

BROOKDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**Board of Trustees
Special Public Business Meeting Minutes**

September 15, 2026

**Brookdale Community College
Student Life Center, Navesink Rooms
765 Newman Springs Rd.
Lincroft, NJ 07738**

Chair Horl called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M. and roll call was taken.

Present	Trustees	Administration:
	Ms. Barbara Horl, Chair	Dr. Katie Lynch
	Ms. Tracey Abby-White, Trustee, Vice-Chair	Ms. Nancy Kaari
	Ms. Mary Pat Angelini, Trustee	
	Mr. Steve Clayton, Trustee	Mr. Kornipibob Kanthanjan
	Mr. Paul Crupi, Trustee	
	Dr. Stephanie D'Alessio	
	Ms. Dyese Davis, Trustee (5:40 PM)	Dr. Teresa Manfreda-Foley
	Ms. Stephanie L. Hoitt, Trustee	Dr. Laura Longo
	Mr. James McCracken, Trustee	
	Dr. Les Richens, Trustee (5:40 PM)	Ms. Cynthia Gruskos
	Dr. David Stout, Secretary	
	Mr. Montez Swartz, Trustee	
	Ms. Cyndie Williams, Trustee	
Absent		
College Counsel	Mr. Mitch Jacobs, Esq., General Counsel	

Ms. Gruskos read the following statement: "In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S. 10:4-6 et seq., advance written notice of this meeting of the Board of Trustees was provided in the following manner:

On September 10, 2026 at 11:30 am advance written notice of this meeting was posted on the Brookdale Community College website; posted on the BAC Bulletin Board and filed with the

Clerk of the County of Monmouth.

Mr. Jacobs read the statement on procedures and requirements for making public comment during the public meeting.

Chair Horl led the pledge of allegiance followed by a welcome to those in attendance.

Chair Horl read our mission statement:

Brookdale Community College opens doors to education with courage and care, guiding diverse learners toward a lifetime of growth and success.

Topic and Discussion	Votes Taken	Action and Follow-up Actions
Adoption of Agenda	A motion to adopt the agenda was made by Trustee D'Alessio and seconded by Vice Chair Abby-White. Motion approved.	
Resolution to Hold a Closed Meeting	A motion to approve by resolution (Attachment A) to hold an Executive Session was made by Trustee Crupi and seconded by Vice Chair Abby-White. Motion approved.	
Motion to Re-Open the Meeting to the Public	A motion to reopen the meeting to the public was made by Trustee Richens and seconded by Trustee Hoitt. Motion approved.	
Public Comment on Agenda Items		

Topic and Discussion	Votes Taken	Action and Follow-up Actions
Chair Horl opened the meeting to public comment. She stated anyone wishing to make public comment on agenda items only may do so in accordance with the instructions provided by Mr. Jacobs, and that all speakers would be given 5 minutes to make public comment. No public comment was made and Ms. Gruskos confirmed that no written public comments were submitted. Seeing no other public comment, Chair Horl closed the public comment on agenda items only.		
Approval of Purchases in Excess of \$44,900 and New Jersey “Pay-to-Play” bids, and Pursuant to the New Jersey “Pay to Play” Process equal to or exceeding \$17,500 - Health Insurance Consultant/Broker	A motion to approve by resolution Purchases in Excess of \$44,900 and New Jersey “Pay-to-Play” bids, and Pursuant to the New Jersey “Pay to Play” Process equal to or exceeding \$17,500 - Health Insurance Consultant/Broker was made by Trustee Richens and seconded by Trustee Crupi. YES: Trustees Abby-White, Angelini, Clayton, Crupi, D’Alessio, Davis, Fajardo, Hoitt, McCracken, Richens, Williams and Chair Horl NO: None ABSTENTIONS: None Motion approved.	

Topic and Discussion	Votes Taken	Action and Follow-up Actions
Public Comment Chair Horl opened the meeting to public comment. She stated anyone wishing to make public comment may do so in accordance with the instructions provided by Mr. Jacobs, and that all speakers would be given 5 minutes to make public comment. Caroline Calogero, Associate Professor of Sociology and Vice President of the Faculty Association, addressed the Board regarding the anticipated layoffs. Ms. Calogero stated that the anticipated layoffs would significantly affect impacted employees and their families and noted that, based on her more than 20 years at Brookdale, she believes employees are dedicated stewards of College resources. She encouraged the Board to consider permanent and structural solutions to the College's financial circumstances in addition to cost reductions. Ms. Calogero stated that the College cannot sustain itself on tuition revenue alone and encouraged consideration of additional sources of revenue and funding, including increased support from the County and State. She urged Board members to use their networks to advocate with legislators and the Governor for sustainable funding levels for community colleges and to involve members of the Brookdale community in those efforts. Ms. Calogero also encouraged Board members and others in positions of influence to promote Brookdale by inviting individuals to visit the College, attend student events, and observe classes. She concluded by asking Board members to consider their role in fundraising and identifying additional resources for the College during the current financial circumstances. Jack Ryan, Assistant Professor, English - addressed the Board regarding the anticipated reduction in force and the uncertainty surrounding the process. He referenced the issue of rumors and stated that employees were experiencing uncertainty because information about the process could not yet be publicly distributed. He expressed concerns being raised about the lack of clarity regarding the voluntary separation agreement, eligibility, timing, and procedures associated with the reduction in force. He stated that the uncertainty was affecting employees across the College community and that students were also aware of the situation. He recalled a prior reduction in force during which an employee voluntarily separated, allowing another employee to retain their position. He asked the Board to provide greater clarity regarding the process during the period leading up to the anticipated actions. He also acknowledged the difficulty of the decisions facing the Board and thanked the Board for its consideration. Ms. Gruskos confirmed that no written comments were submitted. After all public comment was made, Chair Horl and Dr. Stout addressed concerns raised. Chair Horl responded to the public comments and acknowledged the deeply personal impact that the anticipated reduction in force would have on employees and their families. She shared that she had personally experienced the loss of employment, as had members of her family, and		

Topic and Discussion	Votes Taken	Action and Follow-up Actions
expressed her understanding of how profoundly such a loss can affect an individual, particularly for those who have dedicated their careers to education. Chair Horl stated that the Board recognizes the significant responsibility it carries in making these decisions and that the process has been deeply difficult for the Board as well. Chair Horl stated that the Board has extensively considered the College's structural deficit and continues to investigate every possible avenue to lessen the impact on employees. She emphasized that the people of Brookdale are central to the College and expressed her appreciation for their dedication and contributions. She assured those affected that the Board would continue to consider every available option to lessen the hardship resulting from the decisions before it. Chair Horl stated that the Board understands the human impact of these decisions and that this consideration has remained at the forefront of its deliberations. Dr. Stout responded to the public comments and acknowledged the difficulty and emotional impact of the circumstances facing the College. He stated that the Board understands that the Brookdale employees are central to the institution and that many employees have dedicated significant portions of their careers to the College and its mission. He recognized that the decisions before the Board are difficult and that the Board is confronted with difficult choices. Dr. Stout stated that the Board has extensively considered the College's structural deficit and has been examining a range of options to address the College's financial circumstances and lessen the impact on employees. He noted that the Board has engaged in advocacy efforts with County, State, and federal representatives and has considered additional opportunities for funding and revenue, including entrepreneurial opportunities, leasing, naming opportunities, and potential asset sales, in an effort to avoid actions that would negatively affect employees. Dr. Stout also addressed the transparency of the current process, noting that the approach has differed from the College's prior reduction-in-force process. He stated that the College has sought to be more transparent about the financial circumstances and the process, while recognizing that greater transparency during a period of uncertainty can also contribute to anxiety among employees. He acknowledged the stress experienced by employees and expressed regret for the anxiety associated with the process. Dr. Stout emphasized that the decision before the College is not simply whether to take action, but that choosing not to act is also a decision, with consequences for the College's financial circumstances and its ability to address the structural deficit. He stated that the Board must consider the difficult choices before it in light of their potential longer-term impact on the institution and its employees. Dr. Stout stated that the College would continue to communicate as openly as possible as the process moves forward. He noted that meetings with union presidents would begin the following day and that additional information would begin to be communicated more broadly during the		

Topic and Discussion	Votes Taken	Action and Follow-up Actions
following week. He thanked the members of the public who addressed the Board and those they represented for sharing their concerns. Char Horl closed the public comment portion of the meeting.		
Old/New Business – There was no old or new business discussed.		
Adjournment Meeting adjourned at 6:32 pm	A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Trustee Richens and seconded by Trustee Clayton. Motion approved.	

BROOKDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE SESSION

WHEREAS, while the Sen. Byron M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq.) requires all meetings of the Brookdale Community College Board of Trustees to be held in public, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) sets forth nine (9) types of matters that may lawfully be discussed in "Executive Session," i.e. without the public being permitted to attend, and

WHEREAS, the Brookdale Community College Board of Trustees has determined that **2** issue is permitted by N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) to be discussed without the public in attendance and shall be discussed during an Executive Session to be held on **September 15, 2026 at approximately 4:30 PM**. The nine (9) exceptions to open public meetings set forth in N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) are listed below, and next to each exception is a box which will be marked when the issues to be privately discussed fall within that exception, and after each exception is a space where additional information that will disclose as much information about the discussion as possible without undermining the purpose of the exception shall be written.

☐ "(1) Any matter which, by express provision of Federal law, State statute or rule of court shall be rendered confidential or excluded from public discussion." The legal citation to the provision(s) at issue is: _____ and the nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is _____

☐ "(2) Any matter in which the release of information would impair a right to receive funds from the federal government." The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is _____

☐ "(3) Any material the disclosure of which constitutes an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy such as any records, data, reports, recommendations, or other personal material of any educational, training, social service, medical, health, custodial, child protection, rehabilitation, legal defense, welfare, housing, relocation, insurance and similar program or institution operated by a public body pertaining to any specific individual admitted to or served by such institution or program, including but not limited to information relative to the individual's personal and family circumstances, and any material pertaining to admission, discharge, treatment, progress or condition of any individual, unless the individual concerned (or, in the case of a minor or incompetent, his guardian) shall request in writing that the same be disclosed publicly." The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is _____

Approved: September 15, 2026 - RESOLUTION

☐ "(4) Any collective bargaining agreement, or the terms and conditions of which are proposed for inclusion in any collective bargaining agreement, including the negotiation of terms and conditions with employees or representatives of employees of the public body:

☐ "(5) Any matter involving the purchase lease or acquisition of real property with public funds, the setting of bank rates or investment of public funds where it could adversely affect the public interest if discussion of such matters were disclosed." The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality –

"(6) Any tactics and techniques utilized in protecting the safety and property of the public provided that their disclosure could impair such protection. Any investigations of violations or possible violations of the law." The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is:

☒ a) "(7) Any pending or anticipated litigation or contract negotiation in which the public body is or may become a party. Any matters falling within the attorney-client privilege, to the extent that confidentiality is required in order for the attorney to exercise his ethical duties as a lawyer." The parties to and docket numbers of each item of litigation and/or the parties to each contract discussed are and the nature of the discussion, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is: **Attorney client advice/privilege as to Reduction in Force and the appointment of a health insurance broker/consultant.**

☐ "(8) Any matter involving the employment, appointment, termination of employment, terms and conditions of employment, evaluation of the performance, promotion or disciplining of any specific prospective public officer or employee or current public officer or employee employed or appointed by the public body, unless all individual employees or appointees whose rights could be adversely affected request in writing that such matter or matters be discussed at a public meeting." Subject to the balancing of the public's interest and the employee's privacy rights under South Jersey Publishing Co. v. New Jersey Expressway Authority, 124 N.J. 478 (1991), the employee(s) and nature of the discussion, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality..

☐ "(9) Any deliberation of a public body occurring after a public hearing that may result in the imposition of a specific civil penalty upon the responding party or the suspension or loss of a license or permit belonging to the responding party as a result of an act of omission for which the responding party bears responsibility." The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is a

WHEREAS, the length of the Executive Session is estimated to be 45 to 60 minutes after which the public meeting of the Brookdale Community College Board of Trustees shall (select ☐ one) reconvene and immediately adjourn or

☒ reconvene and proceed with business where formal action will be taken.

Approved: September 15, 2026 - RESOLUTION

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Brookdale Community College Board of Trustees will go into Executive Session for only the above stated reasons; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Brookdale Community College Board of Trustees hereby declares that its discussion of the aforementioned subject(s) will be made public at a time when the public's interest in disclosure is greater than any privacy or governmental interest being protected from disclosure.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board Secretary, at the present public meeting, shall read aloud enough of this resolution so that members of the public in attendance can understand, as precisely as possible, the nature of the matters that will privately discussed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board Secretary, on the next business day following this meeting, shall post this Resolution on the Board website and furnish a copy of this Resolution to any member of the public who requests one at the fees allowed by N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 et seq.