

**SMITH VOCATIONAL AND AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL  
NORTHAMPTON, MA**

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

PRESENT: Mr. Michael T. Cahillane, Dr. Julie Spencer-Robinson, Mr. Richard Aquadro, NPS Interim-Superintendent Dr. Jannell Pearson-Campbell, Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra (5:08pm)

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

ABSENT: Ms Crystal Fairman, School Business Administrator

STUDENT REP: Ms Mandy Wright, Ms Jayanna Daniels (absent)

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

Participation by the Public: Christina Peterson, resident whose property almost abuts Smith Farm Fields. Ms Peterson briefly stated a few ideas and suggestions on how to manage the erosion. Ms Peterson will email Mr. Aquadro the suggestions and asked to meet to discuss (attached).

Participation by the Trustees: Dr. Spencer-Robinson reported briefly on the following topics; the Policy Group on Tradeswomen Issues and civil rights complaint against DESE (detail attached).

Mr. Aquadro briefly updated the Board on the property subcommittee meeting that took place this afternoon.

Mr. Cahillane welcomed everyone here tonight, had a great property subcommittee meeting, thanked all who are participating on this committee.

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

**APPROVED 5-0**

School spotlight: Adult Education - Lorena Turner, Director of the Adult Education program gave a brief update on the spring courses to date (attached).

CTI Grant with Workforce Board – to train the unemployed or underemployed to prepare them to go out into the workforce. Externship, Resume writing, Interview skills, connections with local employers to hire upon completion of the course. Uniforms, shoes, books, knife sets are supplied in the program paid for by the grant, no cost to students. Dr. Spencer-Robinson asked if Ms Turner tracks where students enrolled in Adult Ed programs live, she'd be interested in knowing this information.

Mr. Bianca complimented Ms Turner on building the program to the success it is. Dr. Linkenhoker added his compliments to Ms Turner. Mr. Cahillane added his appreciation to the work Ms Turner puts into the Adult Ed Program.

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

Property Subcommittee Report – reported under Participation by the Trustees

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

Principal's Report – Mr. Bianca requested the Student Rep's to give their report (attached). Mr. Bianca gave his report (attached).

Business Report – as submitted.

Dr. Spencer-Robinson spoke in regard to the last page of the Business Report and briefly ran through numbers, this is a new report grouped into specific categories, this will be provided quarterly.

Facilities Report – Mr. Smith reported on the following: The Burts Pit road property work has been done for the season, will pick back up in the spring. The paddock apple storage building repair to begin in March. The drainage issue on Locust Street pasture will begin in spring. The Animal science classroom former GCC renovation is moving along, goal is to move the animal science students in March. Carpentry only able to go every other week with limited number of students. Plumbing and Electrical is ready for inspection. During April vacation demo the pig barn for future Animal Companion building. \$22,200 was lowest bid by Associated Builders. The window project – FY23 CIP money, still on schedule for the B Building during February break. The A/C in C Building anticipate going out to bid February 22<sup>nd</sup> with opening being March 8<sup>th</sup>. The sidewalk project engineer listed a few things that need to be adjusted to bring up to code. Bringing water to the forestry building on the VA land was discussed with a possible path through woods. The chip activated entry doors, the IT Director will be working with the Facilities Director on this installation. The FY24 Capital Improvement projects, the hood systems, energy management system building C have been requested and we won't know until March if the projects will be funded.

Dr. Linkenhoker reported on the Mootel that was recently constructed. Farm Tech Giles DeWitt, along with the other farm techs and a few students worked on this.

Mr. Smith added in regard to the Multi Species Barn renovation and moving the sewer line, he is looking to have a plan drawn up and hiring a company to do this work over the summer. Also, the Autobody shop flooring abatement is still on track take place during the summer.

New Business:

A **MOTION** was made by Mayor and seconded by Dr. Pearson-Campbell to approve one day an out of state field trip to SUNY Cobleskill April 11, 2023 for 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in Agriculture and Criminal Justice  
**APPROVED 5-0**

A **MOTION** was made by Mayor and seconded by Dr. Spencer-Robinson to approve payment of an FY22 invoice to Sysco for \$750.67 from Culinary Arts Revolving  
*Discussion:* Mr. Aquadro asked why this is up for a vote rather than in the warrants. Dr. Linkenhoker replied past fiscal year invoices need a vote, adding he is unsure why this is so late.  
**APPROVED 5-0**

A **MOTION** was made by Dr. Spencer-Robinson and seconded by Mr. Aquadro to approve purchasing a table of 8 for the St. Patrick's Day Breakfast for \$228 from Trustees Account  
*Discussion:* Dr. Spencer-Robinson asked how this is important to our school, Mr. Cahillane replied it is a public relations event, the whole city gathers.  
**APPROVED 5-0**

Mr. Cahillane requested this **MOTION** for discussion from the December 20, 2022 motion to go out to bid for 7 – 10 passenger vehicle for clarification.

*Discussion:* Mr. Cahillane briefly explained the original motion was for a hybrid or electric vehicle and feels this is what we should be getting. Dr. Linkenhoker reiterated the need for a student activity vehicle for transportation to job sites, health technology rotations, students to job interviews and the difficulty of acquiring one. Dr. Spencer-Robinson added her understanding of the motion was to get a vehicle, whether it

is hybrid or gas powered, adding the priority will be hybrid but will get gas if needed. Mayor added a report from the department head meeting that getting a hybrid or electric vehicle is very difficult, this is a problem across Massachusetts. Dr. Spencer-Robinson added do we want to put aside educational opportunities for our students in order to find a hybrid vehicle which appears unobtainable at this point in the immediate future. Mr. Smith asked for clarification in regard to the vehicle needing to be a Chrysler model.

A **MOTION** was made by Dr. Spencer-Robinson and seconded by Mayor Sciarra for **Discussion/Possible Action** (vote) for a standardized annual longevity for all employees:

five (5) or more years of service \$750; ten (10) or more years of service \$2000; fifteen (15) or more years of service \$2500

*Discussion:* Dr. Spencer-Robinson gave a brief background of the motion and requests a new motion.

A **MOTION** was made by Dr. Spencer-Robinson and seconded Mayor Sciarra to defer the standardized annual longevity agenda item to the negotiation subcommittee.

**APPROVED 5-0**

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Aquadro and seconded by Dr. Spencer-Robinson to approve to begin a capital campaign

*Discussion:* Mr. Aquadro gave a brief explanation for this agenda item, feels it is time to begin raising funds for future needs.

Mayor asked would this be limited specific goals or be a general campaign.

Dr. Spencer-Robinson added she is interested in the scholarship fund and is it possible to coordinate this?

Mr. Cahillane recommends once this is approved start a committee.

Dr. Linkenhoker added a committee would be very helpful as would having someone in the profession of fundraising.

Dr. Spencer-Robinson asked how would the Friends of the Farm fit into this as a charitable/nonprofit. Dr.

Linkenhoker replied this could be similar to the campaign Monty Tech used to build a small building for their vet assisting program.

Mr. Aquadro asked about the Friends of the Farm. Mr. Cahillane gave a brief background of the inception.

**APPROVED 5-0**

Future Business:

March 21, 2023 Regular Board of Trustees meeting 5:00pm – Library

April 11, 2023 Regular Board of Trustees meeting 5:00pm – Library

May 16, 2023 Regular Board of Trustees meeting 5:00pm – Library

Upcoming Events:

March 22, 2023 Program Advisory Committees Dinner and Meetings – 6:00pm – Cafeteria

April 4 – 6, 2023 FFA State Convention – Sheraton Framingham Hotel & Conference Center

April 13, 2023 MAVA Outstanding Vocational Student Awards Banquet – Mechanics Hall Worcester

Adjourn:

At 6:35pm Mayor Sciarra **MOTIONED** to adjourn Mr. Aquadro seconded.

**APPROVED 5-0**

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Carver, Board Secretary

## SOME PROPOSED SOLUTIONS TO MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES AT SMITH FARM FIELDS

Presented to SVAHS Board of Trustees Feb. 14, 2023 by Christina Petersen.

During the 1980's I was on the Advisory Board for the Forestry Program. I am an abutter on Burts Pit Rd, and, since 2000, have been a longtime complainer of the dog situation on the farmland. I've organized public meetings, tried to engage MDAR through Barbara Hopson (to no avail), worked with Tim Smith on erosion of the riverbank, and taken a walk with Julie Spencer-Robinson to survey the situation.

Here are some suggestions for ongoing management.

1. There is severe erosion leading from the new "desire path" from the parking area down to the main road/trail. Solution: put up an educational sign letting people know of their impact on the trees/slope. Ask them not to use their new path. Install water bars to prevent further erosion.
2. People are continuing to run their dogs on the cemetery hill, in full view of the sign asking them not to. Not sure what the solution to that is.
3. There is severe erosion in the area where people swim their dogs. Solution: signage and hope for the best.
4. People continually stray off the paths through the upper hay mowing/corn fields on BP Rd. Solution: more signs asking people not to stray from the road/path.
5. People parking directly next to the big oak in the parking lot. I work with Tree Northampton, and we have tried to address this through wood chips, traffic cones, and stakes. I wonder if the school could drop a load of large rocks there that we could spread in a circle under the tree canopy to prevent further parking on the tree roots.
6. People used to park along the shoulder of BP Rd. near the parking area. I asked the DPW to put some boulders there, but they said no. Tree Northampton put up stakes which have worked well to prevent parking, but I wonder if they are in the way of mowing for SV.
7. Parking along the farmland on upper BP Rd. used to be a problem. That has been mostly addressed with the No Parking sign. Yay!

In general, a large sign installed on the gate leading down from the parking area could be installed. The first line would be "All users, please read this sign" in very large font. With very few words, the sign could give information on ownership of the land and responsibilities associated with the APR, as well as proper protocol of dog walking. I would advocate that the second line would read, "This is not a dog park!".

## **Board of Trustees Announcement February 14, 2023**

Lisa Clauson, who facilitates the Policy Group on Tradeswomen Issues, reached out to me and our guidance staff about holding an information session especially for girls and non-binary students to learn more about careers in the union building trades, which offer excellent benefits and starting pay. She will be here on March 9th and 15th, and I encouraged her to contact Northampton High School as well.

On a different topic, last week, Massachusetts civil rights advocates filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education charging that selective admission standards in vocational schools discriminate against low-income students, students of color, English language learners, and special education students, who are accepted at lower rates than their counterparts not in these groups. Admissions criteria is an issue that I have been closely examining in my role on the VTE Advisory Council, and of course Dr. Linkenhoker and his team have been for several years.

There are roughly twice as many applicants to vocational-technical schools than there are slots available each year. Schools currently select students using criteria like middle school grades and attendance record, but they have been encouraged to consider a lottery instead, so that all applicants have an equal chance of acceptance and enrollment.

Dr. Linkenhoker has spoken to us before about Smith Vocational's attendance policy, and I know he will again. We may decide to make changes without waiting for a mandate from the federal government. If anyone wants to know more about this important issue, please don't hesitate to contact me, and I invite anyone who has thoughts about it to share them with me.

## Spring 2023 Semester Smith Vocational Adult Education

Courses Offered: # of students: Net:

|                                    |                     |                    |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Clinical Medical Assisting         | 10                  | \$21,022.98        |
| Electrical Code and Theory Level 1 | 17                  | \$5,309.20         |
| Electrical Code and Theory Level 2 | 17                  | \$5,257.60         |
| Electrical Code and Theory Level 3 | 19                  | \$6,273.20         |
| Electrical Code and Theory Level 4 | 25                  | \$9,609.40         |
| Home Repair                        | 12                  | \$1,326.20         |
| Oil Heat Technician License Prep   | 7                   | \$9,774.91         |
| Phlebotomy                         | 14                  | \$15,470.37        |
| Small Engine Repair                | 6 (still enrolling) | \$348.36           |
| Woodworking                        | 6 (still enrolling) | \$683.88           |
| Welding Course                     | 7 (still enrolling) | \$3,738.50         |
| Totals:                            | <b>140</b>          | <b>\$78,814.60</b> |

### Grant Oversight:

Culinary Arts CTI Grant Cohort #1 (10 students)  
 Dates of class: January 17, 2023 – June 13, 2023  
 \$3,500 (50 hours Start-up) + \$10,500 (150 hours management)

Nurse Aid Program (final year of a 6 year grant) (6 students)  
 Dates of Class: March 4, 2023 – June 3, 2023  
 Projected \$7,000 (100 hours)

# Superintendent Report

February 14, 2023

Submitted by  
Andrew H. Linkenhoker, Ed.D

# Highlights & Updates

- 1/18/23: MIAA TMC Meeting
- 1/19/23: MAVA CFS Steering Committee
- 1/20/23: SNOW DAY
- 1/23/23: SNOW DAY
- 1/24/23: Leadership I Presentation
- 1/25/23: General Advisory Meeting
- 1/27/23: *Tour/Lunch with JFK Principal Marien*
- 1/30/23: Unit H Negotiations
- 1/31/23: *Mindfulness Session*
- 1/31/23: Joint Session w/ Northampton City Council, School Committee & SVAHS Trustees
- 2/7/23: *Mindfulness Session*
- 2/7/23: *MAVA Consult w/ Attorney Paige Tobin*
- 2/7/23: Unit H Negotiations
- 2/9/23: City DH Meeting
- **2/10/23: CJ MRE Cooking Judge**
- 2/13/23: Host Franklin/Hampshire Counties DESE CCTE Meeting
- 2/14/23: Mindfulness Session
- 2/14/23: Property Subcommittee

\***BOLD** = Superintendent Goal Evidence\*

\**Italics* = Equity Focus\*



# Horticulture Building Rebuild Update

- OPM out to Bid
  - Will drive next steps of bidding out design phase of project
- 2/1/23: Received letter from Smith College
  - Donation of \$150,000 towards project split over two years
  - Personal response being written to be share with requested invoice
- Updated Financial Picture:
  - Structure insurance settlement: \$1,039,779.89.
  - Lost equipment/tools insurance settlement: \$421,445.05.
  - 1st Skills Capital Grant: \$600,000 towards facility rebuild
  - 2nd Skills Capital Grant: \$3,500,000 towards facility rebuild
  - Economic Bond Bill (Thank you Senator Comerford): \$275,000
  - Smith College Donation: \$150,000
  - Monetary Donations: \$39,884.37
  - **Potential Total: \$6,026,109.31 million towards building construction**
    - Current Building Estimate: \$7,432,100
    - Must anticipate finding \$1,405,990.69

# FY24 Budget Priorities

- Continue to support all academic and vocational programs
- Continue to focus on multiple Skills Capital Grant implementations
- Continue to focus on Horticulture Building Rebuild
- Add additional Assistant Principal
- Increase Animal Science from 2.5 FTE to 3.0 FTE
- Support New Model of 2.0 FTE Farm Techs & 2.0 FTE Animal Care Techs

# NEASC Update Letter

- 1/23/23: Received response letter to recent Special Report
  - Accepted without change in membership status the Special Report
  - Provided several noteworthy commendations
  - Must provide another Special Report focusing on following recommendations:
    - Continue seeking future Skills Capital Grants
    - Continue seeking funding sources for the Horticulture Building rebuild
    - Consult with city officials and DESE on bonding options and capital assessments to non-resident communities
    - Continue to consult with outside groups on vision and expansion of Agriculture programs

# City DH Name Tag Updates/Input

- Options:
  - City Logo & SVAHS Logo
  - City Logo & Recognition of SVAHS making name tags
  - City Logo & No SVAHS recognition

# Donations

- None this month

# Looking Ahead

- 2/15/23: MIAA TMC Meeting
- 2/20/23-2/24/23: NO SCHOOL: February Vacation
- 2/28/23: Mindfulness Session
- 3/1/23: Unit H Negotiations
- 3/3/23: CVSR Luncheon
- 3/7/23: Mindfulness Session
- 3/14/23: Mindfulness Session
- 3/16/23: MAVA Officers, Board of Directors, & General Membership Meetings
- 3/21/23: Board of Trustees Meeting

# March Focus

- Initial FY24 Budget Presentation

# Contact Information

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*Super*

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February 14, 2023

**Student Representatives Report  
February 2023 Board Meeting**

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

**Jayanna**

**Lowerclassmen:**

**FFA:**

**Athletics:**

**Shops:**

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**Mandy**

**Upperclassmen:**

**Skills:**

**Clubs:**

Yearbook - staff members are submitting pages for approval, taking photos, and identifying seniors as winners of the Senior Superlatives

**Fundraisers:**

Baseball Shop Cloth sale - Athletes and school community members may shop the online "gear shop" in support of the baseball team. The money raised will help support team activities, clothing, and equipment.

Viking Runestone (SVAHS Art and Writing publication) Advertising campaign - Students and staff will sell advertisements to be published in the Spring 2023 edition of the Viking Runestone. The money raised will help support the publishing costs of the magazine.

**English, Math, Special Ed, Humanities:**

**Shops:**

Respectfully submitted,

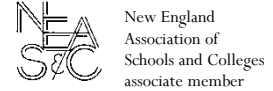
Jayanna Daniels and Mandy Wright  
Student Representatives



Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School  
80 Locust Street  
Northampton, MA 01060-2094  
Phone (413) 587-1414

Mr. Joseph C. Bianca  
Principal

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



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February 14, 2023

**Principal's Report  
February 2023 Board Meeting**

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

**Student Representative:**

Mandy Wright

**Enrollment:**

563 students

**Admissions:**

February 2023 – 243 applications, with 54 (22.2%) from Northampton

February 2022 – 215 applications, with 45 (20.9%) from Northampton

February 2021 – 163 applications, with 32 (19.6%) from Northampton

February 2020 – 184 applications, with 41 (22.3%) from Northampton

February 2019 – 180 applications, with 26 (14.4%) from Northampton

Applications are due to us by March 15, 2023 and the Out of District Tuition Forms are due April 1, 2023.

**Budget:**

Crystal Fairman and I are building the school budget proposal for Dr. Linkenhoker to review. On track to present at the March Board of Trustees' Meeting.

**Personnel:**

Interview phases for Electrical Instructor and Animal Science Instructor

**Athletics:**

Boys Basketball are the Tri-County South League Champions.

Wrestling sending 7 wrestlers to the State Tournament: Mateo Henriques, Evan Latour, AJ Orubo Matt Small, Forrest McSweeney, Ari Ginsburg and **Western Massachusetts Champion Alex Martinez.**

*Founded in 1844 by Oliver Smith*

*SVAHS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, disability, religion or sexual orientation.*

**State School and District Report Cards 2022:**

The School and District Report Card Announcement Letters are being sent via email to parents this evening and are now posted on our school website. The letter information was issued in English and Spanish.

**Highlights:**

**98.3%** Teachers licensed in their field of study – **4.9% higher** than state average.

**9<sup>th</sup> Grade passing 94%** which is **16.6% above** state average. **9<sup>th</sup> grade students who pass all of their classes are 4x more likely to graduate.**

**100% of students complete MassCore** requirements. Vocational schools are waived from the Foreign Language Requirement, but approx. 25% of our students complete this regardless of the waiver.

**95.2% 4-year graduation rate** which is **5.4% above** the state average.

**Decreased from 13%-5%** the students in the Not Meeting Expectations category in ELA.

**Decreased from 12%-8%** the students in the Not Meeting Expectations category in Math.

**47.2% Growth** in ELA, 2.7% below the state average.

**54.6% Growth** in Math, 4.6% above the state average.

**26<sup>th</sup> Percentile, no accountability determination assigned.**

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Bianca  
Principal

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