



# **Sullivan County County Legislature Meeting Minutes - Final**

Chairman Nadia Rajsz
Vice Chairman Joseph Perrello
Legislator Matt McPhillips
Legislator Brian McPhillips
Legislator Nicholas Salomone Jr.
Legislator Catherine Scott
Legislator Luis Alvarez
Legislator Amanda Ward
Legislator Terry Blosser-Bernardo

Thursday, August 15, 2024

10:20 AM

**Government Center** 

# Public Hearing SCCC 2024-2025 Budget

### Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Rajsz called the Public Hearing to order at 10:40AM.

## **Roll Call of Legislators**

**Present:** Chairman Nadia Rajsz

Vice Chairman Joseph Perrello District 1 Legislator Matt McPhillips District 3 Legislator Brian McPhillips District 4 Legislator Nicholas Salomone Jr.

District 5 Legislator Catherine Scott District 6 Legislator Luis Alvarez District 8 Legislator Amanda Ward

District 9 Legislator Terry Blosser-Bernardo

#### **Reading of Public Hearing Notice**

The Clerk read the Public Hearing Notice.

Dr. David Potash stated that the College is in gratitude for the partnership with the County. He then introduced both his Vice Presidents Rose Hanofee, and Sean Welsh. He then gave an overview on the college's reaccreditation efforts.

At this point, Luis Alvarez left the public hearing at 10:47AM and returned at 10:48AM.

Dr. Potash then highlighted the comparison of this year compared to last year and stated he would then entertain questions.

At this point Amanda Ward left the Public Hearing at 10:50AM and returned at 10:50AM.

Terry Bernardo stated that Dr. Potash mentioned that last year the college was able to house 160 full time students in the residence hall and now that the Hall is now closed, a smaller facility was opened up to house 40 or 50 students and now you are going to lose about 120 full-time students for the Fall. She then asked what is being done to fill that gap. It is her understanding that the Athletic Program was cut the JV men's and women's basketball and baseball and cross country. How do you make this up?

Dr. Potash explained he does not have the full enrollment data report yet. He further explained that yes the Residence Hall which could hold lots of students was closed. The smaller one is in really good shape and we are looking to filling that this coming year which holds 50 students. It is also his understanding that the students who lived in the Residence Hall, in terms of issues of retention and programming, had opportunities for improvement for experience and are coming back to the college. In terms of on campus and off campus housing, one of the things that SUNY Sullivan is wrestling with is that all community college students want a residential experience and if they do, it is not necessarily in a format that the Residence Hall had. This issue is not going to be solved in one year. We have a significant demand from students who want careers in health care, not only in nursing but other areas. On top of that the college started has been aggressive in terms of work force. Terry Bernardo asked how many do you currently have in the health field? Rose Hanofee stated that there are approximately 25 or 30 students in the nursing program. We have transformational money from SUNY to start 2 new programs in nursing on the evening and weekends which will start in the spring as well as an accelerated LPN Program which will start next summer. The Medical Assistance Program has about 13 students. We were notified today that we were approved for \$75,000 for Medical Assistance and Respiratory Care. There is a lot of funding coming in for Nursing. She shared some other news about this Fall. The Office for Developmental Disabilities has partnered with SUNY partnering a \$32 Million grant until 2030. The college will be starting to support more local workforce development in the county.

Amanda Ward asked if the DSP Program was free. Rose Hanofee stated yes it is a free program. We have partnered with Center for Discovery, New Hope Community and Sullivan ARC.

Terry Bernardo stated if we are keeping track, as we lost about 110 people due to the dorms, maybe 100 due to the Athletic Programs being cut and you are saying you have 25 to 30 people in the Healthcare Program which you plan on expanding and you think that is going to make up close to 200 students?

She doesn't see that being a reality. Dr. Potash stated that the college has not funded JV athletics and will be announcing an Athletic Director probably within the next day and not only are we trying to offer the same Varsity athletics as we had the past year but also trying to grow that as well. That is something else that we are absolutely committed to. There will be some personnel changes as well. Your concerns about the actual tuition numbers we share very much as well. The educational Eco-system has been actually shifting quite a bit since the pandemic. The college has to shift not only when we offer courses but how we offer courses to meet the needs of students in different kinds of ways. Classes and programs that were popular in 2016 are shifting and we have to come up with new and better ways to meet those students who have different work schedules or have different family needs as well. Everything that we have put together so far with this budget leads us to believe------

At this point Joseph Perrello left the meeting at 11:02AM and returned at 11:03AM.

we are going to be pretty close to enrollment numbers and tuition revenue. We will be sharing those numbers as we progress. Mrs. Bernardo asked that Dr. Potash expand on his concerns. She stated she doesn't think that the numbers from the Residence Hall and Athletics Program are realistic numbers and she hopes that Dr. Potash would go back and take a look at it. She then stated in regard to food for the students, there are no longer food services at the college and how are the students in the new facility going to eat. Dr. Potash stated we will have food services and the contract is being worked and he is really excited about that but it is not finalized yet. Sean Welsh stated they executed the bid process for a traditional higher education vendor. We are going to have kitchenettes in the new eco dorms that we are putting back on line. We eliminated the meal plan through the bid process. The bid process failed and we looked at local vendors and we have a contract now with a local vendor which is not yet finalized. Terry Bernardo asked where would the students shop to buy food to make in their kitchenette? Sean Welsh stated we will have transportation options and we will have vans to bring off campus for students who do not have their own transportation. Amanda Ward asked about student activities. Sean Welsh stated Student Activities will be coordinating on that.

Terry Bernardo stated to Dr. Potash, put this on your to do list, is the college is planning on publicly asking our local State Senator and Assemblyman to look at the health care coverage for the two year college. The State is picking up health coverage for a four year college but not a two year college. She believes there is an \$8 million dollar debt to NYSHIP and that could be erased immediately if he would make that request. People do things because somebody asked. Ask other college presidents if they could ask their local Senators and Assemblymen.

Chair Rajsz stated that there have been numerous NYSAC resolutions that she has put through as well as others like Orange to address that same issue. She has spoken with our local Assembly person and Senator and you are not going to budge the State. This is something that has been on topic for a long time.

Chair Rajsz stated most colleges have seen a decrease in FTE.

Dr. Potash stated we are exactly on the same page.

Amanda Ward asked with the smaller housing option, will they still be required to leave campus for the short holidays Dr. Potash stated the current housing contract does not call for that.

Matt McPhillips stated that obviously housing is an issue in the county but one of the things that has been brought to my attention is that there are several unions in the area that are interested in bringing program opportunities to the college and would you be open to meeting with some of them. Dr. Potash stated absolutely.

Brian McPhillips stated he commends the college as an employee of New Hope for all the work that is being done for the DSP Program. There were other programs that used to be sought out from the college such as theatrical and others that were removed whether there was a lack of interest or personnel to do those programs. He thinks when there is a \$4.3 million ask from the Legislature which is taxpayer dollars and then we are funding tuition for our children through taxpayer dollars and then we have the Promise Scholarship which was almost \$500,000 through taxpayer dollars, at some point making decisions to removing programs without really engaging the public's interest in them, he thinks there should be a different process in getting there. If I am going to take constituent dollars that they work very hard for, he wants them to have the opportunities to expand their education and by not providing certain programs and he doesn't necessarily agree with that. Second, he would be interested in knowing specifically because of the Promise Scholarship, the numbers that are coming in, it has been a very productive process, however, in theory, you would think that the numbers in surrounding colleges from local would go down because you are providing the service at low cost or free but the numbers at Orange are still going up. So, we are missing on grasping everyone. He is more interested in how recruitment is going to be addressed hitting the local schools harder. Our youth are not staying here. I know Dr. Potash is new but how will this be addressed moving forward. Dr. Potash totally agrees with Brian McPhillips about process and what he would also encourage folks to do is realize that there is often a difference between a program which gets listed in a catalog then someone goes and gets particular certification and what happens in terms of education and opportunity and what classes the college has and doesn't have. We are going to do a good job sharing that all in advance. We are super excited and super grateful for the Sullivan Promise. We have been working through s the dollar issues and we feel really good in tightening this down. There are complications because TAP comes after FASA but TAP requirements don't always necessarily align with scheduling so you have to rework stuff and we are getting better at that. He has yet to meet with any of the high school Superintendents or Principals but what he has learned from the team that has been visiting, the college and high school numbers have been growing pretty significantly. SUNY Sullivan partners right now with 9 high schools in the county and 2 outside of the county and many of those students, particularly outside, move into the Sullivan Promise.

Amanda Ward asked Dr. Potash where is the college with the GED Programs. She heard that the college was going to be a site for testing. Rose Hanofee stated we just onboarded three test proctors and we met quality concerns. Looking to open sometime in September. There will also be GED Preparation classes also.

Terry Bernardo stated that we have not had good communication from the college since this Legislature took office.

Chair Rajsz asked when do the Trustees meeting again and Dr. Potash stated September 19th. We are an open organization and we can only be successful if we share what is working and what is not working,

Luis Alvarez asked how many months has it been since Dr. Potash became President. Dr. Potash stated

one and a half, Mr. Alvarez stated he is impressed with Dr. Potash's explanations and only being there 45 days.

Brian McPhillips stated he had one more question. The accreditation back in January there was an article that there are different stages and we are in the middle stage. Dr. Potash explained that Regional Accreditation is necessary to offer Financial Aid. SUNY Sullivan is accredited by the Middle States Higher Education Commission which is one of the largest institutions through out the Mid Atlantic. To do an accreditation, we have to submit a self study which is a lengthy document that says this is criteria, this is how we are meeting the criteria along with pieces of evidence. This document is super complicated and takes a few years to do and needs to be updated annually. The goals of accreditation are really two fold. One is to ensure the public that the college is doing everything that it is supposed to and second it showcases where we can do better. Accreditation standards change with multiple versions. Middle States has 14 standards of accreditation now. A few Higher Education and trained individuals will come to the college, read the report and visit everyone and ask questions. The Middle States Report was submitted and reviewed and came back and stated we are really concerned about two standards. One of these is learning outcomes assessment and the other one was the alignment of budget and planning to show that you are using your budget and planning to go forward. The college has time to explain on how they are addressing those two concerns. That started under Dr. Krabel. Dr. Potash stated he feels really good about the report as critical eyes reviewed it and he feels really good. Middle States has it and they will have a team come up, they will read the report and spend a half a day in September. After that, they have a larger board meeting in November to state their findings on the report which they post publicly.

Sullivan County Community College 2024-2025 Budget Overview and Public Hearing Notice

**ID-6701** 

**Attachments:** 

SCCC 20242025 Budget Overview

sccc budget

#### **Public Comment**

1. Ken Walter spoke about the College Board of Trustees, how long it took for their budget to get to the Legislature, \$8 Million hole in health care, full time students enrolled, the population in New York keeps shrinking and Albany keeps growing and the dorms.

#### **Adjournment or Close**

There being no further comments, Brian McPhillips moved to close the public hearing, seconded by Matt McPhillips. The Public Hearing was declared closed at 11:28am.