

DRAFT

**New River Community College Board
Meeting Number Three Hundred Seventy-One**

**Minutes
September 8, 2025**

Meeting number three hundred seventy-one of the New River Community College Board was held on Monday, September 8, 2025, at New River Community College, Christiansburg site.

Board Members Present

Mr. Craig Chancellor (Floyd County)
Mr. William (Bill) Cunningham (Pulaski County)
Mr. John Hale (Giles County)
Dr. Richard (Dick) Harshberger (City of Radford)
Dr. Margaret (Peggy) Dewald-Link (Floyd County)
Mr. Eric Johnsen (Montgomery County)
Mr. Cameron Peel (Pulaski County)
Mrs. Bobbie Potter (Montgomery County)

Board Members Present

Mr. Christopher (Chris) Calfee (City of Radford)
Ms. Jessica Littlejohn (Montgomery County)
Mr. Chris McKlarney (Giles County)

Staff Members Present

Ms. Melissa Anderson, Vice President for Finance and Administrative Services
Dr. Peter Anderson, Vice President for Instruction and Student Services
Dr. Robert Brandon, President
Mr. Tim Jones, Director of Information Technology and Facilities Services
Dr. Deborah Kennedy, Interim Executive Director NRCC Educational Foundation
Ms. Lori Lavery, Dean of Business and Technologies
Ms. Tammy Parks, Faculty Assembly President
Ms. Kathy Ridpath, Administrative Assistant President's Office
Dr. Mark Rowh, Vice President for Workforce Development and External Relations
Dr. Fritz Streff, Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Research
Ms. Tammy Smith, Interim Dean of Student Services
Dr. Sarah Tolbert-Hurysz, Dean of Arts and Sciences
Mr. Jack Watkins, Student Resources Manager
Ms. Helen Wolfe, Dean of Health Professions

Guests Present

Olivia Burton, Student Ambassador

Agenda Items

1. Call to Order

Mr. Bill Cunningham, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. A quorum was present, and due notice had been mailed and published.

2. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Cunningham welcomed the recently appointed board member from Giles County, Mr. John Hale. Mr. Hale addressed the board and staff.

3. Agenda for Approval

Mr. Cunningham asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

Motion: Dr. Dick Harshberger made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Eric Johnsen seconded the motion.

Action: The motion carried unanimously.

4. Minutes for Approval

Mr. Cunningham asked for a motion to approve the minutes of meeting number three hundred seventy held on Monday, June 2, 2025.

Motion: Mr. Cameron Peel made a motion to approve the minutes. Dr. Peggy Dewald-Link seconded the motion. Mr. Hale abstained.

Action: The motion carried unanimously.

5. President's Report

Dr. Robert Brandon informed the board that the Chancellor chose four VCCS students to be part of a student panel at the recent Chancellor's Retreat. Ms. Olivia Burton, NRCC student, was chosen for the panel. She provided her thoughts on the retreat. She also provided a report of things she felt went well for the fall semester startup:

- Therapy dogs on campus were an asset.
- Food Pantry is more accessible for students.
- The loaner laptop program is helpful to students who need them.

Dr. Brandon referred to exhibit B, College Focus Areas and Priorities, (see attached). The college priorities shape the plans for the college for the year. Highlights of these focus areas include:

- Honoring our legacy of care
- Looking forward to the future
- Deepening our commitment to student success

Dr. Brandon discussed the Chancellor's Goals, exhibit C (see attached). The focus of these goals include:

- Increase the number of credentials awarded
- Increase FastForward completion rates
- Increase enrollment of working age adults
- Expand access to UCGS and Passport
- Invest in faculty and front-line staff professional development
- Culture of care

Dr. Brandon provided information on the VCCS one-system initiative. The focus of the one-system initiative is to have a unified student experience across the VCCS. On another note, Dr. Brandon referred to a document previously disseminated showing information on FastForward programs and discussed the impact these programs are having on students.

Dr. Brandon reported on recent and upcoming college events that included:

- NRCC hosted a roundtable and tour of the college for representatives of the Roanoke Blacksburg Innovation Alliance (RBIA) and Roanoke Blacksburg Technology Council (RBTC) among others on September 8.
- The college held many events for students during the first week of classes.
- Upcoming event - President Emeritus Celebration for Dr. Jack Lewis will be held on October 13.
- Upcoming event - Presidential Inauguration will be held on November 14

Dr. Brandon introduced Mr. Jack Watkins, NRCC Student Resources Manager, who provided an overview of the Student Resources department. Highlights included:

- Therapy dogs on campus for student support
- Loaner laptop program
- Food Pantry and Huber Cup
 - Study performed in SDV classes last year regarding food insecurity (findings showed the average student skipped at least 10 meals a week)
 - Food pantry available for students
 - Huber Cup – food drive competition between college departments during the month of September. Board members were invited to participate.

6. Institutional Effectiveness and Research Report

Enrollment

Dr. Fritz Streff provided an update on enrollment. For the summer semester, enrollment showed an increase of 5.02 percent in FTEs (25.5 FTES) and an increase of 9.22 percent in student headcount (136 students). The college was 14th overall in FTE change in enrollment in the VCCS for the summer semester. For the fall semester enrollment shows a decrease of 0.5 percent in FTEs for the fall semester at this point in time over last year. Questions were posed and discussed.

7. Instruction and Student Services Report

Reorganization of Instruction and Student Services

Dr. Peter Anderson provided information on the reorganization process of Instruction and Student Services. A new division is being created – Instructional Services and Innovation.

The college is in the process of hiring a dean to oversee this division. The areas this division will include:

- Library
- Academic Success Center (Tutoring)
- Christiansburg site daily management
- Program Review and Assessment
- Word Processing Center
- Instructional Design
- Center of Teaching and Learning and Professional Development (CTLPD)

Dr. Anderson provided an update on the proposed Advanced Manufacturing Center (AMCC). This is a renovation and expansion of Rooker Hall that will house instructional spaces that are used for Automotive, Instrumentation/Control Automation, Machining, Electrical, Engineering Design, and Welding. This project is listed as number two on the General Assembly's capital outlay project list. The approximate cost for planning will be between \$5 million and \$6 million. Dr. Anderson commented that enrollment in programs such as Welding are at full capacity. The AMCC will provide more space for this and other programs and will be an asset to the college and the community.

8. Finance and Administrative Report

Locality Contributions to Local Budget, 2026-2027

Ms. Melissa Anderson referred to Exhibit D, Locality Contribution to Local Budget 2026-2027. When the participation formula is applied, the amounts requested from the jurisdictions fluctuate with the population in each jurisdiction, the total property values in each jurisdiction, but mostly enrollment of students from each jurisdiction. She informed the Board that the full Budget and Finance Committee was unable to meet due to lack of a quorum. Mr. Peel, member of the committee, informed the board that the amount for approval is \$105,183. He noted that in the past the committee reviewed the formula and decided to not change the formula going forward.

Mr. Cunningham asked for a motion to approve the locality budget.

Motion: Dr. Harshberger made a motion to approve the locality budget. Mr. Craig Chancellor seconded the motion.

Action: The motion carried unanimously.

9. Workforce Development and External Relations Report

FastForward Update

Dr. Mark Rowh provided an update on the FastForward program (short-term training programs for high-demand industries). He stated the statewide demand for these programs has outgrown the resources (budget has not been cut; the resources have just been spent).

Legislative Plans

Dr. Rowh informed the board that the VCCS has changed the way the colleges visit legislators in Richmond. For the past few years, colleges have brought students to visit local legislators and the General Assembly at the beginning of each year. This will change for the

upcoming year with fewer visits with students and a possible one-day visit for business/board representatives. More information will be forthcoming.

SACSCOC

Dr. Rowh informed the board that the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) reaffirmation process for the college will begin next year and will be completed in 2028. A SACSCOC review team will make onsite visits in the fall of 2027. An orientation session for colleges with reaffirmation classes of 2028 will be held at the annual meeting in December of this year. More information will be forthcoming on this process. Questions were posed and discussed.

10. Information Technology and Facilities Services Update

Information Technology Update

Mr. Tim Jones provided an update on projects taking place in Information Technology that included:

- Computer upgrades on a five-year cycle
 - Deploying Windows 11 across campus on all ECRS and most labs
- Electronic classroom upgrades
- Phone conversion to Teams is completed except for the emergency alert notifications (Cisco phones still in place for emergency alerts). He noted the conversion has gone well.
- Network upgrades
- Applications
- Cameras and wireless installation in parking lots
- Cyber Security –
 - Working toward the Chancellor's one-system approach for Cyber Security system.
 - College-wide security training every year

Facilities Services Update

Mr. Jones provided an update on projects in Facilities Services that included:

- Classroom renovations at the Christiansburg site in rooms 109, 116, 118, 128. This included new paint and flooring.
- Classroom renovations in Dublin in rooms Godbey 128/129 for the early learning program.
- Immersive classroom (Edwards 120)
- Covered walkways are nearing completion (expected completion by the end of September)
- Student Plaza construction is underway with expected completion by the end of October.
- HVAC systems – replacing air handlers in Martin Hall, boilers in all buildings in Dublin, and chillers in Rooker and Martin Halls (near or past end-of-life).

11. NRCC Educational Foundation Report

Scholarships

Dr. Deborah Kennedy reported that the Foundation Office will be awarding 435 individual scholarships this fall (a total of \$369,750). She noted that because of the ACCE funds for

high school students, the average age of the regular scholarship recipients is 24-25 years. On a related note, she reported that since the last meeting, there are two new and two pending endowed scholarships.

ACCE Update

Dr. Kennedy provided an update on the ACCE program. For the fall semester, there are 25 students from Floyd County, 42 from Giles County, 157 from Montgomery County, 83 from Pulaski County, and 24 from the City of Radford. This is a total of 331 ACCE scholarships being awarded. She noted that 75 percent are receiving funding and 25 percent are not receiving funding but still wanted to complete community service. Two localities sponsored events over the summer to support their respective ACCE programs – Montgomery County Race for ACCE and Pulaski County Jet Ski Race.

Dr. Kennedy reported on other contributions made to the college. AccessU will contribute \$5,000 to sponsor the inauguration reception in November. National Bank will contribute \$6,000 to sponsor the Scholarship Dinner in October. PC Land donated 20 Chromebooks to support veteran students. On another note, she reported that the college has started a brick campaign with the proceeds going to support student success.

12. Standing Committees for 2025-2026

Mr. Cunningham referred to Exhibit E, Roster of Standing Committees for 2025-2026 and asked for a motion to approve.

Motion: Mr. Johnsen made a motion to approve the standing committees. Mr. Chancellor seconded the motion.

Action: The motion carried unanimously.

13. Open Discussion

A discussion was held on the possibility of adding additional sections to courses that are filled (example: Welding) and on the NRCC/Radford University partnerships.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m. The next regular meeting of the is scheduled for Monday, December 2, 2025, at NRCC in Dublin.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. William (Bill) Cunningham, Chair

Dr. Robert Brandon, President