

**MASSASOIT COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2026  
Library Brockton  
Brockton, MA**

**APPROVED  
February 18, 2026**

Attendees: Tom Carroll, Bonnie Blackler, Eshita Chakrabarti, Carl Kowalski, Laura Lawson, David Offutt, Daniel Pestana

Absent: Jim Dunphy, Kate Welch, Eval Silvera

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Roll Call:**

Chair Carroll – yes  
Trustee Blackler – yes  
Trustee Chakrabarti – yes  
Trustee Kowalski - yes  
Trustee Lawson – yes  
Trustee Offutt – yes  
Trustee Pestana – yes

**Chairman's Report**

Chair Carroll welcomed everyone and stated that this was the first day of Spring semester. He stated that there are many great plans for college in 2026 and he's looking forward to the journey together. He welcomed Trustee David Offutt, stating that his commitment to the community and his insights make him so valuable to the college and he congratulated Trustee Welch on her trustee reappointment. The Alumni committee voted and elected Professor Emeritus Kenneth Anania as the Alumni representative to the Board of Trustees. Trustee Blackler has been the alumni representative for the past 12 ½ years. The college means so much to her, and we are grateful for her service. Tonight, we will recognize Robert Bowers (posthumously), Roland Blanchette and Dr. Gerard Burke whose work and dedication to Massasoit Community College has truly made a difference and for all they've done for Massasoit over the years.

**President's Report**

President Mitchell thanked Chair Carroll. President Mitchell recognized President Emeritus Dr. Charles Wall and Professor Emeritus Ken Anania before growing the ranks of Emeritus by three. President Mitchell commented that he has had the privilege of knowing all three Emeritus candidates for over 40 years. They have all played a part of his growth within the college and where he sits today. When you look back on your career and you think about the people who had an impact on you and helped you along the way, Dr. Gerard Burke is one of those people. It's unusual for someone to have a personal relationship with all three of the folks who are being inducted tonight, and President Mitchell feels blessed for having this opportunity. President Mitchell introduced Kendra Butters, Vice President for External Relations.

President Mitchell asked Vice President O'Neill to provide an update on the status of our facilities. Vice President O'Neill started out by showing slides of a new building, a renovated building. In May 2025, we emptied the old Liberal Arts building and turned it over to the Brockton Fire Department for training purposes. The project is on time and continues to move forward. We've installed the utilities in the ground, did significant work on the soffits and started the framing inside the building. We should be all-set for the start of the fall semester.

### Student Trustee Report

Trustee Pestana mentioned that this was the first day of classes of the spring semester and that Student Life had put on a club fair from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Over winter break, we held a Senate retreat, where we had an amazing presentation from Vice President of Student Services and Enrollment Management, Joseph Harris, on the aspects and attributes of being a great leader. Upcoming events from Student Life are hot cocoa at the Canton Campus tomorrow, and then on January 28<sup>th</sup>, an event on human trafficking.

### Consent Agenda

**A motion was made by Trustee Kowalski and seconded by Trustee Blackler to approve the Consent Agenda.**

#### Roll Call:

Chair Carroll – yes  
Trustee Blackler – yes  
Trustee Chakrabarti – yes  
Trustee Kowalski - yes  
Trustee Lawson – yes  
Trustee Offutt – yes  
Trustee Pestana – yes

**The motion passed unanimously.**

Recommendation that the Board of Trustees award Massasoit Community College President Emeritus status to Dr. Gerard Burke, by William Mitchell, President (vote needed)

President Mitchell stated it was his honor to recommend to the Board of Trustees, Dr. Gerard Burke for its consideration to President Emeritus. Dr. Burke holds a Bachelor of Science from Boston State College, a Master of Arts degree from Georgetown University and a Doctor of Philosophy degree from American University. He joined the Massasoit community in January 1982, as Dean of the College. In August 1983, Dr. Burke became Massasoit's third President. During his thirteen-year tenure there were many significant accomplishments which included: merger of Massasoit & Blue Hill Technical Institute, multimillion-dollar turnkey computer system, emergence of the Academic Resource Center in Brockton, expansion of Student Services, which included minority, foreign and disadvantaged counseling services, implementation of a pilot project in third-party financing of energy conservation, expansion of national recognition for both men's and women's intercollegiate athletic programs, culminating in national championships for the men's soccer team in 1986 & 1987 and the baseball team in 1993.

**A motion was made by Trustee Offutt and seconded by Trustee Chakrabarti to award Massasoit Community College President Emeritus status to Dr. Gerard Burke.**

#### Roll Call:

Chair Carroll – yes  
Trustee Blackler – yes  
Trustee Chakrabarti – yes  
Trustee Kowalski - yes  
Trustee Lawson – yes  
Trustee Offutt – yes  
Trustee Pestana – yes

**The motion passed unanimously.**

Recommendation that the Board of Trustees award Massasoit Community College Professor Emeritus posthumously to Robert Bowers, by Edward Krasnow, Director, Digital Media Arts Center (vote needed)

Edward Krasnow, Director of Digital Media Arts, stated that Robert Bowers was a mentor and teacher to many generations of students. He was incredibly supportive and caring to all his students. Bob was diagnosed with ALS in October 2023 and died in April of 2025. He worked up until the day he died. He began at Massasoit Community College as a faculty member in 1979 and helped define Media Arts at Massasoit. During his time at Massasoit there were many significant accomplishments: chair of the Communicative Arts Department, founding member of Radio Classics, raised over one million dollars in scholarship funds, led with steadiness, humor, and integrity, and scholar of radio history.

**A motion was made by Trustee Kowalski and seconded by Trustee Blackler to award Massasoit Community College Professor Emeritus posthumously to Robert Bowers.**

Roll Call:

Chair Carroll – yes  
Trustee Blackler – yes  
Trustee Chakrabarti – yes  
Trustee Kowalski - yes  
Trustee Lawson – yes  
Trustee Offutt – yes  
Trustee Pestana – yes

**The motion passed unanimously.**

Recommendation that the Board of Trustees award Massasoit Community College Professor Emeritus status to Roland Blanchette, by Professor Emeritus Kenneth Anania (vote needed)

Professor Emeritus Anania stated that with more than 40 years of service to Massasoit, Professor Roland Blanchette has been an integral part of the college, contributing significantly to its growth and success across multiple disciplines, particularly within liberal arts and humanities. Professor Blanchette began at Massasoit Community College as an adjunct faculty member in 1980 and in 1982 was hired as a full-time instructor of Sociology. In addition to Sociology, he taught Anthropology, Geography, Comparative Religion, Film and Society and Liberal Arts Seminar. During his time at Massasoit there were many significant accomplishments: several terms as Chair of the Sociology Department, original member of the Professional Development Committee, instrumental in beginning the college's First Friday series, distinguished Teacher by the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development, served as master of ceremonies for retirement and recognition ceremonies, led the coordination of Massasoit's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, participated in several Massasoit Little Theatre productions, founding member of Radio Classics, coached the women's softball team for thirteen years guiding them to several winning seasons, most notably, he was the driving force behind the creation of the College Emeritus Program.

**A motion was made by Trustee Lawson and seconded by Trustee Pestana to award Massasoit Community College Professor Emeritus to Roland Blanchette.**

Roll Call:

Chair Carroll – yes  
Trustee Blackler – yes  
Trustee Chakrabarti – yes  
Trustee Kowalski - yes  
Trustee Lawson – yes  
Trustee Offutt – yes  
Trustee Pestana – yes

**The motion passed unanimously.**

**A motion was made by Trustee Lawson and seconded by Trustee Kowalski to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m.**

Roll Call:

Chair Carroll – yes  
Trustee Blackler – yes  
Trustee Chakrabarti – yes  
Trustee Kowalski - yes  
Trustee Lawson – yes  
Trustee Offutt – yes  
Trustee Pestana – yes

Cori Foy – Recording Secretary