

VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Meeting Number 341
Tuesday, February 10, 2026
Location: SVHEC room 103/104

The Virginia Highlands Community College Board convened at 9:15 a.m. on Tuesday, February 10, 2026. Lunch immediately followed the meeting at 12:05 p.m.

Members Present

Dr. Doug Arnold, Washington County
Gwen Beattie, Smyth County
Donald Bowman, City of Bristol
Charlie Fugate, Washington County
Pamela Hill, Smyth County
Dan Smith, Washington County
Tonya Triplett, Washington County

Members Absent

Beth Rhinehart, City of Bristol

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

Don Bowman, Chair, called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes

Board Member Charlie Fugate made the motion to approve the minutes for November 12, 2025 Minutes No. 340. Board Members Doug Arnold, Dan Smith, and Tonya Triplett abstained due to not attending the meeting. Board Member Gwen Beattie seconded, and the motion carried.

Public Comments

There were no official public comments.

College Updates

Instruction and Student Services

Vice President Dr. Derek Whisman presented to the Board an enrollment update. The attachment shows that we are up by 5 FTE compared to last year, and as of today we are up by 21 FTE. The Promise Programs are showing good results, with Navigators in the high schools. Dual Enrollment numbers are fewer due to focused pathways and cost considerations. The homeschooling population has increased in the past few years due to a home scholars program that reduces tuition.

Institutional Advancement and Educational Foundation

Vice President Laura Pennington provided updates in her division. The private student scholarships cycle recently began, with a deadline set for May. The 2025 “Giving Tuesday” campaign raised \$4000 for the Helping Hands Student Emergency Fund. Ms. Pennington also shared that they have filled the position of Grant Writer/Sponsored Programs Officer.

Finance and Administrative Services

Vice President Christine Fields gave a few brief updates of current campus projects, as outlined in the attachment. The patio renovation is still in progress. The Nursing Simulation Lab renovation will go out to bid in March, and hopefully work will take place over the summer. The exterior door replacement and asbestos abatement projects are nearing completion. The HVAC replacement for the OTC Building and ADA restroom renovations are planned. Planning is also underway for possibly redesigning our two science labs in the ISC Building and an expansion of the NEB Building.

President’s Office

President Dr. Hutchison began his address to the Board by providing the Workforce Development report. Their FastForward classes have kicked off for the semester with steady enrollment, with more classes beginning in February and March. A recent opportunity that is under development is an expanded partnership with our regional police academy for Basic Law Enforcement training, pending FastForward approval. Shannon Mutter is also working on programs for eligible inmates at the regional jail for employment training.

Dr. Hutchison also provided a legislative update. He and four of our students will be traveling to Richmond for VCCS Student Advocacy Day next week, visiting with the General Assembly. We do not have a final budget bill yet. The VCCS has three major initiatives that we are trying to include in the budget bill. Some specific bills circulating through legislation are a bill related to board composition to potentially include a voting staff representative and voting student representative, and another bill under consideration is related to collective bargaining for higher education employees. The State Board for Community Colleges (SBCC) will be discussing tuition decisions in the coming weeks. The SBCC may also consider implementing a differential fee structure for high cost programs, such as Nursing, Diesel, etc.

Dual Enrollment funding has been a challenge due to the account created being unfunded to offset the costs. The request to the General Assembly is to fund the account.

Dr. Hutchison also informed the Board that VHCC is currently undergoing our accreditation review with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The Board may be involved in the process next year when the accrediting agency visits our campus.

The annual Presidential Evaluation cycle is open for Board Members to provide feedback through the survey that Dr. Hutchison sent in an email. Mr. Bowman will be submitting a letter to the Chancellor once the survey results are completed.

A short recess was given. Upon return, the Board proceeded with the Master Planning presentation by SFCS.

Adjournment

Board Member Dan Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Board Member Doug Arnold seconded, and the Board unanimously approved adjournment at 12:04 p.m.

Submitted By: _____
Dr. Adam Hutchison, President

Approved By: _____
Don Bowman, Chair

_____ Date