Hancock seeks oversight members

By Michelle Hatfield/Staff writer

Hancock College is looking for community members to serve on a committee tasked with overseeing the college's dispersal of $180 million in taxpayer-funded school bonds.

At their monthly meeting Tuesday night, Hancock trustees will consider establishing a Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee and approving the group's bylaws.

The board meeting is set for 6 p.m. in Hancock's student center conference room, 800 S. College Drive.

If approved by trustees, Hancock officials will accept applications Wednesday through Sept. 18. The committee would have the minimum of seven members, two of whom would serve one-year terms. The others would serve two-year terms. Officials anticipate the committee would meet at least twice a year.

Hancock's Measure I passed in June with 57.5 percent approval to fund various construction projects to improve Hancock's facilities. When the threshold for passing a school bond was lowered from 67 percent to 55 percent, school districts were required to set up community oversight committees and perform annual audits of school bond money.

Hancock President Jose Ortiz will review applications and make recommendations to trustees at their Oct. 17 meeting. Once the application period opens, those interested in serving on the committee can apply online or in person.

Hancock officials plan on advertising the vacancies in the media as well as various community group newsletters.

Of the seven, one must be a current Hancock student active in a college support group such as student government; one must be involved in a business organization; one must be active in a senior citizens' group; one must participate in a taxpayers association; one must be involved in a Hancock support organization; and two must be members of the community at large.

Members must be at least 18 years old and cannot be a Hancock employee, consultant, vendor or contractor, according to state law.

For more information about serving on the citizens' oversight committee, call 922-6966, Ext. 3245, or go online at www.hancockcollege.edu.

Also at Tuesday's board meeting, trustees will consider issuing the first chunk of bonds in the amount of $68 million, establishing a tax rate for the bonds and setting up a school bond building fund.

The $68 million would cover projects planned through 2006-07 and 2007-08 and include planning and architectural design costs in addition to construction.

For this school year, about $20.3 million would be spent on planning for the one-stop student services center, public safety complex and industrial technology modernization; funding scheduled maintenance, technology upgrades and current construction (such as the skills center building replacement and the science and health occupations complex); and paying down mortgage-like funds.

For 2007-08, about $43 million would go toward construction of the one-stop student services center, public safety complex and industrial technology modernization; funding scheduled maintenance, technology upgrades and current construction; and paying down mortgage-like funds.

The second issuance of bonds is planned for 2008.

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