

TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

Minutes of the Special Called Meeting

Electronic / Remote Location

December 21, 2020

Link to recording:

[THEC Special Called Commission Meeting 12/21/2020 \(tn.gov\)](#)

Chairman Evan Cope called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Member	PRESENT	ABSENT
Chairman Evan Cope	X	
Commissioner Nancy Dishner	X	
Secretary Tre Hargett	X	
Commissioner Tara Scarlett	X	
Commissioner Pam Koban	X	
Treasurer David Lillard	X	
Commissioner Sarah Morrison	X	
Commissioner Jay Moser	X	
Commissioner Vernon Stafford	X	
Commissioner Dawson Hassler	X	
Commissioner Frank Watson	X	
Commissioner AC Wharton	X	
Comptroller Justin Wilson	X	
Commissioner Dakasha Winton	X	

At the start of the meeting there were thirteen (13) members present, constituting a quorum.

ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION NECESSARY

Board Secretary Shauna Jennings read the following statement:

Chairman Cope and Commission Members,

In Executive Order No.16, extended by Executive Orders 34,51,60, and 65, Governor Bill Lee suspended Tennessee's open meeting laws as necessary to allow a governing body to meet by electronic means and conduct essential business under certain conditions if the governing body "determines that meeting electronically is necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of Tennesseans in light of the COVID-19 outbreak." The conditions are:

- Live access to the meeting by the public, if possible;
- No adjustment to existing quorum, meeting notice, or voting requirements;
- Clear notice to the public of the meeting agenda and how to access the meeting in a manner reasonably accessible to members of the public;
- Each part of the meeting subject to the Open Meetings Act must be audible to the public;

- Each member participating electronically must be able to simultaneously hear each other and speak to each other during the meeting;
- Any member participating electronically shall identify the persons present at the location from which the member is participating;
- Each member participating electronically must be provided, before the meeting, with any documents that will be discussed at the meeting, with substantially the same content as those documents actually presented;
- All votes taken during a meeting shall be by roll call vote; and
- Electronic participation allows a member to vote but does not make a member eligible for per diem.

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) has ensured that each of the required conditions have been met. For purposes of this THEC meeting, we are using WebEX, which accommodates up to 1,000 participants. Commission Staff were given a link that allows them to participate in the meeting. All other attendees were given a link that allows them to watch the meeting, but not unmute themselves. However, attendees will be able to raise their hand during the meeting and be unmuted by the Host for participation, as needed. Notice of the meeting, agenda, materials, WebEX link for those participating via webinar, call-in number for those participating by phone only, and applicable codes were posted to the THEC/ TSAC website and emailed to members of the Commission on Friday, December 11, 2020. All votes will be by roll call and there have been no changes to existing quorum, meeting notice, or voting requirements. Each member has introduced themselves and listed all persons at their respective location. Lastly, members will be considered present for voting purposes but not for purposes of per diem.

All conditions listed in Executive Order No. 16 having been met, the only remaining item needed to ensure compliance with the Opens Meeting Act and Executive Order No. 16 is for the Commission to determine that meeting electronically is necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of Tennesseans in light of COVID-19 outbreak.

Chairman Cope made a motion to approve the electronic participation necessity. Commissioner Wharton seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed with 13 ayes.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Commissioner Stafford made a motion to adopt the agenda. Secretary Hargett seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed with 13 ayes.

I. Appointment of Executive Director

Commissioner Koban made a motion to appoint Dr. Emily House as Interim Executive Director. A second was made by Commissioner Hassler.

Commission members discussed. Commissioner Stafford motioned to amend the motion to give a timeline of the Interim position ending on June 30, 2021. A second was made by Commissioner Koban. This motion was then withdrawn by both Commissioner Stafford and Commissioner Koban. The original motion was still on the table.

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed with 13 ayes.

II. Process for Selection of Executive Director

Chairman Cope motioned to appoint Commissioner Scarlett to work with THEC staff on developing the process for the selection of the Executive Director position, with the process to be presented at

the next commission meeting on Friday, January 28, 2021. A second was made by Commissioner Koban.

A roll call voice was taken, and the motion passed with 12 ayes and 1 abstention.

Chairman Cope adjourned the meeting at 1:39 p.m.

NEXT THEC COMMISSION MEETING:

Thursday, January 28, 2021 at 9 a.m. CT in Nashville

THEC Chairman Evan Cope

THEC Secretary AC Wharton, Jr.