

# LMC agrees to collect full levy

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**BENTON HARBOR** — Lake Michigan College will levy its full millage rate to ensure enough money exists for covering operations, officials said.

The Board of Trustees agreed this week to levy 2.3002 mills.

“That’s a housekeeping thing. We have to do that every year to be able to levy our millage,” Chairwoman Mary Jo Tomasini said. “Basically, the board has to concur with our chief financial officer (Kelli Hahn) that we do need the millage levied.”

General fund expenses for the 2018-19 fiscal year will look much like this year’s figure of \$32.1 million, a memo from Hahn states. Property tax revenue for this year is estimated at \$19.7 million. LMC’s fiscal year runs July 1 to June 30.

Tuesday’s action is a preliminary step as the college begins preparing its 2018-19 budget.

Tomasini said she expects the picture to get little clearer at the board work-

shop, which it moved from Feb. 21 to 8 a.m. Friday, Feb. 10, “because we had three (members) that were going to be gone.

“It’s to see how we’re doing, get departmental updates from the President’s Cabinet, to look at our strategic plan – we call it a workshop, but it’s like a mini-retreat. It’s getting caught up on those things,” Tomasini said.

The workshop isn’t open to the public.

The board is starting off the year with a new slate of officers, which it affirmed at its Jan. 3 organizational meeting. Board policy requires members to hold different offices every two years, Tomasini said.

The new officers are: Chairman Michael Lindley, Vice Chairwoman Debra Johnson, Treasurer Jeff Curry and Secretary Judy Truesdell.

In other actions, the board tightened procedures for releasing academic records.

Students must sign off on any requests and decide

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if they want other people – like parents – to see their records, and put that choice in writing, Tomasini said.

“It better defines what the protection is for the student.” Tomasini said.

“Basically, if you’ve got a 20-year-old that’s coming to school here, you can’t call, and say, ‘What are my kid’s grades? I paid for their tuition.’”

Colleges and universities must approve such policies under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.

“We already had something (on file), but felt it needed better definition, and benchmarked it against the other 28 community colleges (in Michigan),” she said.

The board approved a financial policy that requires setting cash reserves at about 120 days of average

expenses, “and that’s in line with what we’ve had in the past,” Tomasini said.

LMC is getting an accreditation visit next year by the Higher Learning Commission, which will mean reviewing about 250 policies, and making sure they’re up to date, Tomasini said.