

SMITH VOCATIONAL AND AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL  
NORTHAMPTON, MA

MINUTES OF THE  
REGULAR BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
Tuesday November 14, 2023  
5:00 PM

PRESENT: Mr. Michael T. Cahillane, Dr. Julie Spencer-Robinson, Mr. Richard Aquadro, Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra, Dr. Portia Bonner NPS Superintendent

ADMINISTRATION: Superintendent Dr. Andrew Linkenhoker, Principal Mr. Joseph Bianca, Facilities Director Tim Smith

STUDENT REP:

ABSENT: School Business Administrator Ms. Crystal Fairman, Student Rep's Domeniq Sanchez and Brandon Diaz

Chair Michael T. Cahillane called the meeting to order at 5:00pm  
Vice-Chair Dr. Spencer-Robinson led the Pledge of Allegiance.  
Mr. Aquadro read the Mission Statement of the School.

Participation by the Public: none

Participation by the Trustees: Dr. Spencer-Robinson reported briefly on the MASC-MASS Joint Conference she attended with fellow Trustees last week, a lot was learned.

Dr. Spencer-Robinson also contacted Senator Comerford to express her appreciation for her advocacy with her senate colleagues in support of the Act relative to the use of hoisting equipment in Chapter 74 vocational technical education and suggested the Trustees send a formal letter to the Senate President asking for support of this bill.

Mr. Aquadro added he too attended the MASC-MASS Joint Conference and was pleased that he could share the history of our school.

Mr. Cahillane attended the Division VIII and Division V meetings at this conference, and enjoyed the AI presentation. Mr. Aquadro added we offered our school for future meetings of Division V.

Approval of Minutes: A **MOTION** was made by Mayor Sciarra and seconded by Dr. Spencer-Robinson to approve the minutes of the October 17, 2023 meeting.

**APPROVED 5-0**

School Spotlight: FFA (presentation attached) Katrina Chasse, a senior in Animal Science, reported on the recent national conference students attended. Dr. Spencer-Robinson asked about the American Degree, Katrina Chasse explained the process to achieve this. Mr. Aquadro asked if the students feel well prepared for this national competition, Katrina Chasse replied yes, we get a lot of preparation and practice.

Dr. Linkenhoker thanked the advisors for the work they put in to train the students. Mr. Aquadro asked who the advisors were. Dr. Linkenhoker replied Ms Evangelista, Ms Irish and Mr. Anspach

Information and Proposals/Trustees Questions & Answers (Q&A):

Superintendent's Report - Dr. Linkenhoker presented his report (attached).

In regard to NEASC accreditation Dr. Spencer-Robinson asked if this is worth the time and the money, should we poll the staff? Dr. Linkenhoker replied he did get input from the staff, and decided to stay with the accreditation for the time being. Dr. Bonner asked if the Trustees will need to be participants in the review, Dr. Linkenhoker replied he will know more once the schedule is sent. Mr. Aquadro asked if this accreditation forces us to do better, similar to what was reported from the MCAS presentation.

In regard to the Horticulture building project Dr. Spencer-Robinson asked do we want to spend our money this way? Increase square footage for one program out of 15 as well as academic classrooms adding that she is concerned that the cost will come in way over budget as building projects tend to do. Dr. Linkenhoker replied the building committee discussed the estimates and felt that some of them were on the high side. The committee feels comfortable moving to the design development stage. If the Board approves this tonight the design development is the phase where costs can be adjusted as necessary or needed.

Dr. Spencer-Robinson asked about a public school raising private funds at this level, is there a precedent? Dr. Linkenhoker replied Monty Tech raised funds to build a vet tech program, this took many years to raise the money and construct the building, adding other opportunities to raise funds would be to assess the sending districts, uncomfortable with this for only one program, would prefer to visit this option when we look at D building.

Discussion in regard to how this cost estimate was reduced to within the budget we have on hand.

Principal's Report - Mr. Bianca stated the student reps were unable to attend this evening.

Mr. Bianca gave his report (attached).

Mr. Aquadro asked about enrollment and when we reach the 600 capacity do we have the ability to increase?

Dr. Linkenhoker replied we wouldn't be able to accommodate the academic side. Dr. Linkenhoker added that we need a new D Building and when we get to that point we could add more academic classrooms.

Committee Report – Mr. Aquadro reported the building meeting was lively, all voices were heard.

Facilities Report – Mr. Smith briefly went over current projects taking place on campus.

Financial Report – as submitted.

New Business:

**A MOTION** was made by Dr. Spencer-Robinson and seconded by Mr. Aquadro to approve an out of state field trip for Pre-engineering senior students to attend the New England Air Museum April 25, 2024

**APPROVED 5-0**

**A MOTION** was made by Dr. Bonner and seconded by Dr. Spencer-Robinson to approve an out of state field trip to New York City for Criminal Justice senior students, a date in April 2024 to be determined.

Two Criminal Justice students and instructor Kristen Marciniac briefly stated their trip plans, including taking the train into NYC.

**APPROVED 5-0**

**A MOTION** was made by Mr. Aquadro and seconded by Dr. Spencer-Robinson to approve payment of an FY23 invoice from June 15, 2023 for Stadium Systems for \$3,750.00 from the Athletics Revolving Account

**APPROVED 5-0**

**A MOTION** was made by Mayor Sciarra and seconded by Dr. Bonner to approve payment of an FY23 invoice from Nov. 17, 2022 for Valley Machine Knife for \$61.80 to be paid from the Graphic Communications Revolving Account

**APPROVED 5-0**

**A MOTION** was made by Dr. Spencer-Robinson and seconded by Mr. Aquadro for **Discussion and Possible Action (VOTE)** on Horticulture Building budget and timeline.

**Discussion** Dr. Spencer-Robinson asked for Dr. Linkenhoker’s preference for the design development with the budget presented. As a Board approving the schematic design phase, not the budget at this point. Dr. Linkenhoker stated he is comfortable with moving to the design development phase.

Dr. Spencer-Robinson asked Dr. Bonner her perspective and comfort level with this. Dr. Bonner replied in her experience the projects were done through MSBA, feels that making sure contingency funds are in place.

Dr. Spencer-Robinson asked for the Mayor’s input, Mayor Sciarra replied it is a good idea to move to this next phase.

A **Motion** was made by Dr. Spencer-Robinson and seconded by Mr. Aquadro to approve to move from to schematic design phase to the design development phase.

**APPROVED 5-0**

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Aquadro and seconded by Dr. Spencer-Robinson for **Discussion and Possible Action (VOTE)** to send a support letter for **HB2337, “An Act relative to the use of hoisting equipment in Chapter 74 vocational technical education”** filed by Representative Patricia Haddad.

**Discussion** Dr. Linkenhoker gave a brief explanation in regard to the hoisting equipment use by students.

**MOTION APPROVED 5-0**

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Aquadro and seconded by Dr. Spencer-Robinson for **Discussion and Possible Action (VOTE)** on Board of Trustees term length.

**Discussion** Mr. Aquadro feels two years is not enough time to learn the ropes and provide good input and would like to suggest to increase to at least three years possibly to four years. Mayor replied this is in the city charter and when it was redrafted this was discussed city wide. This would require a change to the city charter, city wide is two-year terms. It would have to go through City Council first.

Future Business:

December 19, 2023 Building Committee meeting 3:00pm – Library

December 19, 2023 Regular Board of Trustees meeting 5:00pm – Library

January 16, 2024 Building Committee meeting 3:00pm – Library *TENTATIVE*

January 16, 2024 Regular Board of Trustees meeting 5:00pm – Library

February 13, 2024 Regular Board of Trustees meeting 5:00pm – Library

Adjourn:

At 6:58pm Dr. Bonner **MOTIONED** to adjourn.

**APPROVED 5-0**

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Carver, Board Secretary

# OUR TRIP TO NATIONALS



This template has been created by [Slideshow](#)

## FORESTRY TEAM

### Bronze Team

- Seraphina Gibson
  - Silver individual
- Jameson Lavalley
  - Bronze individual
- Sam Ryan
  - Bronze individual



# LIVESTOCK TEAM

## Bronze Team

- Haley-Ann Lynch
  - Silver individual
- Katrina Chasse
  - Bronze individual
- Hannah Marcil
  - Bronze individual
- Oliver Watters-Kochapski
  - Bronze individual



# DAIRY HANDLING INDIVIDUAL

- Grace Clendenin
  - Gold individual



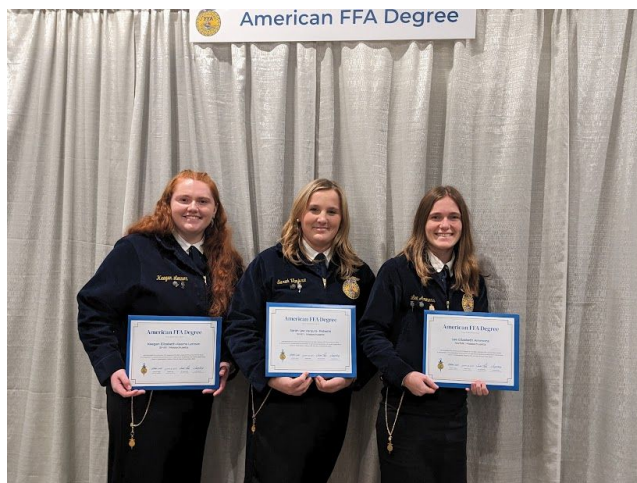
# AG MARKETING TEAM

- Nellie Hankinson
- Suzanne VanGeel
- Allie Devino



# American Degrees

Keegan Lennon  
Sarah Vanjura





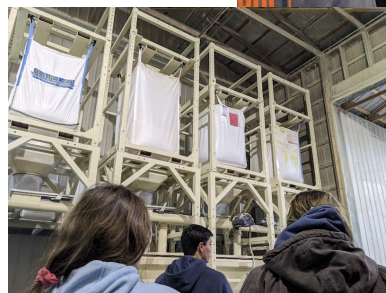
# Mint distillery

Students learned about the process of mint oil distilling, along with other herbs. They also learned about corn ethanol!



# FEED MILL

Students learned about grain mixing, storage and the process to make feed for cattle and hogs!



# THE HARVEST

Students learned about the process of growing corn and soybean and the process of collecting it. They were also given the opportunity to take a ride in the combine!



# RODEO!

Students enjoyed the night at the rodeo after a long day of competitions





# FAIR OAKS

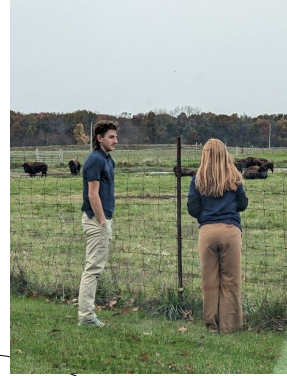
Students took a tour of the dairy part of fair oaks learning about the process giving birth along with the different parts of the milk process. By visiting the birthing barn, along with both the robot barn and the rotary milker



# FAIR OAKS PT2



# TEAM BONDING PICS



**THANK YOU  
ANY QUESTIONS**



# Superintendent Report

November 14, 2023

Submitted by  
Andrew H. Linkenhoker, Ed.D

## Instructional Leadership

*The education leader promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by cultivating a shared vision that makes powerful teaching and learning the central focus of schooling.*

- 10/20/23: Horticulture Freshmen Patio Judging
- 11/1/23: NEASC Steering Committee
  - Reviewed Standards Committee reports & compared Academic/Vocational
- 11/3/23: NEASC Steering Committee w/ Bruce Sievers
  - Review current progress and planning for March 2024 Visit

## Management & Operations

*Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by ensuring a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment, using resources to implement appropriate curriculum, staffing, and scheduling.*

- Campus Updates
  - 10/18/23: Companion Animal Construction Team Meeting
    - Plumbing & Electrical currently working
    - Anticipated completion Spring 2024
  - 10/30/23: Skills Capital Grants Update Meeting
    - Review current spending
    - Review budget of facility upgrades

## Management & Operations

*Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by ensuring a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment, using resources to implement appropriate curriculum, staffing, and scheduling.*

- 10/27/23: Fire Drill
- [Marketing Video](#)



## Management & Operations

*Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by ensuring a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment, using resources to implement appropriate curriculum, staffing, and scheduling.*

- Horticulture Building Updates
  - Current Budget Includes:
    - Structure insurance settlement: \$1,039,779.89
    - Lost equipment/tools insurance settlement: \$421,445.05
    - Skills Capital Grant: \$600,000 towards facility rebuild (Tuition Revolving)
    - Larger Skills Capital Grant: \$3,500,000 towards facility rebuild
    - Massachusetts Economic Bond Bill Amendment: \$275,000
    - Smith College Donation: \$150,000
    - Monetary Donations: \$39,834.37
    - **Potential Total: \$6,026,109.31**

## Management & Operations

*Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by ensuring a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment, using resources to implement appropriate curriculum, staffing, and scheduling.*

- Horticulture Building Estimate
  - Includes
    - 2 classrooms
    - 1 simulator room
    - Office
    - 2 Shop spaces
    - Climbing structure
    - Lavatories
    - Lockers
  - Net gain (including existing building)
    - 1 classroom
    - 1 simulator room
    - Climbing structure
    - 1 garage bay (potential)

	Prefab Metal Building (Keep Existing Structure) 7940 sq.ft
New Construction	\$3,068,741.00
Sitework	\$994,167.00
New Greenhouse	
Direct Costs	<b>\$4,062,908.00</b>
Design Contingency	\$406,290.80
Escalation	\$97,510.00
	<b>\$4,566,708.80</b>
Bonds	
GCS	
GRs	
Building Permit (City Waive?)	
Insurances	
OH&Profit	20% Markup
	<b>\$5,480,050.56</b>
Soft Costs	\$1,304,905.00
TOTAL	<b>\$6,784,955.56</b>
Contingencies/Escalations	\$883,800.80
Minimum Cost	<b>\$5,901,154.76</b>

## Management & Operations

*Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by ensuring a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment, using resources to implement appropriate curriculum, staffing, and scheduling.*

- Available Revenue: \$6,026,109.31
- Potential Costs: \$5,901,154.76 - \$6,784,955.56
- **Difference: +\$124,954.55 to -\$758,846.25**

### **How to close potential difference?**

- Fundraising
- Tuition Revolving Account
- Bond
  - \$750,000 at 20 years, 4.75%
    - Approximately \$58,125/ year or \$4,844/month
    - Cell Tower Revenue: \$2,000/month

### **\*Recommend a vote to approve SD estimate as shown and move project to DD phase**

- DD phase runs through December with approval in January
  - If DD is over budget then decisions/votes must occur in January

## Family & Community Engagement

*Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff through effective partnerships with families, community organizations, and other stakeholders that support the mission of the school and district.*

- [November Newsletter](#)
- 10/24/23: Northampton Lions Club Presentation & Dinner
- 10/25/23: Good Dog Spot Meeting
- 10/25/23: Program Advisory Meetings
- 10/26/23: Middle School Counselor Tour & Luncheon
- 10/30/23: Meeting w/ Basketball Program re: BoT Meeting Concerns
- 11/5/23: Open House

## **Family & Community Engagement**

*Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff through effective partnerships with families, community organizations, and other stakeholders that support the mission of the school and district.*

### Program Advisory Membership Needs:

- Advanced Manufacturing: Racial/Linguistic Minority
- Animal Science: Organized Labor, Postsecondary Institution
- Cabinet Making: Person w/ Disabilities, Racial/Linguistic Minority, Parent/Guardian, Student
- Carpentry: Person w/ Disabilities, Postsecondary Institution, Parent/Guardian, Student
- Cosmetology: Non-traditional (gender)
- Electrical: Person w/ Disabilities, Racial/Linguistic Minority
- Health Tech: Racial/Linguistic Minority

## **Professional Culture**

*Promotes success for all students by nurturing and sustaining a school culture of reflective practice, high expectations, and continuous learning for staff.*

- 10/19/23: MAVA Board & General Meetings
  - CTI Program Updates & Best Practices
- 10/27/23: CVSR Luncheon w/ MASS & MASC Presentations
  - Current legislative advocacy topics
- 11/8/23-11/10/23: MASC/MASS Joint Conference
  - Legal updates, MAVA legislative advocacy, Legal updates, AI presentation

## Donations

- David Devine (**Massachusetts Precision Coating**) donated 120 cases of disposable nitrile gloves to **Culinary**. Culinary will distribute gloves to other shops as needed.

## Looking Ahead

- 2x Weekly BAT Meetings
- Weekly Leadership Meetings
- Weekly SMMA Progress Update Meetings
- 11/15/23: NESC Steering Committee
- 11/16/23: School Law Updates Workshop
- 11/17/23: Policy Subcommittee Meeting
- 11/21/23: CJ Shark Tank
- 11/22/23-11/24/23: NO SCHOOL (Thanksgiving Break)
- 11/28/23-12/2/23: ACTE
- 12/4/23: Max Page (MTA President) Visit & Tour
- 12/6/23: Student Early Dismissal
- 12/7/23: MassHire Workforce Board Meeting
- 12/13/23: MIAA TMC Meeting
- 12/14/23: City DH Meeting
- 12/15/23: Hampshire County CES Steering Committee Meeting
- 12/19/23: Board of Trustees Meeting



## Contact Information

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*Super*

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Phone (413) 587-1414

Mr. Joseph C. Bianca  
Principal

[www.smithtec.org](http://www.smithtec.org)



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## Principal's Report November 2023 Board Meeting

### Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School Board of Trustees:

#### Student Representative to the Board:

Brandon Diaz  
Domeniq Sanchez

#### Enrollment:

572 – Total Students - 118 Northampton (20.6%)

9th – 150  
10th – 148  
11th – 146  
12th – 128

#### Open House

Our annual Open House was held on November 5, 2023. We had commercials running on social media and at Hadley Movie Theater. We mailed out 4,000 postcards announcing the Open House, and distributed more to schools for dissemination. School Counselors also visited sending schools for presentations.

#### Guided Tours:

2021 – Change in calculation for visitors – approx. 800 visitors  
2022 – Approx. 800 visitors  
2023 – Approx. 650 visitors

#### Student applications coming into the weekend:

2021 – 29  
2022 – 82  
2023 – 58

#### Student applications at Open House:

2021 – 62  
2022 – 51  
2023 – 46

Current total applications for the 2023-24 school year: 149 total with 28 from Northampton (18.8%). This represents a decline of 2 applications year over year.

*Founded in 1844 by Oliver Smith*  
*SV AHS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, disability, religion or sexual orientation.*

**School Council:**

We have met and begun discussing the DCAP and the update on the progress of our SIP goals. We will begin the Student Handbook review process in the January/February time frame.

**Youth Advisory to the Principal:**

First meeting took place on Wednesday, October 25, 2023. We discussed the SPIFFY At-Risk Youth Survey Data and began to brainstorm activities/next steps to help curb the at-risk behaviors seen in the data.

**Adams Scholarship:**

The annual list of John and Abigail Adams Scholarships awardees was submitted to Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School. We had 33 seniors receive this scholarship. To qualify students must score in the Advanced in at least 1 of the 3 MCAS exams and Proficient or higher in the remaining 2 MCAS exams; following which their total scores from all 3 MCAS exams must place them in the top 25% of graduating students. This offers a tuition waiver for undergraduate students at a Massachusetts state college or university.

Anderson, Astrid  
Bouffard, Caleb  
Carlson, Tyler  
Chasse, Katrina  
Chinappa, Myles  
Corbett, Christopher  
Courtney, Megan  
Daniels, Jayanna  
Farrington, Nathan  
Fein, Aaron  
Gagliardi, Lukas  
Gibson, Seraphina  
Ginsberg, Ariel  
Gorrell, Madison  
Groundwater, Walden  
Lachance, Thomas  
Lashway, Chase

Latour, Evan  
Le Torres, Tatiana  
Loomis, Sarah  
Marcil, Hannah  
Martinez, Alex  
Melo, Zander  
Ndreu, Nikola  
Norton, Morgan  
Ortiz, Ethan  
Ortiz Viera, Eithan  
Poudrier, Lily  
Thayer, Chase  
Tobin, James  
Truong, Zachary  
Wheeler, Jackson  
Yule-Wixx, Genesis-Esprit

**Personnel:**

Health Assisting Instructor – Interview phase

Respectfully submitted,  
Joseph Bianca  
Principal