



EXECUTIVE SESSION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

November 17, 2022
Murdock Hall, Room 208
Audio/Video Conference

Trustees in attendance:

Mohan Boodram*	Taylor Hope	Denise Marshall
John Barrett III*	Frederick Keator*	Robert Reilly
Brenda Burdick	Karen Kowalczyk	Franklyn Reynolds*
Jean Clarke-Mitchell		

Trustees absent:

Kathleen Therrien

MCLA Staff in attendance:

James F. Birge, President
Lisa Lescarbeau, Clerk

*Denotes remote participation

As allowed by executive order of the Governor of Massachusetts, in compliance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30 and 15A, Section 9, and with a quorum present in-person and via audio/video-conference, the Executive Session of the Board of Trustees of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts met on November 17, 2022 with Board Chair Burdick presiding.

Executive Session

Chair Burdick announced that the Board would be entering into Executive Session to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property for which open session may have detrimental effects on the negotiating position of this public body. Property to be considered is the Berkshire Towers. The Board will reconvene in open session following this Executive Session.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, by roll call vote, it was unanimously:

VOTED: to enter into Executive Session of the Board of Trustees to consider purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property for which open session may have detrimental effects on the negotiating position of this public body.

President Birge opened the discussion with a review of a request from the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency made to MCLA for use of residential property on campus.

MEMA is working to secure housing for immigrants and homeless people with immediate need. MEMA along with members of the Division of Housing and Community Development, Department of Public Health, and MCLA met to discuss needs and what space MCLA might have to accommodate the residential need.

The population that would be on campus would be short-stay (5-10 days) revolving likely between December 2022 and June 2023.

The aforementioned groups were provided a tour of MCLA's Berkshire Towers. There was interest in continuing conversations and a meeting of MEMA et al is scheduled for November 18 at Noon.

Trustees discussed concerns with length of stay and impact on the region's resources including school systems, and the ability to offer English as a second language. MCLA provided MEMA with local agency contacts that would be able to aid with these types of concerns.

Revenue potential was discussed. While this is unknown at this time, the College intends to pursue this arrangement as a rental agreement with the State agencies involved.

Trustees discussed concerns with the population and the safety of the current community, and questions arose regarding criminal background and whether background checks would be performed. President Birge noted that the College's conversations with the state agencies included safety and the limited ability of MCLA to provide that with campus police largely due to staffing issues. Security will be the State's responsibility and will be handled with on-site staffing 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

Salem State University is a part of the emergency housing program with the State, and MCLA management will have conversations with Salem management on their agreement with the State for reference as we continue conversations for MCLA.

With regard to questions as to who makes the decision on pursuing this rental agreement, President Birge stated that this is a management decision similar to how all rentals agreements are managed. This session is to keep the Trustees informed of request as it differs from the typical rental.

This deal has potential for real capital for the College. There is potential for push back from the community, but the population will be families seeking permanent homes and will be on campus five days on average. It will be important to be thoughtful of community concerns in making a final decision.

Other services that will be provided to the temporary residents were discussed including transportation, access to medical, groceries, and meals. The State will be responsible for

supporting all needs of the families housed in the Towers with the aforementioned all accounted for in their plans.

President Birge will provide additional information as conversations with the various State agencies continue.

With no further discussion, upon motion duly made and seconded, following a roll call vote, it was unanimously:

VOTED: to exit the Executive Session of the Board of Trustees.