



## REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Jackson College  
Central Campus, Bert Walker Hall,  
Community Room 145  
03.09.26

**[DRAFT & UNOFFICIAL]**

---

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of Jackson College was held on Monday, 03.09.26, 4:30PM, at the Central Campus of Jackson College, Bert Walker Hall, Community Room 145.

*Board Members Present:* Trustee Matt Heins, Trustee Philip Hoffman, Chairwoman Donna Lake, Trustee Danielle Mackey, Trustee Christopher Simpson, and Trustee Teshna Thomas

*Board Member Absence:* Trustee George Page

*Others Present Include:* Dr. Daniel Phelan, Keith Everett Book, Michael Desnoyer, Jason Valente, Ashley Van Heest, Julie Hand, Benjamin Valdez, Doug Yenor, Cindy Allen, Dotty Karkheck, John Randle, Brendon Beer, Albert Rossner, Jonevie Tshibumba, Lisa Fellows, Michaela Baumgardner, Olivia Brautigan, Sara Anne Tomczak

Chairwoman Lake called the meeting to order at 4:30PM Eastern Daylight-Savings Time (EDT).

### **DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

There were no conflicts of interest expressed by Trustees for items appearing on the agenda for the meeting.

### **FY '26 AND '27 BUDGET DISCUSSION**

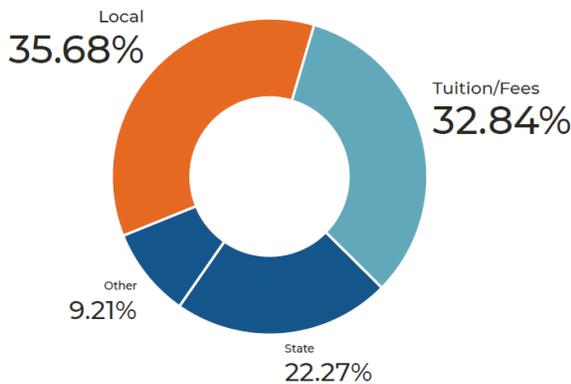
CFO Michael Desnoyer and CEO Phelan provided an overview of the College's current (i.e., FY '26) financial experience, referencing the [November 2025 Financial Report](#), the Board [approved budget](#) and the experience to-date.

For the FY '26 revenue budget versus projected actuals, CFO Desnoyer highlighted gains attributed to being well beyond the target for billing contact hours (BCH) at 122,135 BCH. The FY '26 budget had assumed 114,500 BCH. He also noted higher than budgeted enrollment and housing residents. The most significant shortfall (\$313,244) was a result of state appropriations assumed at a 2.5% increase that ended up only being a 1.6% increase.

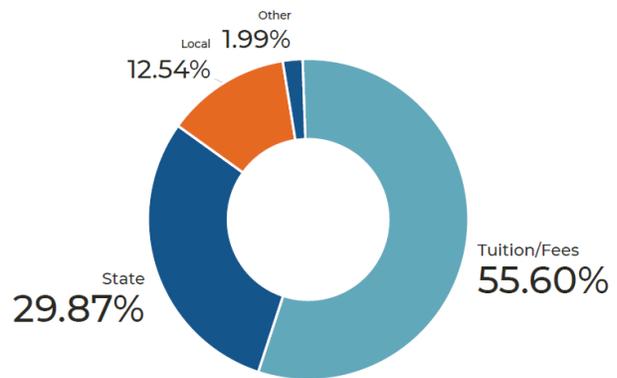
For the FY '26 expense budget vs. projected actuals, CFO Desnoyer highlighting savings from position vacancies, higher use of temporary staffing to cover vacancies, higher services driven by IT maintenance agreements and contracted services, and higher IT subscriptions and membership costs, yet still a projected operating surplus.

The charts below were referenced in CEO Phelan's reminder to the Board of JC's challenging revenue imbalance as compared to state average Michigan Postsecondary Data Inventory (MPDI).

### Michigan Postsecondary Data Inventory Manual State Average Operating Revenue 2024-25



### Jackson College: MPDI General Fund Revenue FY 25



CFO Desnoyer followed with JC's efforts regarding cash control, as recommended by the auditors. All internal control remediation validations have been fully implemented.

The Board subsequently considered plans for the FY '27 budget beginning with an overview of CEO Phelan's assessment of the current environment in which the College exists nationally, within Michigan, and locally, as well as possible implications for Jackson College going forward.

CEO Phelan's environmental scan highlighted:

- Uneven enrollment momentum
- Student age shifting younger (dual enrollment accelerating)
- Increased governance and political influence
- New federal landscape (Department of Education)
- Mandatory, improved student outcomes from Congress, accreditation, and the State of Michigan.
- FAFSA remains a moving target operationally
- Federal Pell Grant funding risk is real for FY '27
- New distance education rules
- ADA Title II digital accessibility deadlines arriving in 2026-2027

- Quickly shifting workforce and technology expectations
- Harnessing the strengths of AI
- Teaching and learning transformation

CEO Phelan described his tilt toward face-to-face, personalized, adaptive, skills-based learning to effectuate completion increases. JC’s cohort default is at an exemplary rate of 12%, for a bit of good news.

CEO Phelan went on to describe the Governor’s recommended FY ’27 budget, with a tuition restraint threshold expected at 4% and level ongoing State appropriations.

Ashley Van Heest shared new and notable initiatives at the College toward the 4 Strategic Agenda goals of committed, connected, innovative, and resilient as follows:

<p><b>Goal 1: Committed</b></p> <p>Approval of Lenawee County Early College</p> <p>Residence Life = Living and learning community</p> <p>Improvement of student completion outcomes;</p> <p>Jets Ascend framework</p>	<p><b>Goal 2: Connected</b></p> <p>Development of Maroon &amp; Gold Standards;</p> <p>Mission and Ethos position</p> <p>Spring 2026 township presentations</p> <p>Contracts - Faculty ratified; Staff in early planning</p>
<p><b>Goal 3: Innovative</b></p> <p>New programming in ATC and SIM Center</p> <p>UM-Dearborn Education articulation agreement</p> <p>Launching Education Program in Partnership with SAU &amp; Local School Districts</p>	<p><b>Goal 4: Resilient</b></p> <p>Getting focused on grants and external engagement with Executive Director positions</p> <p>Accelerated annual budgeting process</p> <p>Prepping for 2028 HLC Site Visit</p>

CEO Phelan described practical applications of:

- A minimum of 50% of the courses offered will be provided, on site, in person, on the Central Campus.
- Pursuit of a millage on the 11.03.26 ballot.
- Launch of a fundraising campaign.
- Aggressive pursuit of improved student completions by 3% through structural reforms, accountable work assignment, and through compensation incentives. A dashboard specifically for the Board will be developed to keep the Board abreast.

Jason Valente, VP of Facilities & Campus Services, reviewed intentions for the Capital Plan for the next 5 years, followed by a review of CEO Phelan’s tuition-setting structure that helped define the proposed FY ’27 budget targets (beginning with major revenue assumptions including tuition and fees, BCH, state appropriations, local property tax, and major expense assumptions including wages, union contracts, merit pay, retirement and benefits, services/staffing agency, transfers, transfer-debt

service, long-term debt, and capital equipment).

CFO Desnoyer provided the details of the proposed FY '27 budget of \$64.85M centered around an in-district tuition rate of \$209 and a universal student services fee of \$57.

The goal of this FY '27 budget discussion today was to stage Board approval of the FY '27 budget at its 04.20.26 regular Board meeting. CEO Phelan received the Board's feedback on the proposed FY '27 budget:

- Chairwoman Lake thanked the presenters and described being well-informed of the necessary direction.
- Trustee Hoffman described that the general fund revenue has changed over the years with state contribution being 50% in 2003, now 29% in 2026. He encouraged an increase in community contribution to higher education.
- Vice Chairman Heins described not liking a tuition increase over 3% but understanding the need for more in the current set of scenarios.
- Trustee Thomas described the necessary direction due to federal and state mandates.
- Trustee Simpson described the tremendous lift an increase in completion by 3% will be.
- CEO Phelan described work that he and Chief Advancement Officer Julie Hand are doing toward the pursuit of congressional discretionary spending and state appropriations.
- He clarified for Trustee Simpson that inclusion of CEP graduates and auto awarding has helped structural improvements. We now need to mine the data in different ways than we have before, particularly within instruction, to ensure better student outcomes. What it comes down to is what is needed to capture each human transformation opportunity. Engagement matters as we move away from a convenience strategy to a completion strategy.
- Vice Chairman Heins shared that he is pleased to hear that we are shooting for 50% completion rate.
- Trustee Thomas described appreciation for the focus on the students, keeping them in the center of the conversation.
- CEO Phelan has begun socializing student success reformation for institutional collaboration.
- Trustee Mackey requested that the Board be utilized toward the pursuit of a millage and referenced the speech below provided by CEO Phelan at the College's 2026 MLK Celebration Dinner:

*We gather tonight because Dr. King's life continues to call us into something higher. Not simply remembrance, but responsibility. Not simply reflection, but resolve. Dr. King never asked people to admire him or his ideals from a safe distance. Rather, he asked them to stand up, speak up, and show up...especially when it was inconvenient, costly, or misunderstood.*

*Years later, President Barack Obama gave voice to that same responsibility when he said, "Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek." That is both encouragement and challenge, because it makes clear that the future does not belong to spectators. It belongs to people who decide to act.*

*Many of you know I grew up in the Tall Grass Prairie of Iowa. It was there I learned a great many values that still guide me today: Honor a handshake...Give grace when you can...Forgive more than is fashionable... Put in a full day's work for things that truly matter...Be kind to others...Have a bias toward action...Keep your word...And tell the truth.*

*The matriarch of our family for many years, my Grandmother Mary, had her own way of saying it: "Listen to the words, Danny, but watch the doing. The doing is what gives insight." I think about her often, especially now, because we live in a moment when words can travel fast...faster than facts...faster than understanding...sometimes faster than kindness. And as Jackson College is a public institution, we also live in a moment of real political pressure...competing expectations, changing requirements, differing lived experiences, and strong opinions from many directions. At the College we have to consider and be responsive to those realities as we can, because that is part of serving the public. But I can assure you that we do not lose our way in the process.*

*Our north star stays the same...to fulfill our mission, to educate and train, and to serve this community with love, care, and integrity...for everyone.*

*So tonight, I come before you to speak plainly...and to share my truth about Jackson College and our incredible work here.*

*Firstly, I have been blessed by the opportunity to serve as this College's President for nearly 25 years. I am invested in this community and work tirelessly, with many others, to make it better. Given that the national average tenure of a community college president is 3.7 years, I hope you see that I am dedicated not only to the work, but to this community. And in those 25 years, I've also learned a great deal from our board of trustees, from our employees, from our students, from companies and organizations...and from you...about your hopes for the future.*

*I can tell you that the truest story of Jackson College is not told in rumor or rhetoric. It's told in our work. It's told in outcomes. It's told in student lives changed...and in the lives of their families that are likewise changed. It's told in the quiet moments no camera captures...when a student is one problem away from stopping out, and someone at this college helps them stay in. When a student feels unseen, and a faculty member notices. When a family is stretched, and support from the College Foundation shows up right on time. Or when a*

*student who believes they have little self-worth is lifted up by a staff member who listens to their story...and gives them hope, support, and connection.*

*This is how Jackson College shows up for everyone.*

*We show up by making college possible financially...through scholarships and other supports that reduce barriers and keep doors open. Consider the story of one of our students I'll refer to as Tala. Tala was homeless and living in her car as she attended college. Upon learning of Tala's situation, the team here at Jackson College worked to get her a scholarship, emergency funding support from our Dick Wendt Charities Fund provided by college employee donations, and we helped to get her a job and academic support as she continued her studies. We have, and continue to support, many students with stories like Talas.*

*This is how Jackson College shows up for everyone.*

*We show up when the basics are the difference between staying enrolled and stepping away...our Harriet's Hub helps students access essentials, including food, toiletries, and other basic-needs supports, because you can't focus on learning when you're worried about getting through the week. This is how Jackson College shows up for everyone.*

*And we don't just address hunger in a symbolic way...we are committed to being a Hunger Free Campus. That means when students are hungry, we help. And when the need extends into their household, we work to support families too...because we know a student's ability to persist is often connected to what is happening at home. This is how Jackson College shows up for everyone.*

*We show up with practical support that prepares students to step into opportunity...our Jackets for Jets program provides professional clothing, because we want students to walk into an interview with confidence, and be judged on their preparation, not their pocketbook. This is how Jackson College shows up for everyone.*

*We show up with care, because student success is never only academic...it is human...our Oasis Center provides no-cost counseling support, and our Togetherall support extends mental health and peer support in a way that's accessible when and where our students need it. We want students to be well, not just enrolled. This is how Jackson College shows up for everyone.*

*We show up with health services that meet people where they are...our on-campus Health Clinic, in partnership with Henry Ford Jackson Hospital, supports physical well-being for about \$5 per student...though no one ever goes untreated because of cost. And our Dental Hygiene Clinic provides preventive services while training future professionals, because oral health is health, and preventive care matters. This is how Jackson College shows up for everyone.*

*We show up for students who are carrying the full weight of adulthood while trying to earn a credential...we have tiny homes on campus that support single parents who are pursuing an education, with stability, with wraparound supports, with access to child care, and often with a campus job that helps them build both income and experience while they learn. We are not asking them to choose between being a good parent and earning a better future. This is how Jackson College shows up for everyone.*

*We show up through our Center for Student Success...because sometimes what a student needs is not inspiration, but real, hands-on support. That includes services for students with disabilities, whether hearing, visual, physical, or other needs, so that access is not a barrier. And it includes tutoring and academic support for students who are struggling with the subject matter, because difficulty should never be a verdict...it should be a signal that help is on the way. This is how Jackson College shows up for everyone.*

*We show up for working families with our on-campus childcare center...because we know childcare is not a side issue...it's an education issue. When parents have dependable care, they can attend class, study, work, and persist. This is how Jackson College shows up for everyone.*

*And we show up with preparation for life and work...through our workforce training, transfer pathways, and hands-on learning programming, because this community deserves talent, and our students deserve economic and social mobility. This is how Jackson College shows up for everyone.*

*These are but a few of the many ways we show up for everyone at Jackson College*

*Here's what I want you to hear from me plainly: Jackson College was legislatively established in 1928 in the State of Michigan as a public institution of higher education for everyone...for our community...for you...and that has not changed, nor will it going forward. We exist for the people of this region. We were built for this community, and we remain accountable to this community. We will always be responsive to the responsibilities that come with public trust, and we will always keep our eyes fixed where they belong...on serving, educating, and building opportunity...for everyone.*

*If you ever want to know who we are, I invite you to come see us. Talk to our students. Meet our faculty and staff. Visit our programs. Walk our campus. Watch how this college shows up, day after day, with consistency, respect, love, and care. Because the clearest answer to doubt is seeing the work itself...rather than listening to the words of the loudest voices.*

*And speaking of showing up...I want to lift up the people who do this work every day...our faculty and staff. They are the steady heartbeat of this institution. They*

*teach. They mentor. They coach. They fix what breaks. They answer the phone. They welcome students back after a hard day. They listen to and empathize with our students' lives. They notice. They care. They stay late. They do the doing that matters. They prepare meals and for events like this one. For those employees in the room, please stand...and if you would, please join me in thanking the employees of Jackson College with your applause.*

*Tonight is also a celebration of the kind of service Dr. King would recognize immediately...people showing up for others, not for credit, but because it's right. That's why one of the most meaningful moments in our program each year is the presentation of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Medal of Service Award. This evening, we will honor Mr. James Johnson Jr. for service that is steady and consequential...the kind of leadership that strengthens working families and strengthens a community from the inside out.*

*And we're pleased to welcome our keynote speaker, Mr. Nathaniel "Nate" Jackson Jr., who will offer reflections in his address, *The Lessons of King!* In a time when it can feel easier to retreat into corners, we need voices that bring us back to conscience, courage, and the discipline of hope.*

*So tonight, as we listen and as we honor, I hope you'll choose one next step before you leave this hall...something practical, something real. A conversation you'll have. A hand you'll extend. A commitment you'll renew. Because we are not waiting for a better future to arrive. We are building it...together.*

*Thank you again for being here. And now, let's begin this evening in the spirit it deserves...with open minds, grateful hearts, and a shared determination to carry these lessons forward in how we live, how we lead, and how we serve...for everyone...*

*- Daniel J. Phelan*

**MOTION BY TRUSTEE HOFFMAN TO RECESS FOR A BOARD DINNER DURING WHICH NO BOARD DISCUSSION OR DECISIONS WOULD ENSUE. TRUSTEES VOTED BY ROLL CALL VOTE: TRUSTEES HEINS, HOFFMAN, LAKE, MACKAY, SIMPSON, AND THOMAS VOTING AYE. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The Board took a recess at 6:06pm.

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairwoman Lake called the meeting back to order at 6:38PM Eastern Daylight Savings Time.

## **COMMUNICATIONS** *PUBLIC COMMENTS*

### *Summary of public comments:*

Lisa Fellows provided the Board with an update on JC Corrections Education Program (CEP), including:

- Federal Correctional Institute (FCI) Milan is recognized across the country for the number of volunteer hours performed in providing programs to incarcerated individuals. Annually, volunteers provide roughly the equivalent of 5 full-time staff members. Logging about 10,000 volunteer hours, FCI Milan is first in the nation. Second place trails far below them and comprises an entire region of prisons instead of an individual one. Jackson College is part of this proud tradition and a valued partner in this endeavor!
- More day classes at MDOC allow students to take classes at more opportune times.
- Gratitude was shared to the Board for approving the new faculty contract which begins to recognize the unique working environment, sacrifices, inequities, and challenges in which our CEP instructors work.
- A College Algebra course has been added to the schedule for Fall 26 at Parnall Correctional Facility with a list of students eager to take it. The ability to offer this class is largely due to the leadership of Dr. Kristin Stockbridge in her role as Dean of Corrections Education.
- Another project that Dr. Stockbridge is assisting with is the return of the Associate of Science degree within the CEP.
- Annual class schedules are now becoming available for CEP students unlike they have before.
- Thanks were given to Dr. Stockbridge and Dr. Benjmain Valdez (Chief Academic Officer) for their support and commitment to CEP and faculty, as well as to the Board for continuing to make JC's work inside of correctional facilities possible.

### *EXCELLENCE MINUTE – Cast & Crew of Noises Off – Sara Anne Tomczak*

Sara Anne Tomczak (JC Theatre Lead Faculty) shared participants in and a sampling from the JC Theatre Department's upcoming production of Noises Off.

### **OWNERSHIP LINKAGE**

CEO Phelan shared that he will soon have a meeting with Henry Ford Jackson Hospital's Board via interim CEO, Dr. Wendy Kim, to discuss an Ownership Linkage opportunity with current board members prior to the conclusion of the Henry Ford Health System definitive agreement in April.

Regarding continued community engagement, Keith Everett Book and Ashley Van Heest will present at the Summit Township Board meeting on 05.12.26. Scheduling the same presentation at a Waterloo Township Board meeting is also in progress for this Spring.

### **CONSENT / REQUIRED APPROVAL AGENDA**

Prior to the meeting, Board members individually reviewed the minutes of the most recent meeting of the Board dated 02.16.26, in consideration for placement into the formal record of the Jackson College Board of Trustees.

For their regular review, the Board considered their Board Executive Limitations policy EL-09 Organization Culture and Board-CEO Delegation policy BCD-06 CEO Compensation, to which policy pre-review Trustees (Chairwoman Lake, Trustee Hoffman, Trustee Mackey) and CEO Phelan recommended minor edits.

Vice Chairman Heins requested that Board-CEO Delegation policy BCD-06 CEO Compensation be discussed outside of the consent agenda.

Also for their regular reviews, the Board considered their Board Executive Limitations policy EL-07 Compensation & Benefits and Board Governance Process policies GP-00 Governance Commitment and GP-01 Governing Style, to which pre-review Trustees (Chairwoman Lake, Trustee Hoffman, Trustee Mackey) and CEO Phelan did not recommend any changes at this time.

To test the policy itself and their understanding thereof policy EL-07, the policy pre-review Trustees shared the Compensation and Benefits Obligation in Uncertain Times Case Study they used in their review of policy EL-07.

Lastly, the Board assessed CEO Phelan's revised interpretations for Board Executive Limitation policies EL-04 Financial Conditions & Activities and EL-08 Communication & Support to the Board.

**MOTION BY TRUSTEE HOFFMAN TO:**

- **APPROVE THE BOARD MEETING MINUTES DATED 02.16.26;**
- **APPROVE POLICY EL-04 AND POLICY AS AMENDED;**
- **APPROVE POLICIES EL-07, GP-00, AND GP-01;**
- **ASSESS CEO PHELAN'S INTERPRETATIONS OF POLICIES EL-04 AND EL-08 AS REASONABLE;**

**TRUSTEES VOTED BY ROLL CALL VOTE: TRUSTEES HEINS, HOFFMAN, LAKE, MACKEY, SIMPSON AND THOMAS VOTING AYE.**

Discussion ensued amongst the Board, CEO Phelan, and Brendon Beer regarding recommended changes to the Board-CEO Delegation policy BCD-06 CEO Compensation, as well as when and how those recommendations might best be discussed.

**MOTION BY TRUSTEE HEINS THAT THE BOARD WILL REVIEW BOARD-CEO DELEGATION POLICY BCD-06 CEO COMPENSATION AT A FUTURE BOARD MEETING. TRUSTEES VOTED BY ROLL CALL VOTE: TRUSTEES HEINS, HOFFMAN, LAKE, MACKEY, SIMPSON, AND THOMAS VOTING AYE. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**MONITORING CEO PERFORMANCE**

*MONITORING CEO PERFORMANCE: EL-11 Mission Support & Entrepreneurial Activity – Evidence Review:*

CEO Phelan presented the evidence (i.e., monitoring report) for Policy EL-11 Mission Support & Entrepreneurial Activity indicating Full Compliance according to his previously approved interpretations.

**MOTION BY TRUSTEE THOMAS THAT THE BOARD HAS ASSESSED THE MONITORING REPORT FOR POLICY EL-11 MISSION SUPPORT AND ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITY AND FINDS THAT IT DEMONSTRATES COMPLIANCE WITH REASONABLE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE POLICY. TRUSTEES VOTED BY ROLL CALL VOTE: TRUSTEES HEINS, HOFFMAN, LAKE, MACKAY, PAGE, SIMPSON, AND THOMAS VOTING AYE. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

*MONITORING CEO PERFORMANCE: CEO Monitoring Compliance Schedule & Summary:*

CEO Phelan provided the monitoring compliance schedule an update on reports presented to the Board over the preceding 12 months with the compliance status noted – (all monitoring reports are fully compliant).

**INFORMATION REQUESTED BY THE BOARD**

*Next Board Meeting Topics – 04.20.26*

Below are currently anticipated topics.

- Excellence Minutes: TBD
- Policy Review: EL-10 Access to Education
- Policy Review: GP-02 Board Job Contributions
- Policy Review: GP-04 Role of the Board Chair
- Policy Review: GP-10 Investment in Governance
- Policy Review: BCD-00 Global Statement
- Policy Review: BCD-06 CEO Compensation
- Evidence Review: EL-12 Land Use
- Interpretations Assessment: EL-07 Compensation & Benefits
- Interpretations Assessment: EL-09 Organization Culture
- CEO Monitoring Compliance Schedule & Summary
- FY '26 Q2 Financial Report
- FY '27 Budget Approval Decision
- Pre-Audit
- College Feature: TBD
- Next Board Meeting Topic

## **SELF-EVALUATION OF GOVERNANCE PROCESS & BOARD PERFORMANCE AT THIS MEETING**

### *Principles of Policy Governance:*

Members discussed the Policy Governance principles of monitoring institutional performance, executive limitations, and governance process. They also reviewed the results of the 02.16.26 Board Meeting Self-Assessment Summaries.

### **MEETING CONTENT REVIEW**

Trustees described that the presentation made by the Jackson College Theatre Department was a pleasant surprise.

### **ADJOURN**

**MOTION BY TRUSTEE HOFFMAN “To adjourn.”**

**TRUSTEES VOTED BY ROLL CALL VOTE: TRUSTEES HEINS, HOFFMAN, LAKE, MACKAY, PATTERSON, SIMPSON, AND THOMAS VOTING AYE. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Meeting Adjourned at 7:12PM EDT.