose of the meeting had been to provide an update and no action was required, but she would be happy to answer any questions.

Mr. Conover advised he assumed they were working on planning for a worst case scenario and determining what was sustainable given certain conditions as opposed to using the Fund Balance as a bridge to a better time. Dr. Duffy informed Ms. Scheidegger and her staff were projecting out SUNY Adirondack's finances as they could over the last several years as part of a long-term financial plan, but they had not anticipated for the fact that there would be a pandemic. She advised their work going forward this year would be to consider what the new SUNY Adirondack would look like post COVID-19 and with that what were the structural changes required in order to have a more sustainable financial future. She stated one issue they were having was that there was still a significant amount of unknowns with no one providing them with concrete answers regarding what to expect which resulted in them preparing for the worst case scenario, but hoping for the best one. She stated during the summer they had implemented some strategies, such as partially furloughing 126 administrators and staff, some of whom were still on a partial furlough. She added they had also held off on filling almost all of the vacant positions over the past few years resulting in twenty-three positions that would remain vacant. She noted this was not sustainable either and there was a point where the current staff could no longer sustain the work that they were trying to accomplish. She mentioned in order to invest in the areas they felt were mission critical other decisions were required that would assist with continuing to invest in their core mission which was instruction and supporting their students to succeed. She advised with those two things in mind they would be carefully reviewing all of their programs and services to create a more sustainable future. Ms. Scheidegger added this was likely to occur over a period of time, as well with them implementing different measures during different periods of time based on what occurred because of all of the unknowns right now. As an example, Dr. Duffy apprised if they were considering eliminating an academic program they did not have the ability to just eliminate it, as it had to be taught out which meant this was not a short-term solution. She stated they were attempting to identify short-term, mid-term and long-term solutions while also being very methodical and careful about that. She advised they did not want to eliminate a program as part of a knee jerk reaction and then determine it was needed after the decision had already been made which was why they were trying to use solid data they could count on to make the decisions for now and into the future.

In regard to trends and enrollment, Mr. Wild inquired whether there was any data available that compared SUNY Adirondack to the other SUNY schools, as well as other schools located in the Northeastern part of the Country to determine how the College compared to others. Dr. Duffy responded almost every single Community College in New York had a decline in enrollment year-to-year for an average of about fifteen percent. She said SUNY Adirondack was trending right along with its peers, adding the Community College sector across the Nation had mostly experienced a decline.

Supervisor Driscoll apprised he would like to return to the reduction in courses offered as it related to being slightly shy of the enrollment goal and he questioned whether these schedule reductions had been across the board or were there specific curriculums that had been identified, such as those who were offered to individuals seeking careers in the trades and offer them the opportunity to obtain a higher education. Dr. Duffy replied the enrollment decline had been across the board and it sprinkled throughout programs, as there was no specific program that had a larger decline than others. In regard to the Nursing Program, Dr. Duffy informed enrollment was stable there, as well as in some of the Workforce Entry Programs, but with some decline across the board. She mentioned as enrollment declined their section number declined which resulted in a reduction in instructional expenses; she added they had been doing this for several years now and were directly aligning enrollment patterns with course offerings to ensure they were as lean as possible. She said they had contracted with a company that had provided them with a good data analysis tool which allowed them to drill down into data further to be able to align the course offerings with enrollment. She advised enrollment and course offerings had both declined, but not in one specific program. She indicated their Academic Division Chairs were very adept at identifying what they felt students needed and not over or under offering courses to ensure they would not diminish a students ability to progress in their degree program.

Dr. Duffy stated some of the positive that had arisen out of the COVID-19 crisis was that they had learned new ways to offer education that they were not ready for prior to this. She said over the summer they had to redesign some of the ways they managed their courses, adding she believed there was an opportunity to think differently about delivering education more specifically to rural areas if they had the technology available which was a challenge in some of the areas they served. She advised her point was in trying to look on the bright side they also had the opportunity to rethink the manner in which education was delivered; she added she believed this would occur across the higher education sector as everyone went through this. She stated if they used this opportunity correctly, they could reinvent the manner in which they did their work and think differently about it.

There being no further business to come before the Committees, Mrs. Frasier adjourned the meeting of the Finance Committee at 10:10 a.m. and Mr. Wild adjourned the meeting of the Economic Growth & Development and Higher Education Committee immediately after.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah McLenithan, Deputy Clerk of the Board