

**Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Regents
Murray State University
October 1, 2024**

Call to Order/Roll Call

The Murray State University (MSU) Board of Regents met on Tuesday, October 1, 2024, in Special Session in Room 118 Wells Hall on the Murray State University campus. Chair Leon Owens called the meeting to order at 3 p.m. and welcomed those joining the meeting in person and via ZOOM or livestream. Secretary Jill Hunt called roll and the following Board members were present: Robbie Fitch, Virginia Gray (via ZOOM), Brendan Hawkins, David Meinschein, G. L. Ovey, Leon Owens, Matthew Price (via ZOOM), Emily Roark (via ZOOM), Melony Shemberger, Tom Waldrop and David Wilson. Absent: none.

Participants in the meeting were: Robert L (Bob) Jackson, President; Jill Hunt, Senior Executive Coordinator for the President, Coordinator for Board Relations and Secretary to the Board; Tim Todd, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs; Jackie Dudley, Senior Vice President for Finance and Administrative Services and Treasurer to the Board; Don Robertson, Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management; Robert Miller, General Counsel; additional members of the MSU administration; Information Technology staff and members of the University community, general public and news media.

AGENDA

<u>Call to Order</u>	Chair Leon Owens
<u>Roll Call</u>	Secretary Jill Hunt
<u>President’s Report</u>	President Bob Jackson
<u>Authorization to Execute an Amended Contract of Employment – Robert L Jackson*</u>	Chair Leon Owens
<u>Personal Services Contract – Search Firm – President*</u>	Chair Leon Owens
<u>Appointment of Search Committee – President*</u>	Chair Leon Owens
<u>Adjournment</u>	Chair Leon Owens

(*Requires Board of Regents Action)

President’s Report, presented

President Jackson read aloud the following statement:

“Chair Owens and Members of the Board of Regents:

First, I want to thank you, and our administration, faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends for all that they do for Murray State University (MSU). MSU is a special place and has been successful for over 100 years because of these dedicated groups and individuals.

Since August 2018, I have had the tremendous privilege of serving my Alma Mater as President. There is no greater honor in higher education and this service has been the capstone of my professional career.

During recent months, as we celebrated a record Freshman class and other recruiting and retention successes, our centennial year, the pending construction of a new School of Nursing and Health Professions building, funding for a new Veterinary Sciences building and Learning Commons/Residence Hall, new funding for our Program of Distinction – Cybersecurity and Network Management – the acquisition of Station 74 to benefit our students, legislative accomplishments, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges reaffirmation process, a successful \$100 million capital campaign that is well on its way to

completion – with more than \$90 million raised to date – and many other important renovations and improvements to our campus, operations and academic enhancements; Karen and I have discussed our future plans.

As many in this room know, I walked onto this campus 43 years ago this fall as a freshman student. My experiences here opened many doors, provided me a world-class education and numerous leadership opportunities, established a path for my career, assisted me in serving this region and Kentucky as a State Senator and in other appointed governmental roles and most importantly, this is where I met my wife, Karen, who is not present because she is at Oakhurst preparing for a large University event this evening. As I have stated many times, no one does these jobs alone. Karen is an alumna and cares deeply about this University and has worked hard to advance it.

Furthermore, the work and accomplishments of the past several years could not have been achieved without a great team. We are very fortunate to have outstanding administrators, faculty, staff, students, Board members, alumni and friends who ensure that we continue to advance this great University.

The past several years have been extremely busy in every area of Murray State University. I have traveled thousands of miles to Frankfort, around this state, country and world advancing our University. And, while this position has been incredibly rewarding, one thing we learned in recent years is that life is very short. It is now time for us to focus on the next chapter of our lives, spend more time with our family and friends and travel to places we have never been. I am extremely proud of our combined accomplishments as we focused our efforts on recruiting, retention, academic excellence, access and affordability, focusing on new and enhanced academic programs and related new facilities to address our growth, campus improvements, addressing deferred maintenance, financial stability, ensuring a safe and healthy campus during the pandemic, development of a new Strategic Plan, addressing legislative matters, enhancing Racer Athletics, among many other items.

My goal when I accepted this position was to help leave the University better and stronger and more financially secure than we found it and to enhance the campus and strengthen academics – we have more than accomplished this goal. There is still much work to do, there will always be much work to do, but we have a better foundation today. We have a renewed focus and clearer path forward. A foundation and path which will prepare us for our second century. And, again, all of this was accomplished with a great team and I am very thankful for this group.

Murray State University is truly a special place and as our Alma Mater states, it's the finest place we know, and as I have stated many times, our best days are ahead of us. I am very grateful to the Murray State University Foundation Board of Trustees, the Alumni Association Board of Governors, thousands of alumni and friends, faculty, staff and especially our students, who have provided support to me and most importantly, Murray State University.

Finally, I am very appreciative of the Board of Regents, their vision for MSU, the support which they have provided and the excellent working relationship with our current and former members. I have had the opportunity to serve with six chairs: Leon Owens, Dr. Don Tharpe, Eric Crigler, Jerry Rhoads, Dan Kemp and Susan Guess and 26 different Regents during my tenure. I am very grateful to each of these talented and dedicated individuals for their support, kindness and vision for our future.

I will retire from my current position on June 30, 2025, and will continue my employment in a transition and advisory role through October 31, 2025, and I plan to work as hard on my last day in this office as I did my first day. Thank you for the opportunity to serve this great University as the 14th President and I look forward to assisting the Board of Regents and the next President during a future transition.”

Sincerely,

Bob Jackson, President

Dr. Jackson also stated that he appreciates each and every member of this Board more than they know. It has been a wonderful last several years and this is a credit to everyone at this great

University – faculty, staff, administrators, alumni and friends and, most importantly, this Board. Appreciation was again expressed to all.

President Jackson received a round of applause and standing ovation.

Regent Shemberger expressed appreciation to President Jackson. Regent Waldrop indicated that his first reaction to this news was very selfish but in retrospect this represents a very unselfish act because the University is at a point where it has millions of dollars to spend on new endeavors which have been initiated. Murray State is in a position to attract the very best and brightest candidates for the position of President. It is time for President Jackson to take a victory lap. Regent Wilson expressed appreciation from the staff's perspective to President Jackson for his support over the years. He has looked out for staff, as well as faculty and students. He has been very generous to this University. Regent Ovey indicated that President Jackson is a true leader he has known for a long time. He is a friend but what impressed him the most when he came on this Board was what a true leader he is – a true visionary. All can look around campus and see Bob Jackson's prints that will remain for decades to come. Appreciation was expressed for his service and he was wished the best. On behalf of Murray State students, Regent Hawkins indicated President Jackson is truly one of the people who make this a special place. He will be greatly missed. Regent Meinschein indicated he appreciates President Jackson's impact on the region and the Commonwealth. He has also been a mentor and for that Regent Meinschein is very appreciative. The impact Dr. Jackson has had throughout the Commonwealth is tremendous and he will be missed. Regent Gray reported that she is the only Regent remaining on the Board who went through the process that eventually hired President Jackson. There is proof in the pudding in terms of how President Jackson was able to not only stop the decline in enrollment but to set records. He is also responsible for advanced programming and funding for capital projects and she is proud to have been part of the process. She has never heard anyone say a cross word about Bob Jackson and he is beloved by his community because they came out in droves to support him for the job of President. He has done everything those individuals said he would and more. He has been an excellent leader and she cannot say thank you enough. She is so proud of what he has accomplished and to call him a friend. She hopes he and Karen go and have the best time of their lives in the next chapter. Chair Owens indicated he has known Dr. Jackson for over 25 years and it has been a pleasure to not only know him as a friend but also to work with him closely as a Regent, as well as in his previous roles. His leadership speaks for itself and it was clear he wanted to be the President of Murray State and he is leaving the University better than he found it. Dr. Wells and Dr. Carr would both be very proud of President Jackson and what he has accomplished. Appreciation was also expressed to Karen for loaning him to the University for 43 years to do this work. He appreciates Dr. Jackson and is also proud to call him a friend.

Authorization to Execute an Amended Contract of Employment – Robert L Jackson, approved

Chair Owens reported that with notice of President Jackson's pending retirement, and based on his lengthy record of accomplishments on behalf of Murray State University, it is recommended that his employment agreement be amended to reflect a new term of employment concluding on October 31, 2025; provision of a campus office to conduct research and scholarly activities; and the designation as *President Emeritus*, effective July 1, 2025. In consultation with General Counsel Rob Miller, the Employment Contract Amendment as submitted to the Board represents the recommended changes and was read aloud as follows:

CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT
BETWEEN MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY AND
DR. ROBERT L JACKSON
AMENDMENT

The Board of Regents of Murray State University (University), at a meeting held on March 1, 2019, by vote of all Regents present, approved the initial employment of Dr. Robert L Jackson as President of the University.

WHEREAS, the parties wish to modify the Contract of Employment as set forth herein.

NOW THEREFORE, the parties agree the Contract of Employment with an effective date of March 1, 2019, is amended as follows:

- A. Regarding the length of the contract, §I.C. shall state: “The effective date of this Contract is March 1, 2019 (“effective date”). Effective July 1, 2024, Dr. Jackson’s term of appointment as President of MSU will be from July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025. President Jackson shall remain employed as *President Emeritus* providing assistance to the Board of Regents and University administration at his current salary and benefits until October 31, 2025.”
- B. *New Section III.G.3.* of the Agreement states: “Upon leaving the presidency, Dr. Jackson shall also be provided an appropriate office, at his discretion and in a mutually agreed upon location, to do research and other scholarly activities on the main campus.”
- C. *New Section III.G.4.* of the Agreement states: “Upon leaving the presidency, Dr. Jackson shall be granted the honorary title of “*President Emeritus*.” In addition to the benefits and privileges afforded to all retired faculty and staff and any other benefits to which he may be entitled, Dr. Jackson shall receive a Resolution naming and honoring him as *President Emeritus*; listing him as *President Emeritus* in the University catalog and website and use of the title *President Emeritus* in community and professional activities.

The parties agree that this amendment supersedes prior amendments, and no other revisions or changes are made by this Amendment to the Contract of Employment dated March 19, 2019.

The parties express their agreement to the foregoing terms by signing below.

PRESIDENT

MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY
By and through its Board of Regents

Dr. Robert L Jackson

Board of Regents Chairperson Leon Owens
Murray State University

Date: _____

Date: _____

The Board of Regents is sincerely grateful to President Jackson and his wife Karen for their exceptional service to Murray State University.

Regent Ovey moved that the Board of Regents, upon the recommendation of the Chair of the Board of Regents, approve the President’s Employment Contract, as amended and presented, effective October 1, 2024. Regent Fitch seconded and the roll was called with the following voting: Dr. Fitch, yes; Mrs. Gray, yes; Mr. Hawkins, yes; Dr. Meinschein, yes; Mr. Ovey, yes; Dr. Price, yes; Mrs. Roark, yes; Dr. Shemberger, yes; Mr. Waldrop, yes; Dr. Wilson, yes and Mr. Owens, yes. The motion carried unanimously.

Personal Services Contract – Search Firm – President, approved

Chair Owens reported that some time ago the Board received a presentation relative to search firm options for athletics and academics. Item #11 of the Delegation of Authority stipulates that the Board: “...approve all Personal Services Contracts totaling more than \$50,000. The Board will be notified of all Personal Services Contracts between \$10,000 and \$50,000 before they are submitted to the Legislative Research Commission. Upon review, individual Board members may request that these be held for approval at the next Board meeting.”

The Board is being asked to approve the hiring of Academic Search, Inc. in Washington, DC, at a cost of 30 percent of the first year’s salary of the new President of Murray State University, plus expenses related to the search process.

Vice Chair Fitch moved that the Board of Regents, upon the recommendation of the President of the University, approve a contract for Academic Search, Inc. per requirements of the Delegation of Authority Item #11. Regent Wilson seconded and the roll was called with the following voting: Dr. Fitch, yes; Mrs. Gray, yes; Mr. Hawkins, yes; Dr. Meinschein, yes; Mr. Ovey, yes; Dr. Price, yes; Mrs. Roark, yes; Dr. Shemberger, yes; Mr. Waldrop, yes; Dr. Wilson, yes and Mr. Owens, yes. The motion carried unanimously.

Appointment of Search Committee – President, established

Chair Owens reported that *Board of Regents Policy 1.1 E*. provides that the Board may establish special committees of the Board as deemed necessary. Chair Owens requested a motion that the Board of Regents, upon the recommendation of the Chair of the Board, establish a Search Committee for the position of University President, effective October 1, 2024. The Board Chair is authorized to appoint replacements as the need arises. On October 1, 2024, and thereafter the Committee is composed of the following members:

Regent Leon Owens, Chair	Regent Robbie Fitch, Vice Chair
Regent Virginia Gray	Regent Brendan Hawkins
Regent David Meinschein	Regent G. L. Ovey, Jr.
Regent Matthew Price	Regent Emily Roark
Regent Melony Shemberger	Regent Tom Waldrop
Regent David Wilson	Dan Wann, Professor of Psychology
Roslyn White, Asst. VP Enrollment Mgmt.	Katelyn Young, Graduate Student

General Counsel Rob Miller; Director of Human Resources Courtney Hixon and Senior Executive Coordinator for the President, Coordinator for Board Relations and Secretary to the Board of Regents Jill Hunt will serve as ex-officio members of the Search Committee.

Regent Shemberger so moved, seconded by Vice Chair Fitch, and the motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

Chair Owens indicated there being no further business to come before the Board, he would entertain a motion for the Special Meeting of the Board of Regents to adjourn. Vice Chair Fitch so moved, seconded by Regent Ovey, and the motion carried. Adjournment of the Special Meeting of the Board of Regents was at 3:25 p.m.


Secretary Jill Hunt
Chair Leon Owens

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