

MEETING MINUTES
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE & FACILITIES
MARCH 4, 2024
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND FACILITIES
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING

A meeting of the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education's Finance and Facilities Committee was held on March 4, 2024.

1. Call to Order

Commissioner Paul Batson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. and noted the establishment of a quorum of Committee Members. Chair Batson then asked for the adoption of the agenda. Commissioner Bryson moved for adoption of the agenda, and Commissioner Dyer seconded the motion.

Upon Chair Batson's request, Scheri Eichelberger acknowledged Committee members and introduced guest attendees and established compliance of the Freedom of Information Act.

Committee members present for this meeting were Commissioners Edgar Dyer, Dino Teppara, and Jenni Bryson.

Commissioner Mick Zais had an excused absence from this meeting. Commissioner Patrick White was absent from this meeting.

Commission on Higher Education staff that attended this meeting were Georges Tippens, Scheri Eichelberger, and Yarley Steedley.

Guests who attended this meeting were Mike Matthews, and Scott McKay, University of South Carolina; Elbert R, Malone, South Carolina State University; Tanju Karanfil, Clemson University. These guests were part of the panel that wrote and revised the Battelle Alliance Plan.

Other guests that joined this meeting were Melanie Barton, Governor's Office; Rick Lee, Winthrop University Trustee; and Beth Bell, Clemson University.

2. Review/Discussion of Revised Battelle Alliance Plan

Chair Batson then asked Georges Tippens to introduce the item for discussion and action.

Mr. Tippens stated that Proviso 11.24 of the fiscal year 2023-24 Appropriations Act appropriated \$40 million for the Battelle River Alliance, allocated among Clemson University (\$16 million), University of South Carolina (\$16 million), and South Carolina State University (\$8 million).

Prior to fund distribution, the proviso required the institutions to submit a comprehensive plan and timeline to the Commission on Higher Education for how the \$40 million will be utilized to further the mission and support the Savannah River National Laboratory.

The Commission on Higher Education reviewed the plan in November 2023. It then needed to receive review and comment by the Joint Bond Review Committee and approval by the State Accountability Authority before the institutions could receive and expend the funds.

While the plan was reviewed favorably by the Commission on Higher Education, the Joint Bond Review Committee did not approve the plan as was initially written. The Joint Bond Review Committee directed staff to work with the Commission on Higher Education and other interested parties to develop accountability measures and periodic reporting requirements for inclusion in the plan.

Staff of the Commission on Higher Education met with staff of the Governor's Office, the University of

South Carolina, South Carolina State University, and Clemson University to include accountability measures, transparency, and reporting requirements in the plan.

Revisions to the plan included more frequent reporting and more defined program measures and targets.

Chair Batson noted that the first version of the plan was approved by the Commission on Higher Education in the fall of 2023, therefore, the focus of the meeting was solely to discuss and decide on the revised version of the plan.

The universities involved in writing and revising the plan stated that the plan would positively impact these institutions and they have an expectation that the measures of the plan were highly achievable.

Melanie Barton stated that in the revised plan the institutions successfully provided more concrete numbers for the purpose of accountability for the issuance of the funds to support the Battelle Alliance Plan. Rick Lee stated that the Governor continues to be involved and supports this initiative.

Upon conclusion of statements from the institutions, staff of the Governor's Office, and discussion among the Committee, Commissioner Dyer moved to accept the revised Battelle Alliance Plan and Commissioner Bryson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

When there were no more comments or remarks, Commissioner Bryson motioned for adjournment, and Commissioner Dyer seconded.

The meeting adjourned at 2:03 p.m.