

**VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**Meeting Number 340**  
**Wednesday, November 12, 2025**  
**Location: ADM Boardroom**

The Virginia Highlands Community College Board convened at 12:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 12, 2025. Lunch was at noon, and the business portion of the meeting immediately followed at 1:06 p.m. in the ADM Boardroom.

**Members Present**

Gwen Beattie, Smyth County  
Donald Bowman, City of Bristol  
Charlie Fugate, Washington County  
Pamela Hill, Smyth County  
Beth Rhinehart, City of Bristol

**Members Absent**

Dr. Doug Arnold, Washington County  
Don Ashley, City of Bristol  
Dan Smith, Washington County  
Tonya Triplett, Washington County

**Staff Present**

Dr. Adam Hutchison, President and Secretary to the Board  
Jessie O'Quinn, Executive Assistant to the President  
Christine Fields, Vice President of Finance and Administration  
Laura Pennington, Vice President of Institutional Advancement  
Dr. Derek Whisman, Vice President of Instruction and Student Services

**Call to Order**

Gwen Beattie called the meeting to order. Shortly thereafter, Chair Don Bowman, arrived and led the meeting.

**Approval of Minutes**

Board Member Beth Rhinehart made the motion to approve the minutes for August 12, 2025 Minutes No. 339 (with one minor correction). Board Member Gwen Beattie seconded, and the motion carried with all in favor.

**Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

**College Updates**

Instruction and Student Services

Vice President Dr. Derek Whisman began by asking the Board for approval of an addition to this year's Citizens Advisory Committee membership. The list was provided in the Board packet for review. Board Member Pam Hill made a motion to approve the new member for the Citizens Advisory Committee membership. Board Member Beth Rhinehart seconded the motion, Charlie Fugate abstained, and it carried with majority vote.

Dr. Whisman presented two new curriculum proposals for approval effective Fall 2026: Hospitality & Tourism Management AAS degree and Medical Coding & Billing AAS degree. The Hospitality & Tourism Management degree would have two pathways, one in Tourism and Hotel Management, the other in Culinary Arts. This degree was developed with regional input, focusing on local needs. It was also designed to allow dual enrollment student who have earned a Culinary Arts certificate to apply those credits at VHCC. The Medical Coding & Billing AAS degree is an expansion from certificate to associate's degree to meet the demand for higher paying, remote jobs. Board Member Gwen Beattie made a motion to approve the two new curriculum proposals. Board Member Charlie Fugate seconded the motion, and it carried with all in favor. These proposals will now be sent to the State Board for approval.

Dr. Whisman also presented to the Board approval to discontinue seven certificate programs. The attachment originally listed eight programs, but Dr. Whisman mentioned Accounting will not be included at this time. The seven certificate programs proposed for discontinuation are:

- A+ Networking
- Web Design Manager
- Engineering (Solar Energy Technology)
- Supervision and Management
- Clerical Studies
- Computer Numerical Controls Machining
- Health Information Technology

He informed the Board that it was the VCCS's recommendation to discontinue these certificates due to low FTE and graduates in the past three or more years. Many times, the programs are outdated or superseded by new offerings. Board Member Beth Rhinehart made a motion to discontinue these seven certificate programs. Board Member Pam Hill seconded the motion, and it carried with all in favor.

Dr. Whisman also provided an enrollment update. We are ending the semester strong with 1326 FTE, an 8% increase in FTE compared to last year.

Institutional Advancement and Educational Foundation

Vice President Laura Pennington provided updates in her division. She shared the recent announcement of the Bristol Promise Program for three years beginning Fall 2026. This is possible due to a grant from the Anne & Gene Worrell Foundation. Other highlights in her department include upcoming requests for student Thanksgiving meal boxes, another successful Golf Tournament raising \$30,000 for our general scholarship fund, and the Aspen Institute naming VHCC as a top 200 U.S. Community College.

Finance and Administrative Services

Christine Fields, Vice President of Finance and Administration, asked for approval of the 2026-2027 Localities Appropriation Fund Budget Request. The total operating budget request is \$160,750. She also included a history of what has been requested and received from the three localities since 2022. Board Member Gwen Beattie made the motion to approve the budget request. Board Member Charlie Fugate seconded, and the motion carried with all in favor.

Ms. Fields also gave a few brief updates of current campus projects, as outlined in the attachment.

President's Office

President Dr. Hutchison began his address to the Board by asking for review and reaffirmation of VHCC's mission statement. He explained that our accreditor, SACSCOC, requires governing boards to regularly review institutional mission statements. Board Member Charlie Fugate made the motion to reaffirm the mission statement. Board Member Pam Hill seconded, and the motion carried with all in favor.

Dr. Hutchison also discussed the Campus Master Plan. SFCS has remained actively engaged in advancing our master plan, holding multiple Zoom meetings with the President's Cabinet to ensure steady progress. They continue to focus on optimizing space utilization and updating infrastructure. SFCS has been asked to present at the February Board meeting to share their findings. The February meeting is expected to run longer to accommodate this presentation, and Dr. Hutchison encouraged board members to consider scheduling options that work best for them.

Lastly, Dr. Hutchison provided the Workforce Development report that Shannon Mutter included in the packet, including FastForward enrollment data. Dr. Hutchison commented that Ms. Mutter has done a great job in significantly broadening the work of certain programs such as CDL, construction trades, and other industries. Also, the EMT program has moved to the Workforce Development side.

**Board Chair Address**

Board Chair Don Bowman reminded the Board members that they have been invited to the annual VHCC Holiday Luncheon on December 12.

**Adjournment**

Board Member Gwen Beattie made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Board Member Beth Rhinehart seconded, and the Board unanimously approved adjournment at 2:30 p.m.

Submitted By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Adam Hutchison, President

Approved By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Don Bowman, Chair