



Newaygo County Area Promise Zone Authority Board Meeting
Tuesday, February 10, 2026, at 11:30 am
NC RESA Educational Services Center Board Room

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Present: Dr. Blake Prewitt (chairperson), Scott Rumsey, Holly Moon, Pat Brown, Dick Dunning, Jarred Hibma, Scott Swinehart (arrived at 11:47 am), Dr. Tim Rossler, Stu Sanders

Absent: Don VanSingel, Becky Tuuk

Staff: Melissa Miller (Director of Career, Technical, and Postsecondary Education), Katherine Mater (Student Success Coordinator), Ty Spickerman (Promise Zone Success Coach), Brandi Parsons (Student Success Administrative Assistant)

Chairperson Dr. Blake Prewitt called the meeting to order at 11:33 a.m.

Approval of the Agenda:

Motion by Pat Brown, supported by Dick Dunning, to approve the agenda as presented. Ayes - 8, Nays - 0. Motion unanimously carried.

Visitors:

None

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Motion by Holly Moon, supported by Stu Sanders, to approve the November 19, 2025, Annual and Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. The minutes of the Regular meeting were approved and the Annual meeting minutes were approved as amended, with the removal of the sentence "Donations have decreased." Ayes – 8, Nays – 0. Motion unanimously carried.

Public Participation:

Dr. Prewitt welcomed everyone.

Scott Rumsey presented the following report on behalf of the Operations Subcommittee:

- The financial statement through December 31, 2025, was shared and is subject to the upcoming audit. Mr. Rumsey stated there is nothing significant to discuss. The SET was greater than budgeted and anticipated. Dr. Prewitt shared over the next four years Ferris tuition will cost between \$750,000 and \$1,000,000, not including MCC tuition. Mr. Hibma pointed out this doesn't include MCC students who transfer to Ferris. Dr. Prewitt noted we have a good pot of savings but within four years we will be using most of our tax capture for tuition if the current trend continues.
- Mr. Rumsey opened up discussion regarding the Newaygo County Area Promise Zone Opportunity Fund at the Fremont Area Community Foundation. Mr. Hibma shared that we have asked for clarification from the foundation. It looks as though one fund is not earning interest. The endowment fund is earning about 14% interest, which seems as though they may be co-mingling our total balance, but we are uncertain. Dr. Prewitt pointed out that there's an administrative fee taken out every year. The fee last year was \$4,000. When that is taken into consideration, we are actually losing money year-after-year. The Board needs clarification if there's the ability to decide if the interest can go to the opportunity fund versus the endowment fund. We can access the opportunity fund

whereas the endowment fund is limited. Mr. Hibma stated that if they are co-mingling it, they need to rebalance it. If not, we should move it over to a Certificate of Deposit to begin earning interest.

- The 2025 audit is to begin soon. We are not anticipating any issues.
- The Certificate of Compliance and Certificate of Incumbency need to be signed today.
- The Promise Zone scholarship application deadline is March 2, 2026. We are at 30 applications for MCC, 36 for Ferris State University, and 3 for apprenticeship through Monday, February 10, 2026. Mrs. Miller noted we are on target compared with last year. Dr. Prewitt shared that this graduating class has about 50 less seniors than last year, showing a larger percentage of students are completing the application.
- The Strategic Planning Retreat is coming up. Mrs. Miller reminded everyone that the retreat is scheduled for April 30, 2026, from 12:00 – 2:00 pm and lunch will be provided. We will be taking notes and sharing that information with everyone.
- A Conflict of Interest policy is included in your packet. Dr. Prewitt shared the legal consultant for the Michigan Promise Zones Association recommended a Conflict of Interest bylaw. We have adapted this to our Promise Zone and would like your input. Mrs. Miller spoke to Mr. VanSingel today. He requested to discuss what degree of relativity will be considered a conflict of interest. We will want to be specific. For example, a son or daughter of a board member or in-laws of a board member. Are there specifics we want to get into? This is not addressed in its current form. Being in a smaller county, we have less people to choose from, so when we limit family members, we limit those who could be involved. Mrs. Moon requested further discussion on Section 2, item 3 (a) – the Board shall exclude any insider that has a conflict of interest with respect to the transaction from all discussion and from voting on the transaction. Mrs. Moon shared her experience and noted there may be a situation where a member has valuable input, but it would be a conflict of interest for him or her to vote. Mrs. Moon recommends an insider be allowed to share valuable input but be excluded from voting. Mrs. Moon also wished to review Section 5, item 1 – if the board has reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the director. Mrs. Moon's recommendation is to replace director with chairperson. Mrs. Moon inquired about having a signed acknowledgement. Dr. Prewitt shared his experience has been once you accept the position and sign the oath of office, you are keeping the bylaws of that organization, and it is your responsibility to read the bylaws. We will send this back to Operations for revisions and pass it by legal again. We will bring it back to the Board for approval at the next meeting.

Melissa Miller presented on behalf of Becky Tuuk on behalf of the Promise Success Initiative Subcommittee:

- Mrs. Miller shared that we are focused on what success coaching looks like for our Ferris students. We are maintaining all of our success coaching initiatives with our MCC students – our one-on-one meetings, texts, and promotional information, reminders, and periodically going to the MCC campus. We adopted a similar model for Ferris students. We held one-on-one meetings with students every Friday this past semester at Ferris and will continue these meetings. These meetings have been booked solid, and we are receiving great responses from students. During finals we brought Spanky's pizza. It was one of the most attended and impactful events. We are also looking at what success coaching looks like in the years to come and the different levels of coaching that will be impactful to them. The students are very responsive to all online text and email communications.

- We are also focusing on our renewal process for MCC students. The Class of 2025 has the option of returning for a second year or transferring to Ferris. We are shifting our focus to make sure they have key steps of their selection process completed including their degree audit and FAFSA forms. For Ferris students we are hoping they are persisting to year two, year three, and then year four.

Holly Moon presented the following report on behalf of the Fundraising and Marketing Subcommittee:

- Our 2025 fundraising total was \$88,100. This includes \$8,100 from the Community Foundation, \$16,275.00 from the 2025 Year End Appeal, and \$50,000.00 from Nestle Gerber and Gerber Life. Mrs. Moon inquired as to whether we should be encouraging gifts to go to the foundation. Dr. Prewitt expressed the need for additional information.
- We have 3 billboards – One on M-37, one on M-120, and one on M-82. Mrs. Moon loves the reports we receive from Lamar. This latest report says we will receive 667,000 impressions, but the impressions we received based on MDOT were much greater at 2.4 million impressions. The billboards will run until the beginning of May.

Action Items:

MCC Fall Tuition: Motion by Moon, supported by Sanders, to approve the winter tuition from MCC totaling \$131,621.47. Ayes – 9, Nays – 0. Motion unanimously carried.

FSU Fall Tuition: Motion by Brown, supported by Swinehart, to approve the spring tuition from FSU totaling up to \$100,233.00. Ayes – 9, Nays – 0. Motion unanimously carried.

NC RESA Invoice (Qtr. 4 2025): Motion by Rumsey, supported by Brown, to approve payment in the amount of \$69,593.85. Ayes – 9, Nays – 0. Motion unanimously carried.

Information from Promise Zone Board Members:

Mrs. Moon does not have any updated information regarding the agriculture program at FSU. Dr. Prewitt added he has not seen any press releases regarding the agriculture program.


Dr. Rossler stated it is great to be back. Gratitude was expressed by the Board.

Mr. Sanders stated families are returning to Newaygo County. He is encouraged.

Adjournment:

Motion by Scott Swinehart, supported by Pat Brown to adjourn. Ayes - 9, Nays - 0. Motion unanimously carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:26 pm.



Dr. Blake Prewitt, Chairperson