

Mill increase forced by reductions in state aid and drop in county property valuations

- SCCC/ATS

Seward County Community College/Area Technical School Board of Trustees met Monday to approve officers and the publication of the 2013-14 budget.

The board approved the publication of the proposed 2013-14 budget of \$14,073,193. The proposed budget was based on an assessed valuation of \$264,908,542 for Seward County, which is a decrease from the previous year's valuation.

The board unanimously approved a 1.3 mill increase. That would put the mill levy at 30.123 for the fiscal year.

The budget that will be published prior to the Aug. 5 board of trustee meeting was based on actual costs for the 2012-13 school year in addition to increases in salaries, inflation, needed operational improvements and deferred maintenance needs, according to Dennis Sander, dean of finance and operations.

The college was able to keep the mill levy increase to a minimum due to an unencumbered cash increase of \$471,251 from beginning of the FY 13 school year to the beginning FY 14. This was due to the college holding back on plant upgrades, reducing general operating costs, and receiving approximately \$300,000 in protested taxes from the prior year.

In addition, the college has raised both tuition and fees and increased the rate for on-campus housing for the 2013-14 school year as a means of trying to offset reductions in state aid and local tax revenues.

Sander said the college has built its budget based on the forecasted drop in county revenue by approximately \$600,000. In addition, the college has lost approximately \$300,000 due to the \$13,000,000 drop in the appraised valuation of property from the 2012-13 budget year. According to the historical budget report presented to the board, the Seward County assessed valuation has declined nearly \$50 million since 2007, which has resulted in challenges for all taxing entities. Additionally, the college has realized a reduction in state aid of more than \$600,000 since 2009 and anticipates a budget reduction of at least 1.5 percent in 2014.

The college enrollment has grown consistently over the past five years and local enrollment has grown significantly during the last ten years. Sander indicated that the college's full-time equivalency enrollment of Seward County residents has increased by 208, a 31 percent increase, while the local tax revenue per Seward County FTE has decreased by \$3,580, a 20 percent decrease.

Although the college has had an enrollment increase each year and leads the state in graduation and retention rates, said Dr. Duane Dunn, SCCC/ATS president, the college will receive no new money from state aid as well.

The board did direct the administration to begin looking at ways to reduce the budget for the 2014-15 school year. This includes taking a look at all program areas on campus to determine any opportunities for efficiencies and identify new revenue sources.

Pam Perkins, administrative assistant to the president, swore in Sharon Hobble as a returning member of the SCCC/ATS Board of Trustees.

The board selected Ron Oliver as board chair; Marvin Chance Jr. as vice chair; Dr. Duane Dunn, board clerk/secretary; Tina Call, college treasurer; and Mike Brond, vice treasurer. Trustee John Engel was selected as the voting delegate of the Association of Community

College Trustees and Dustin Ormiston as alternate.

Other committee positions include Engel, Alumni and Friends Association; Rick Brennenman, AQIP Steering Team; Chance and Oliver, Board Policy; Brennenman and Ormiston, Budget/Finance; Engle, SCCC/ATS Foundation representative; Hobble, ATS Foundation alternate; Hobble and Ormiston, Insurance; and Chance and Hobble, Interim Board; Chance, KACCT delegate with Engle and Brennenman as alternates; and Oliver, Seward County Council of Governments with Ormiston as alternate.

The board adopted the 2013-14 institutional goals that include

- Improving the college's social media presence for marketing, recruitment and creating awareness;

- Increasing distance education options for students in all programs; and

- Developing proposal for the next phase(s) of facility planning;

In other action, the board

1. Hired Hiran Gunasekara, economics instructor; Dennis Mulanax, safety and security supervisor; Kate Mulligan, director of the student living center; Patrick Nee, assistant men's basketball coach; Myron Perry, microbiology instructor; Alaina Rice, register; Erin Russell, sustainable agriculture resources program specialist; and Veronica Thor, career services and admissions coordinator;

2. Accepted the resignation of Sherry Farrell, director of outreach, who will remain as Health Information Management instructor;

3. Approved the Policy on Nondiscrimination/Appointment of Compliance Officer and authorized the publishing in the Leader and Times and the Liberal Light;

4. Approved the 2013-14 agreement with Sharp McQueen PA with a reduced fee of \$1,825 per month;

5. Approved the High Plains Leader and Times as the legal publication for the college; and

6. Approved the September board member as Sept. 3, 2013.

An Evening of Harmony is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 4, at Liberal Country Club featuring Music Instructors Darin Workman and Dr. Magda Silva. Tickets are \$70 per person and must be purchased in advance by calling 620-417-1131.

Fall classes begin Aug. 12-13.

The Party Auction, sponsored by the SCCC/ATS Foundation, is scheduled for 6 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 21 at the Seward County Event Center. To donate a new, hand-crafted or collectible item, call 620-417-1131. Tickets will go on sale Aug. 3.