

FLORIDA **A&M** UNIVERSITY  
Board of Trustees

**Budget, Finance, and Facilities Committee Meeting**  
Trustee Craig Reed, Committee Chair  
Wednesday, March 6, 2024 Location: FAMU Grand Ballroom

**MINUTES**

**Committee Members Present:** Jamal Brown, Otis Cliatt, Kristin Harper, Kelvin Lawson, Kenny Stone, Craig Reed, and Michael White

**Call to Order/Roll Call**

Trustee Reed called the meeting to order. Ms. Schloss called the roll. A quorum was present.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**Approval of Minutes – October 11, 2023**

Questions/Comments re: Approval of Minutes-October 11, 2023

- a. Trustee Brown stated that his name may not have been listed on the roll, but his name was included in the comments. He wants to make sure his name is included in the role of present trustee for that meeting.

Response: Trustee Reed asked if the edit could be made, and Ms. Schloss confirmed that it could be done.

*The motion to approve this action item was carried.*

**Approval of Minutes - December 6, 2023.**

There were no revisions to the minutes.

*The motion to approve this action item was carried.*

**Approval of Amendment to the FY 2023-2024 Operating Budget-Carryforward for Activity and Service Fees**

VP Brown for Finance and Administration/CFO requested board approval of an amendment to the FY 2023-2024 Operating Budget-Carryforward for Activity and Service Fees.

Questions/Comments re: Approval of Amendment to the FY 2023-2024 Operating Budget-Carryforward for Activity and Service Fees

- a. Trustee White inquired about the specific uses of the Activity & Service (A&S) fees.  
Response: VP Brown briefly explained that the allocation process involves the Student Government, and then deferred to VP Hudson for a more detailed explanation. VP Hudson stated that the A&S fees are determined by the students by state law. He further explained that the students are the designators of the funds for the student organizations and activities of the year. The Student Senate has a process in which they hear proposals from different student organizations, and then they designate those funds to the student organizations.
- b. Trustee White asked if these funds are used for the Recreational Center.  
Response: VP Hudson replied that some funds are used for the Rec. Center, which has a designated amount. The Rec. Center, The FAMUAN, the Child Care Center, and all student organizations go through a budgeting process.

*The motion to approve this action item was carried.*

**Approval of Contract Authority**

VP Brown requested that the board approve the President to enter into a design agreement between JRA Architects, not to exceed 1.5 million dollars, to design the Howard Hall Renovation Project.

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**(a) Howard Hall Renovation Project Architect/Engineer Services**

Questions/Comments re: Approval of Contract Authority

- a. Trustee Harper asked to be reminded of the President's contract signature authority limit.  
Response: VP Brown stated that it is up to one million.
- b. Trustee Harper requested that VP Brown conduct a comparison of the contract authority levels for Presidents within the State University System (SUS) to potentially revise FAMU's policies accordingly.  
Response: VP Brown stated that they would do a current assessment, but we have looked into this previously, and we're the only university with an authority limit at this range. Trustee Harper asked VP Brown if she had a sense of the authority limits for other Universities within the SUS. Budget Director Nichole Murry clarified that there isn't a set threshold for budget authority for Presidents within the SUS. She explained that the Board of Trustees allows the President to propose changes to the operating budget, which are then reviewed and approved by both the Board and the President.
- c. Trustee Stone asked VP Brown, since the funds are already approved if there was a way that we could look at how to fast-track this versus another board meeting.  
Response: Trustee Reed acknowledged that the current process regarding the authority and oversight of contracts was originally established by the Board itself. He emphasized that the Board retains the power to modify this process if deemed necessary. He suggested that a separate discussion might be appropriate to consider any potential changes. Trustee Reed recalled that the initial rationale behind the stringent process was to ensure financial oversight and transparency for the University, particularly during periods of fiscal challenges.

Trustee Lawson agreed with the previous comments, noting the historical context behind the decision to implement the current process. He referenced specific contractual spending issues within the State University System (SUS), particularly in Central Florida, that prompted the establishment of this process to ensure financial prudence and oversight. He clarified that there have not been concerns regarding the President's authority under this process but emphasized that the initial intention was to ensure the University's fiscal health and stability at that time.

Trustee Cliatt expressed agreement with the previously stated viewpoints, emphasizing that the existing measures were instituted by the Board for significant reasons. He proposed that before any voting occurs on potential changes, the topic should be thoroughly discussed at the upcoming retreat. This would allow for a more comprehensive deliberation. He advocated for maintaining caution and not dismantling established safeguards prematurely. He also recommended that the matter be designated as an agenda item for the retreat, providing ample opportunity for in-depth discussion.

*The motion to approve this action item was carried.*

VP Brown requested that the board approve the President to enter into a design agreement between Architects Lewis + Whitlock, not to exceed 2.2 million dollars, to design the Chemical and Biological Research Center Renovation Project.

**(b) Chemical and Biological Research Center Renovation Project Architect/Engineer Services**

*The motion to approve this action item was carried.*

VP Brown requested that the board approve the President to enter into a contract between the Owner and Dynamic Ceramic, not to exceed 1.5 million dollars, to install new flooring in Polkinghorne Village.

**(c) Polkinghorne Village Floor Installation**

Questions/Comments re: Contract Authority

- a. Trustee Lawson stated that he supports the agreement. He questioned whether opportunities were provided for smaller minority firms to bid on this contract, given that the installation process is not exceedingly complex.

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*Response:* VP Brown affirmed the university's commitment to fostering minority participation in its projects. She indicated that there is already minority representation in several of the projects presented to the Board.

*The motion to approve this action item was carried.*

**Approval of Contract Amendments**

VP Brown requested the board to approve the President to amend the contract with RAM Construction and Development, LLC., not to exceed \$278,948.00.

**(a) RAM Construction for FAMU CASS Promenade Additional Work**

*The motion to approve this action item was carried.*

VP Brown requested the board to approve the President to amend the contract with JRA Architects, not to exceed \$430,000.00.

**(b) JRA Architects -500- Bed Mixed -Use Residence Hall Architect/Engineer Services**

Questions/Comments re: Contract Amendments

- a. Trustee Lawson asked if the cost increase was due to our delay.  
*Response:* VP Brown stated yes.
  
- b. Trustee Lawson asked if negotiations were had and if there was any way to lock in a max. Is the increase due to changing material costs, not labor costs, or is it both?  
*Response:* AVP, Kendall Jones confirmed that the cost increase was attributable to both material and labor costs, in addition to delays in the design phase. He further explained that the decision to postpone all three projects resulted in additional escalation costs
  
- c. Trustee Reed asked AVP Jones to expand on what drives the escalation costs.  
*Response:* AVP Jones elaborated that escalation costs are influenced by the rising costs of materials and design fees, which are calculated as a percentage of the construction estimate.
  
- d. Trustee Lawson asked if we could work with JRA about the \$430,000, seeing that the university will do more business with them in the future.  
*Response:* AVP Jones said we can negotiate that, but that number is not to exceed.
  
- e. Trustee Brown asked if this includes parking relative to the new facilities.  
*Response:* AVP Jones responded that parking is included in each project.

*The motion to approve this action item was carried.*

VP Brown requested the board to approve the President to amend the contract with CHASM Architects, not to exceed \$606,000.00.

**(c) CHASM Architects – 800- Bed Mixed-Use Apartment Complex Architect/Engineer Services**

Questions/Comments re: Contract Amendments

- a. Trustee Cliatt stated that he understands the delay but doesn't understand the contract's parameters.  
*Response:* AVP Jones responded that the anticipated start date had all three projects starting at one time. The design piece started with the 700-bed, but because we are slow-walking the project, the anticipated start date for construction is 2026. The slowdown has caused an increase in labor as well as materials.

Trustee Cliatt expressed concern over a \$500,000 penalty for project delays, finding it excessive. He acknowledged the potential for more flexibility in negotiations on the corporate side compared to state projects. He highlighted the difficulty in reconciling the steep penalty with the fact that the work is still being completed and thus contributing to revenue, albeit delayed. He questioned the fairness of imposing such a significant penalty for merely delaying the timing of revenue inflow.

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- b. Trustee Brown raised a question regarding parking in relation to the two housing projects, collectively providing approximately 1,300 beds. He inquired about the expected percentage of students with vehicles and how this translates into the required number of parking spaces to accommodate these students.  
*Response:* VP Hudson clarified that certain housing facilities, particularly those designated for freshman students, would not require as much parking since freshmen are not permitted to have cars on campus. He specified that the 500-bed facility, replacing Gibbs Hall, would cater exclusively to freshmen. In contrast, the 800-bed facility planned for Palmetto North is intended for upperclassmen and graduate students, areas where there is ample space to accommodate parking needs.
- c. Trustee Washington raised a question regarding the current focus on approving architectural costs for the discussed items. She sought clarification on when the Board would address and approve the actual construction costs associated with these projects.  
*Response:* AVP Jones explained that the decision to address construction costs will be made when the Board opts to proceed with the actual projects. He noted that a collective decision was already made to advance with the design phase to ensure compliance with current construction codes. AVP Jones assured that at the appropriate juncture, the Board would make a decision regarding moving forward with the contract for the Construction Manager (CM) selection.

In her follow-up, Trustee Washington questioned whether, given the decision to proceed at a slower pace, the university feels confident in its ability to manage the construction of the 700-bed facility and, subsequently, the combined 1300 beds across two projects when the time comes. She sought reassurance on the university's project management capabilities concerning these ambitious undertakings.

Trustee Washington emphasized the importance of monitoring construction costs, noting the significant increases with each year of delay. She urged consideration of this factor in assessing the university's capacity to manage multiple projects simultaneously.

*Response:* Mr. Talton affirmed the university's preparedness and financial strategy for managing the construction projects. He stated that there are established construction budgets for the 500-bed and 800-bed projects, which will not be exceeded. The architects are aware of these financial constraints and are tasked with designing within these budgets. He assured that if project costs threaten to exceed the budget, the design will be revised to align with the budgetary limits. Talton expressed confidence in the selected architects and the contractual agreements that mandate designing to a specific budget. Furthermore, he emphasized that any necessary design alterations resulting from budget overruns would be the financial responsibility of the architects, as they are obliged to adhere to the predefined budget.

- d. Trustee Washington pointed out that according to the materials reviewed, there is a noted increase in construction costs. She questioned whether the architects were provided with an amended budget authority to accommodate these rising costs.  
*Response:* Mr. Talton confirmed that the architects have been given specific construction budgets for each project, which they are required to adhere to. He noted that these budgets have been set with consideration for that specific year, and it accounts for inflation.
- e. Trustee Cliatt reiterated a previous suggestion he made concerning parking infrastructure, specifically the inclusion of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations. He advocated for the integration of a sufficient number of EV charging stations in the new parking areas being planned. Trustee Cliatt emphasized this as part of the university's broader initiative towards becoming a more environmentally friendly, or "green," institution, highlighting the importance of supporting sustainable transportation options.  
*Response:* Mr. Jones responded with an FYI that we have installed two charging plug-ins in the CASS parking lot.

Trustee Reed supported Trustee Washington's concerns, deeming them valid and suggesting further examination as a follow-up. He proposed more in-depth discussions on the project's overall timeline to ensure clarity regarding the next steps, especially in light of the design phase and subsequent construction changes agreed upon by the board. Trustee Reed recommended revisiting this topic in a future meeting as an informational item, allowing for a comprehensive board discussion on the comfort level and agreement with the current timing and phasing plans for the 500-bed and 800-bed projects.

- f. Trustee White shifted the focus from the physical expansion projects to the broader impact on the student experience. He inquired about the strategies being implemented to integrate the influx of new students into campus life, ensuring that their experience aligns with the current resources and facilities. Specifically, he highlighted the importance of recreational centers and other amenities in providing an exceptional experience that encourages students to remain on campus. Trustee White's concern was about the holistic development and satisfaction of students in light of the university's expansion efforts.  
*Response:* VP Hudson informed that the decision to construct a new recreational facility was supported by the students through their A&S fees, highlighting the facility's significance as a central hub for student engagement on campus. He described the Recreational Center as a key component of campus culture, frequented not only by student clubs but also by athletics. VP Hudson noted that unlike many institutions within the SUS that charge a specific recreation fee, our university does not due to not having sought approval from the Board of Governors. Furthermore, the imposition of a moratorium on student fee increases has precluded the possibility of introducing this fee. He concluded by stating that plans for the new housing facilities include considerations for enhancing recreational amenities, ensuring that the expansion aligns with the goal of providing an enriching campus experience for students.
- g. President Robinson emphasized the importance of dining facilities in addition to recreational amenities, noting that VP Brown and her team plan to expand The Hub to support the increased student population accompanying the opening of the 700-bed facility. He stressed the necessity of enhancing The Hub's capacity to serve an additional 700 students. Furthermore, President Robinson highlighted the broader objective of enriching the student experience beyond housing and dining. He mentioned the expansion of living-learning communities within these new facilities, aiming to integrate upperclassmen as well as freshmen. This approach, he explained, is part of a strategic effort to foster a more conducive environment for student success at FAMU in the coming years.
- h. Trustee Brown reiterated concerns regarding parking availability, questioning whether an assessment had been conducted to determine the necessity of additional parking garages. Highlighting the historical reliance on a single garage and the evolving dynamics of campus movement, he emphasized the potential challenges posed by the increasing number of vehicles. Trustee Brown expressed apprehension that, with daily activities and potential influxes of people, the university might soon find itself in a situation where existing parking facilities are insufficient to meet demand. He advocated for proactive planning to address potential parking capacity issues.  
*Response:* VP Brown responded that since assuming responsibility for parking services in July, she has been actively evaluating the parking situation alongside the Director of Parking. She mentioned that, according to the current inventory and analysis, the available parking is deemed adequate when considering the volume of traffic and the size of the student population, but what is in question is the convenience of parking.
- i. Trustee Mondelus contributed two points. Firstly, she provided a specific figure in response to earlier discussions about the campus recreational center's usage, stating that approximately 3,139 students utilize the facility. She addressed the recurring student complaints regarding the operating hours of the recreational center, and emphasized her familiarity with budgetary challenges, particularly concerning the Rec Center's funding. Trustee Mondelus expressed the urgent need to implement a recreation fee, positioning it as a critical solution to the funding challenges that prevent the Rec Center from fully serving the student body's needs.

Secondly, she raised concerns regarding parking, specifically during events when main parking areas are unavailable, such as football games. Trustee Mondelus questioned whether the parking studies had considered scenarios when the university closes primary parking facilities, leading to student displacement. She inquired about the measures in place to address such situations and whether these circumstances were included in the parking assessment.

*Response:* VP Brown answered that we have not done the research. She mentioned that discussions on this matter have only recently begun, with plans for a detailed analysis in the pipeline. Regarding the specific issue of parking during game days, VP Brown acknowledged that there is a system in place for redirecting parking or providing accommodations once the primary lots are closed. She pointed out that alternative parking options are made available, such as the lots on Perry Street, and that adequate notifications are sent out to students and others affected, guiding them towards these alternate parking spaces.

- j. Trustee Mondelus acknowledged VP Brown's points on parking adjustments for students but expanded the concern to include visitors and individuals unfamiliar with the campus systems who may not have access to FAMU Info. She questioned the measures in place to inform these groups about parking limitations during specific events, emphasizing the need for effective communication strategies to accommodate the needs of all campus guests.

*Response:* VP Brown indicated that the Athletic Department actively utilizes social media platforms to disseminate information about parking availability during game days. She highlighted the department's deliberate efforts to ensure both students and visitors are informed of parking options and any related changes during such high-traffic events.

Trustee Reed emphasized the importance of a substantive dialogue on parking, suggesting that it should be revisited with more comprehensive information at hand. He advocated for incorporating this discussion within the broader context of ongoing campus developments, including the new constructions.

- k. Trustee Cliatt began by referencing Trustee White's earlier remarks on the recreational facilities, expressing a desire to reiterate the importance of such amenities. He recalled the tour of the CASS building and the Hub provided to trustees, suggesting a similar orientation for the five new trustees. Trustee Cliatt proposed organizing a campus tour to showcase these and potentially other new facilities, enhancing the new trustees' familiarity with campus developments.

He then shifted focus to the topic of parking, reminding the board of the extensive discussions regarding parking structures that took place in 2021. Noting that those discussions did not lead to a resolution, Trustee Cliatt recommended that it might be timely to revisit this matter, implying a need for further deliberation or action on parking infrastructure improvements.

## INFORMATION ITEMS

### Vice President for Finance and Administration's Report

- a. Department Spotlight- Facilities, Planning and Construction
- b. Quarterly Financial Report- Budget to Actuals
- c. Project Updates

### Vice President for Finance and Administration's Report

VP Brown introduced Mr. Kenneth Wilson as the new Controller for the University, and she also introduced Dr. Jennifer Wilder as the new Director of Business Auxiliary Services.

**a. Department Spotlight: Facilities, Planning and Construction**

VP Brown highlighted the achievements of the Facilities, Planning, and Construction Department and a presented short video clip showcasing their completed and ongoing projects throughout campus.

**b. Quarterly Financial Report- Budget to Actuals**

VP Brown presented an update of the budget to actuals as of February 21, 2024, comparing the second quarter FY 22-23 to FY 23-24. She noted that the overall budget expenditure for this quarter was 62%, a decrease from the 68% reported in the same period of the previous fiscal year. VP Brown then detailed variances within specific categories, explaining changes of plus or minus 10%. In the Intercollegiate Athletics category, there was an 18% decrease in expenditures, which VP Brown attributed to exceptional expenditures in the previous year, indicating that the current spending levels are more aligned with normal operational costs. The Concessions category saw a 15% increase in spending, which was explained as additional expenditures tied directly to the University's strategic priorities. The third category is Student Activities, which decreased by 37%, and the last category is Contracts and Grants, which decreased by 13%, primarily attributed to the declining CARES funds that are available.

**c. Project Updates**

VP Brown presented that during the 2022-2023 legislative year, the University was allocated 26.9 million dollars to address deferred maintenance and capital replacement renewal issues. In addition, 27.7 million was allocated to address campus-wide utility infrastructure. To date, approximately 11.9 million of the 26.9 million have been encumbered. VP Brown provided updates on our current projects.

VP Brown provided updates on several key infrastructure and renovation projects underway at the university. She began by highlighting progress on the 700-bed housing project, noting the closure of a 97.5 million-dollar HBCU loan on February 13, 2024. She announced that site work for this project is set to begin within the month, with a completion target of July 2025. Regarding the 500-bed housing project, VP Brown mentioned that it is currently in the design phase, while the 800-bed project had been discussed previously. The Hub expansion was also addressed, with plans to add 210 seats indoors and 44 outdoors in response to the new 700-bed housing addition. VP Brown reported on the Foote-Hilyer renovation project, which involves transforming the former student health clinic space within the Foote Hilyer Administrative Center into office space for the university's Information Technology Services. The update included the completion of the selection process for the Architect/Engineer and construction management for Howard Hall. Lastly, she mentioned the Chemical Biological Research Center Renovation, which aims to finish the last two floors of the Pharmacy Phase 2 building, noting that the selection process for the Architect/Engineer and construction management for this project is also complete.

Questions/Comments re: Project Updates

- a. Trustee Cliatt raised a question concerning the Howard Hall renovation project, specifically inquiring whether the current battalion commander has been involved in the design process for the new building.

Response: Mr. Jones stated that the commander has been part of the programming stage and will be part of the design.

**Stimulus Funding Expenditure Report to Date**

Dr. Akins presented an update on expenditures, encumbrances, pre-encumbrances, and the impact of stimulus funding. He reported a substantial decrease from the initial 195 million dollars to a current balance of \$622,881.37. He highlighted the effective allocation of these funds across various university needs, emphasizing the impact on student support and institutional enhancements. He detailed the remaining balances and allocations, including \$26,000 for institutional dollars primarily aimed at student support, \$60,000 for emergency student assistance within student affairs, and a nominal amount in IT that is likely to be redirected to further support student needs.

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Dr. Akins also provided a breakdown of the HBCU/HBGI dollars, stating that of the 125 million allocated, 124 million has been spent, with \$335,000 encumbered and a remaining balance of \$596,000. He proudly mentioned that 100% of the student aid portion of the funds has been utilized, directly benefiting students. Additionally, out of 39 million allocated for institutional purposes, 38.9 million has been spent with \$122,000 encumbered and a balance of \$26,626 remaining for additional student support.

**The meeting adjourned.**