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TEXAS SOUTHMOST COLLEGE DISTRICT

Public Hearing and Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees

August 28, 2025

The Board of Trustees of the Texas Southmost College District convened in open session on August 28, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. Board Members present were Ms. Adela Garza, Chair; Dr. Norma Lopez Harris, Secretary; Dr. Tony Zavaleta; Ms. Alejandra Aldrete; Mr. Edward Camarillo; and Mr. Edgar Garcia. Also present was Dr. Jesús Roberto Rodríguez, President of Texas Southmost College. Absent was Ms. Delia Saenz, Vice Chair.

AMENDED PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Garza at 5:30 p.m. She called role and confirmed a quorum.

2. Pledges of Allegiance

Trustee Zavaleta led the United States Pledge of Allegiance and the Texas Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Public Hearing on Proposed 2025 Ad Valorem Tax Rate for Texas Southmost College District

Chair Garza stated that Board of Trustees is proposing a maintenance and operations tax rate of \$0.091344 and a debt tax rate of \$0.020465 per \$100 of valuation. She noted that the 2025 notice of tax rates for the Texas Southmost College District had been posted on the college website since August 4, 2025 and in the local newspaper on August 23, 2025.

Mr. Carlos Pecero, Interim Vice President for Finance and Administration, was called upon to review the proposed tax rates. He described the two types of tax rates: maintenance and operations and debt service. He also reviewed three tax rate options: voter-approval, prior-year, and no-new-revenue, as well as the proposed tax rate adoption schedule. The board engaged in a brief discussion of the tax rate being lowered and its impact on the college budget.

Chair Garza asked if there were any speakers signed up for public comment regarding the proposed tax rate. There were no public speakers.

No action was taken on this item

4. Adjournment of Public Hearing

Trustee Aldrete made a motion to adjourn the public hearing. Trustee Camarillo seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

AMENDED REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Garza at 5:41 p.m. She called role and confirmed a quorum. Board Members present were Ms. Adela Garza, Chair; Dr. Norma Lopez Harris, Secretary; Dr. Tony Zavaleta; Ms. Alejandra Aldrete; Mr. Edward Camarillo; and Mr. Edgar Garcia. Also present was Dr. Jesús Roberto Rodríguez, President of Texas Southmost College. Absent was Ms. Delia Saenz, Vice Chair.

2. Pledges of Allegiance

Trustee Zavaleta led the pledges of allegiance during the public hearing.

3. Public Comment

Chair Garza asked if there were any speakers signed up for public comment. There were no public speakers.

4. Chairwoman's Report

Chair Garza presented the following items:

Fall Convocation

Chair Garza reported that the college kicked off the new academic year with faculty and staff at Fall Convocation. The President and senior leadership shared important updates, and Mr. Eric Molina served as the guest speaker. Mr. Molina is a South Texas native and Texas Southmost College Alum who was only one of two Texans in the last 30 years to fight twice for the Heavyweight World Title. Chair Garza said he showed great pride in sharing the impact TSC made on his life. She thanked Secretary Lopez Harris and Trustee Camarillo for participating in the event.

Rededication of the Ruben Herrera J.D. Legal Center

TSC held a rededication of the legal center to name it after former trustee Ruben Herrera, which the board voted to rename the Ruben Herrera J.D. Legal Center at their March board meeting. Chair Garza encouraged the community to visit the center, which features custom-made courtroom furniture, crafted in-house by TSC facilities team members. She thanked Vice Chair Saenz, Secretary Lopez Harris, Trustee Aldrete and Trustee Garcia for participating in the event and honoring the Herrera family.

Community Feedback

Chair Garza shared recent praise she received from a student regarding Mr. Danny Perez, College Preparatory English instructor, whom the student lauded as exceptionally helpful. She noted that the TSC community takes pride in helping and nurturing students. She also received a note from Donald F. Haydon, of Laguna Vista, who praised the college staff who assisted his granddaughter in enrolling at TSC and registering for classes. He named the following staff members as particularly helpful: Alejandra Parra, Daisy Gregorio, Alejandro Flores, and Jorge Bueno. Chair Garza met with Mr. Bueno, and he credited his mentor for helping to enhance his customer service. She said she enjoys continuing to share the good things happening at TSC.

5. President's Report

JET Grant Presentation

President Rodríguez reported that TSC hosted TWC Commissioner Alberto Treviño III, a TSC alum, on campus the previous week for a JET grant announcement at the TSC Performing Arts Center. The event celebrated TWC's investment of \$84,614 in equipment for the welding program through the Jobs and Education for Texas (JET) grant program. Participating in the event were a number of representatives from elected officials' offices, as well as other grant recipients from high schools across the Rio Grande Valley. The President thanked Chair Garza for participating in the event.

WTCE Summer Camps

The Workforce Training and Continuing Education division held three summer camps this year, including the following:

- A STEM camp for 30 IDEA Riverview high school students,
- A Maritime Business Youth camp for 40 Region One Upward Bound Students, and
- A camp for 12 Region One students seeking the to become certified personal trainers.

President Rodríguez thanked Mr. Richard Mesquias, Dr. Angelica Fuentes, Dr. Emma Miller, and the entire team for strengthening community connections and building relationships with new young Scorpions.

Health Professions Pinning Ceremonies

During the summer, two classes of health professions students graduated: the Vocational Nursing pinning ceremony took place on August 5th, and the Patient Care Technician/Phlebotomy pinning ceremony took place on August 21st. President Rodríguez noted that the graduates will make a great impact as part of the medical team beginning their first day on the job by helping their patients and families. He thanked Chair Garza for participating in the pinning ceremonies.

NATCEP approval

TSC's Nurse Assistant program underwent a biannual audit and passed with flying colors; TSC was approved as a Nurse Aide Training and Competency Evaluation Program for another two years by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission. President Rodríguez congratulated instructors Odelia Garcia, Ofelia Hess, and Monica Solis for continuing to run the program in accordance with the highest operations standards. He also congratulated Mr. Mesquias, Dr. Fuentes, and the entire WTCE team for the support they provide to make the college's programs and students successful.

President Rodríguez called upon Dean of Health Professions Herminio Guajardo to provide an update on the most recent class of associate degree nurses (AND). Dean Guajardo said the students graduated with a 100% pass rate on the Registered Nursing licensing exam, and he thanked the board and President Rodríguez for their support of the program and its students.

NJCAA national All-Academic Recognition

Five TSC soccer players were nationally recognized as part of the NJCAA All-academic national team. To earn the recognition, they must maintain a high GPA while participating in intercollegiate athletics. Elizabeth Torres and Romualdo Gonzalez earned a spot on the 2nd team All-Academic, maintaining a GPA between 3.8 and 3.99. America Gonzalez, Camila Minez, and Clariieddy Martinez each earned a spot on the 3rd team All-Academic, maintaining a GPA between 3.6 and 3.79. President Rodríguez congratulated the student-athletes, as well as the faculty and staff who are dedicated to helping them succeed.

Student Services Events

As TSC was preparing for the fall semester, the hard-working Student Services team—led by Dr. David Plummer, Ms. Vanessa Vasquez, and Dr. Prisci Tipton—held a number of events to enhance the Scorpion community and foster student success. These included:

- Registration Round up
- New Student Orientation
- Soccer Scrimmages
- Sign Language classes
- Blood Drive
- Snow Cones
- TSC Sting Day

Brownsville Chamber of Commerce Board appointee

Julie Villalon, Director of Institutional Advancement, was one of seven individuals recently appointed to the Board of the Brownsville Chamber of Commerce. President Rodríguez congratulated her, noting that Ms. Villalon will represent Texas Southmost College well in the community.

Video Presentation

President Rodríguez shared a video, which highlighted college activities that have occurred since the June Board of Trustee Meeting.

President Rodríguez thanked the Board of Trustees for their continued commitment to the college and the communities it serves, as the college begins the academic year guided by the new strategic plan. He said the college community appreciates their leadership in setting the course to move forward with purpose and direction.

6. Rotary Club of Brownsville Sunrise Presentation

Mr. Carlos Chacon, President of the Rotary Club of Brownsville Sunrise, extended his heartfelt gratitude for the TSC Board of Trustees granting the organization use of the ITECC parking area to support their fundraising activities. Mr. Chacon and his fellow Rotarians presented a gift of \$6,000 to the TSC Scholarship Fund.

7. Consideration and possible action on approval of the minutes of the following meetings:**a. Regular Meeting – June 26, 2025**

Trustee Camarillo made a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 26, 2025. Dr. Zavaleta seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

b. Special Board Meeting – August 14, 2025

Trustee Aldrete made a motion to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of August 14, 2025. Secretary Lopez Harris seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

8. Consideration and possible action on approval of the Texas Southmost College District Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026

Mr. Carlos Pecero, Interim Vice President for Finance and Administration, was called upon to present the item. He reviewed the budget timeline, tax rate timeline, and budget comparisons from the previous year. He reported that proposed budget was a balanced budget.

Chair Garza announced that the approved budget includes a 2% pay raise for all full-time employees. It also includes an \$11,000 increase for all full-time faculty.

Chair Garza made a motion to approve the Texas Southmost College Fiscal Year 2025-2026 operating budget, as presented. Trustee Aldrete seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

9. Consideration and possible action on the adoption of the 2025 TSC District Ad Valorem Tax Rate

Mr. Carlos Pecero, Interim Vice President for Finance and Administration, was called upon to present the item. He reviewed the two key items of the property tax rate: maintenance and operations and debt service. He also reviewed the three available property tax rates: voter-approval, prior-year, and no-new-revenue, as well as the property tax rate adoption schedule.

Chair Garza said she took great pride in the fact that the tax rate has never been raised during the 17 years she has served on the Board of Trustees.

Chair Garza made a motion to adopt a maintenance and operations tax rate of \$0.091344 and a debt tax rate of \$0.020465 per \$100 of valuation. Trustee Zavaleta seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

10. Consideration and possible action on approval of Budget Amendment 25-0004 in the amount of \$10,000,000

Mr. Carlos Pecero, Interim Vice President for Finance and Administration, was called upon to present the item. He said the amendment was a key part of the approved budget. The funds, which come from unspent reserves, are proposed to fund one-time expenses and capital projects, as well as institutional partnerships.

Chair Garza made a motion to approve budget amendment 25-004 for Fiscal Year 2025, as presented. Trustee Camarillo seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

11. Finance Committee

Chair Garza called upon Secretary Lopez Harris to present the report.

a. Consideration and possible action to approve a memorandum of understanding between Texas Southmost College and the Texas Southmost College Foundation

Dr. Stella Garcia, Vice President of Intuitional Advancement/Chief of Staff, was called upon to present the item. She said the MOU is a renewal of the previous 5-year MOU between the two entities.

Secretary Lopez Harris made a motion to approve the MOU between TSC and the TSC Foundation, as presented. Trustee Aldrete seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

b. Monthly Financial Statement Report for the month ended June 30, 2025

Mr. Carlos Pecero, Interim Vice President of Finance and Administration, was called upon to present the Monthly Financial Statement Report for the month ended June 30, 2025.

The item was for information only. No action was taken.

c. Third Quarter Investment Report for Fiscal Year 2025

Mr. Carlos Pecero, Interim Vice President of Finance and Administration, was called on to present the Third Quarter Investment Report for Fiscal Year 2025.

The item was for information only. No action was taken.

d. Report on grants awarded to Texas Southmost College for the month of June

Mr. Carlos Pecero, Interim Vice President of Finance and Administration, was called upon to present the report on grants awarded to Texas Southmost College for the month of June.

The board engaged in a brief discussion about grant activity periods.

The item was for information only. No action was taken

12. Facilities Committee

Chair Garza called upon Trustee Camarillo to present the report.

a. Consideration and possible action to approve a facility assessment and facility dashboard access with the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB)

Dr. Stella Garcia, Vice President of Institutional Advancement/Chief of Staff, was called upon to present the item. She reported that the item aligns with TSC's strategic plan goal of enhancing facilities and technology infrastructure. Deliverables include TASB's production of a Higher Educational Facility Assessment, with annual updates, and TASB Facility Dashboard access, for which Dr. Garcia provided a brief overview.

The board engaged in a brief discussion of the value the dashboard would bring to organizing facilities projects and its usefulness when seeking additional external funding.

Trustee Camarillo made a motion to approve the agreement with TASB for a Facility Assessment and Facility Dashboard access in the amount of \$165,000 and authorize President Rodríguez to execute the agreement, as presented. Trustee Garcia seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

b. Consideration and possible action on award for architectural design services for Fort Brown Campus and ITECC Building Roof Renovation Projects

Dr. Stella Garcia, Vice President of Institutional Advancement/Chief of Staff, and Mr. Ronald Robles, Executive Director of Facilities and Physical Plant, were called upon to present the item. Dr. Garcia reviewed the RFQ timeline and staff assessment of the vendor pool. Mr. Robles reported on the evaluation his team conducted to prioritize the buildings most in need of roof repair.

Trustee Camarillo made a motion to negotiate contract award for architectural design services for Roof Renovation Projects to Brown Reynolds Watford (BRW) Architects from McAllen, Texas; Gomez Mendez Saenz (GMS), Inc., from Brownsville, Texas; and Sam Garcia Architect, LLC from McAllen, Texas; and authorize President Rodríguez to execute the contracts, as presented. Trustee Garcia seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

c. Facilities Update

Dr. Stella Garcia, Vice President of Institutional Advancement/Chief of Staff, and Mr. Ronald Robles, Executive Director Facilities and Physical Plant, were called upon to present the item. Mr. Robles provided an update on the following items: thermal plant cooling tower installation, ITECC pipe fitting lab, hydronic line replacement, ITECC fire lane replacement project, and the PUB water tower demolition.

The item was for information only. No action was taken.

13. Academic Committee

Chair Garza called upon Trustee Zavaleta to present the report.

a. Consideration and possible action on approval to pursue an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Culinary Arts, a Certificate Level 2 in Catering and Private Chef, and a Certificate-Level 1 in Baking and Pastry

Dr. Emma Miller, Dean of Business, Engineering, Architecture, and Technology, and Mr. Oscar Hernandez, Associate Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Educational Technologies, were called upon to present the item. The program was developed based on the job growth outlook from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, as well as local industry growth. Three school districts have committed to offer the culinary instruction at their respective sites as dual enrollment programs.

The Board expressed their excitement for TSC's continuing program development to meet communities' growth.

Trustee Zavaleta made a motion to approve the Associate of Applied Science Degree in Culinary Arts, a Certificate Level 2 in Catering and Private Chef, and a Certificate-Level 1 in Baking and Pastry, and to seek THECB and SACSCOC approval to offer these programs by August 2026, as presented. Trustee Aldrete seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

14. Student Services Committee

Chair Garza called upon Secretary Lopez Harris to present the report.

a. Consideration and possible action to approve a memorandum of understanding with the 2025-2026 matching funds agreement between the Stars Scholarship Fund and Texas Southmost College

Dr. David Plummer, Vice President of Student Development, and Ms. Vanessa Vasquez, Associate Vice President of Student Services, were called upon to present the item. Dr. Plummer said the proposed MOU authorizes a new partnership in which the Stars Scholarship Fund will award \$5,000 to TSC for student scholarships, which will be matched by \$5,000 in scholarship funding to TSC students from the TSC Foundation.

Secretary Lopez Harris made a motion to approve a memorandum of understanding with the 2025-2026 matching funds agreement between the Stars Scholarship Fund and Texas Southmost College and authorize President Rodríguez to sign the agreement. Trustee Garcia seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

15. Policy Committee

Chair Garza called on Trustee Aldrete to present the report.

a. Consideration and possible action to approve the revisions to the following LOCAL policies:

CG (LOCAL) – Safety Program

CGF (LOCAL) – Safety Program: Security Personnel

ECC (LOCAL) – Instructional Arrangements: Course Load and Schedules

FFDA (LOCAL) – Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Sex and Sexual Violence

FFE (LOCAL) – Student Welfare Freedom from Bullying

FLD (LOCAL) – Student Rights and Responsibilities Student Complaints

FMA (LOCAL) – Discipline and Penalties Discipline Procedure

Mr. Frank Perez, Legal Counsel, was called upon to present the item. He provided an overview of proposed changes to the following policies:

- CG (LOCAL) – Safety Program, including the addition of guidelines and procedures for responding to disasters, fire safety, and prevention programs
- CGF (LOCAL) – Safety Program: Security Personnel, including alignment to TSC hybrid security model
- ECC (LOCAL) – Instructional Arrangements: Course Load and Schedules, including revisions for applying exceptions to the limit of courses a student may drop
- FFDA (LOCAL) – Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Sex and Sexual Violence, including changing the Title IX coordinator's contact information
- FFE (LOCAL) – Student Welfare Freedom from Bullying, including updating the Vice President of Student Development's title
- FLD (LOCAL) – Student Rights and Responsibilities Student Complaints, including revisions recommended by TASBE regarding retaliation to students

- FMA (LOCAL) – Discipline and Penalties Discipline Procedure, including a model policy for students who are accused of violating the code of conduct.

Trustee Aldrete made a motion to approve the following TASB Update 49 Local policies: BCA, BCB, and BCE. Secretary Lopez Harris seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

16. Executive Session

The Board convened in Executive Session at 6:57 p.m.

The Board reconvened in Open Session at 9:08 p.m.

Trustee Zavaleta departed after Executive Session

17. Action on Executive Session Matters

- a. Consultation with Attorney on Pending or Contemplated Litigation, Section 551.071 Texas Government Code**

No action was taken.

- b. Consultation with Attorney on Pending Real Estate Issues, Section 551.072 Texas Government Code**

No action was taken.

- c. Deliberation on Personnel Matters, Section 551.074 Texas Government Code**

Secretary Lopez Harris made a motion to authorize and approve the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Salary Schedule, as discussed in executive session. Trustee Garcia seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Trustee Garcia made a motion to extend President Rodríguez's contract for another year, so that his contract continues with a five-year term, and that his salary be increased, as discussed in executive session. Trustee Aldrete seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Trustee Camarillo made a motion that the Board of Trustees enter into a contract with Legal Counsel, as discussed in executive session. Trustee Aldrete seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Trustee Aldrete made a motion that the Board of Trustees adopt the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 TSC Strategic Priorities, as discussed in executive session. Trustee Camarillo seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

- d. Deliberation regarding security devices or security audits; Section 551.089 Texas Government Code**

No action was taken.

- e. Deliberation on a matter in which the duty of the attorney to the governmental body under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of Texas clearly conflicts with this chapter, Section 551.071 Texas Government Code

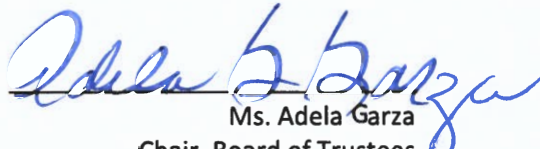
No action was taken.

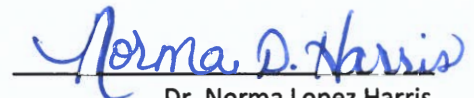
18. Announcement of Proposed Meeting Dates

- a. Regular Board Meeting – Thursday, September 18, 2025, 5:30 p.m.
- b. Regular Board Meeting – Thursday, October 16, 2025, 5:30 p.m.

19. Adjournment

Trustee Camarillo made a motion to adjourn. Trustee Aldrete seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.


Ms. Adela Garza
Chair, Board of Trustees


Dr. Norma Lopez Harris
Secretary, Board of Trustees

The video recording of the Public Hearing and Regular Board of Trustees meeting held on August 28, 2025 is available on the TSC.EDU website. These minutes were prepared by Dr. Angela K. McCauley, Chief Institutional Editor and Special Projects. Videotaping of the Board of Trustees' meetings began on April 11, 1996.