

**NORTHWEST COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**

June 8, 2020

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** President MR. DUSTY SPOMER; Vice President/Secretary DR. MARK WURZEL; Treasurer MR. LUKE ANDERSON; and Trustees MR. JOHN HOUSEL, MS. NADA LARSEN, and MR. BOB NEWSOME.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** MS. CAROLYN DANKO

**OTHERS PRESENT:** DR. STEFANI HICSWA, President; MR. DEE HAVIG, Interim Vice President for Student Services; MS. LISA WATSON, Vice President for Administrative Services and Finance; MS. JILL ANDERSON; MR. BRAD BOWEN; MR. DEAN BRUCE; DR. JENNIFER DARE; MS. RACHEL HANAN; MS. ANGELA JOHNSON; MS. JENNIFER LITTERER-TREVIÑO; MS. NANCY MILLER; MR. DENNIS QUILLEN; MS. HALEY SORENSEN; MR. GREG THOMAS; MR. OSCAR TREVIÑO; MS. SHELBY WETZEL; MR. KEVIN KILLOUGH, *Powell Tribune*; and MS. DIANA GWYNN, Executive Secretary to the President and Board of Trustees.

**CALL TO ORDER:** The regular meeting of the Northwest College Board of Trustees was called to order on Monday, June 8, 2020 at 4:01 p.m. via Zoom.

**A APPROVE THE AGENDA:** **A motion was made by Trustee Larsen and seconded by Trustee Newsome to approve the agenda. Motion carried.**

**A CONSENT AGENDA:** **A motion was made by Trustee Larsen and seconded by Trustee Anderson to approve the consent agenda as presented.**

President Hicswa responded to questions on the check register.

**Motion carried and the consent agenda, including the minutes of the May 11, 2020 regular meeting, was approved.**

**DISCUSSION/  
INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

COVID Response Update

President Hicswa presented an update on COVID response planning. She reported that NWC has applied for as much of the CARES Act funding as possible. Estimates indicate that NWC may need an additional \$8.3M to cover expenses from the spring semester as well as future COVID-related expenses to reopen and operate at the desired level. She reminded the Board that the seven community colleges requested a total of \$53M, of which NWC's portion is the \$8.3M. It is still unclear how much of the \$1.25B CARES Act funding received by the state will be appropriated to community colleges. In the meantime, NWC is moving forward with a plan which encompasses those expenses while best meeting expectations from both the state and students.

President Hicswa reminded the Board that at a recent special session, the legislature assessed the first portion of the CARES funding and determined the "buckets" into which it should go. There has been some talk of a second special session to discuss further allocation of CARES Act funding, but as of yet, no meeting has been scheduled. At the state level, continuing discussions include the potential development of an adult promise program to respond to COVID and the impact of state revenue shortfalls.

For NWC, revenue from local mill levies and enrollment still needs to be assessed before budget decisions can be made. The FY21 budget will need to be approved before much of this is known, so the proposed budget utilizes carryover to cover revenue shortfalls.

President Hicswa reported that the most recent enrollment data shows that NWC has gained ground in headcount from 26% down last month to 18.3%

down this month, compared to same time last year. Enrollment Services is still actively recruiting and she recently sent out a letter to all prospective students. She also reported that NWC received authorization from the county to offer a few face-to-face summer classes, but the majority of summer classes are fully online.

President Hicswa then explained that planning continues for a soft reopening of campus on July 6; however, most planning efforts are directed toward the fall semester. NWC continues to monitor and follow county, state, and federal guidelines to direct the three-phases of campus reopening – Phase 1 is closed; Phase 2 is partially open with restrictions and guidelines; Phase 3 is mostly open with some guidelines. NWC is currently working toward Phase 2 with contingency planning.

President Hicswa reported that the residence halls have capacity to offer a single room to all on-campus students. Dining services will need to be modified in terms of how students access and consume their meals. The Johnson Fitness Center is now open with limited operating hours, and plans are underway for reopening the Children's Learning and Care Center soon.

Planning for athletics is on hold until further direction can be obtained from the National Junior College Athletic Association. A meeting is scheduled for June 19 to determine how to best manage athletics in conjunction with COVID restrictions and guidelines.

Planning for clubs and activities is in progress. While some clubs lend themselves to an online format, some do not. Adjustments are being made to comply with current guidelines.

Social distancing requirements are being instituted for offices and classrooms. Each office is working on a rotational staffing plan for providing full services to the public while limiting exposure as much as possible. Planning is also in progress for social distancing set-up in classrooms.

The final reopening plan for fall 2020, which will include contingencies for various eventualities, will be presented to the Board at their July meeting. It will then be submitted for county and state approval prior to the fall reopening.

President Hicswa reported that the virtual commencement went better than anticipated – last year there were 236 graduates, with 284 degrees and certificates; this year there were 209 graduates, with 256 degrees and certificates.

Board President Spomer asked Trustees for input on what they hope for students as the college moves forward with reopening. All Trustees agreed that the safety of students and employees needs to be the first and foremost concern. It was also agreed that NWC needs to continue to market and recruit – to let students know that they can expect the same academic rigor despite alternative class formats. Trustees also expressed a desire to return to normal operations as soon as it is safe to do so.

#### BOCES Budgets

The Trustees reviewed the budgets for the Boards of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) for Park County School District #1, Big Horn County School District #2, and Big Horn County School District #3 prior to their being submitted to and approved by the respective BOCES Boards.

#### **A UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**A NEW BUSINESS:**

Recommended Policy Revisions:  
5610 Equal Employment  
Opportunity  
5630 Prohibition of Harassment

Trustee Wurzel reviewed the proposed revisions to policy 5610 Equal Employment Opportunity. He explained that these revisions clarify which investigation process will be used for each type of investigation. The Board Policy and Student Success committee amended the revisions to state “according to policy 5700 Sexual Misconduct” rather than “according to the Sexual Misconduct policy” for consistency with other policy references.

Trustee Wurzel then reviewed the proposed revisions policy 5630 Prohibition of Harassment. He explained that this policy is related to Title IX and with the new Title IX regulations, there will be additional future changes to this policy.

**A motion was made by Trustee Wurzel and seconded by Trustee Larsen to approve the revisions to policies 5610 Equal Employment Opportunity as amended and 5630 Prohibition of Harassment as presented. Motion carried.**

**CITIZENS’ OPEN FORUM:**

The Citizens’ Open Forum convened at 5:00 p.m. There were no citizens that wished to address the Board, so the Citizen’s Open Forum adjourned.

**A NEW BUSINESS (CONTINUED):**

Preliminary FY21 Budget

President Hicswa prefaced the budget discussion by explaining that many budget inputs are still unknown such as the amount of state CARES Act funding to be received, state and local revenue, and enrollment revenue. Because of this, developing the FY21 budget has been a challenging process.

Trustee Anderson, Board Finance Committee Chair, reported that the Finance Committee determined it was best to move forward with what information is available, despite the unknowns, and to be flexible and conservative in creating the budget.

President Hicswa explained that the Board Finance Committee also expressed the need to recognize the reality of what lies ahead and understand serious budget decisions will be required going forward. She reminded Trustees that the current proposal utilizes carryover to balance the FY21 budget. Once more of the inputs are known, the college will embark on a thorough and strategic plan to implement any required budget cuts.

Vice President Watson presented an overview of the proposed FY21 budget. She explained that the budget is based on estimates as well as an analysis of other revenue sources, many of which are still unknown.

She explained that NWC had previously been seeing positive results from the focused marketing and recruitment efforts which led to a healthy increase in the budget; and prior to the COVID pandemic, she was optimistic that NWC could hold the enrollment increase and perhaps even carry it forward.

She reminded Trustees that this budget marks the beginning of a new biennium cycle. At the end of the last regular legislative session, NWC came out in pretty good shape, budget-wise; however, due to the actual recalculation of the credit hours across the system, NWC lost some ground in the funding formula. The current budget projections show a deficit of approximately \$500,000 for FY21. Depending on the next legislative session, there is potential for further reductions yet to be determined for the second biennial year. In the meantime, the governor has frozen the general fund and implemented increases to health insurance rates. Employees are being asked to carry a greater burden of health insurance costs. The current planning holds the proposed budget even for the

next fiscal year by utilizing carryover to cover shortfalls, while planning to work on adjustments as needed.

Vice President Watson then reviewed the spreadsheets of several different funds and the measures taken to balance the FY21 budget.

The Unrestricted Operating Funds shows a decline in revenue due to the reallocation of state appropriation and an increase in expenditures due to insurance increases. In order to hold this fund steady, unspent revenue from this year will be utilized.

The Auxiliary Fund shows declines in residence halls and food service which are primarily due to COVID. This fund has been balanced, in part, by moving some of the expenditure lines into other funds; however, this is not a long-term solution.

Because of the COVID pandemic and reduction in normal college operations, the college has a surplus for FY20 of \$1.58M. This surplus would normally be transferred to the Reserves, but instead will be rolled into the FY21 budget.

The One-Mil Funds are projected to be flat for FY21; however, they are not yet finalized.

Auxiliary Funds will continue to be monitored, as several have shown a decrease in revenue, some of which may be COVID-related.

The Plant Fund shows the front-loaded state funds for FY20. There are still several projects in process, so all of the state funding from FY20 has not yet been spent. Two-thirds of the money in this fund is from state appropriations and is earmarked for major maintenance projects.

NWC is still waiting on finalization of federal CARES Act money. The allocation of the money was split between students and the institution. The institutional funding utilization depends on utilizing the student funding. NWC continues to monitor this as changes are still being made to the utilization requirements. NWC also continues to work on obtaining state CARES Act funding.

Vice President Watson concluded by explaining that her research indicates that the best thing to do at this time is to provide stability, rather than layering on cuts one after another. Because there is still so much in flux with the state right now, it is best to hold the course by taking the conservative approach recommended by the Finance Committee. With so many inputs still unknown, NWC needs the stability of operations going into this new academic year.

President Hicswa reported that at the state level there is discussion of an adult promise grant which could potentially increase community college enrollment. Also, NWC offered a free summer class, through scholarships provided by the Foundation, for students to “try out” online learning. This offering was met with overwhelming enrollment requiring four sections to be opened.

Trustee Larsen commended Vice President Watson and her staff for what they have accomplished with the budget, given how much is still unknown.

In response to questions from Trustees, Vice President Watson further clarified the changes in the different revenue funds from the 2019-2020 budget to the 2020-2021 budget. She is hopeful that NWC will not experience much change to the Appropriations lines this year. Tuition could vary due to enrollment and the continuing COVID situation. The Restricted Sources is primarily grant

money. The Auxiliary Fund will be affected by the number of students that can be housed and fed on-site, which could also be impacted by COVID. She reiterated that the current budget proposal utilizes carryover from FY20, which would normally transfer to the Reserves fund, but does not include utilization of funds currently in Reserves.

Board President Spomer asked the Trustees to continue to review the FY21 budget so they can understand the ramifications of what has been submitted and what they will be approving.

A motion was made by Trustee Larsen and seconded by Trustee Wurzel to approve the FY21 budget as presented. After a point of order discussion, Trustee Larsen withdrew the motion with the understanding that action will be taken to approve the budget at the July 6 Board of Trustees meeting.

**LETTER FROM TRUSTEE  
LARSEN:**

Board President Spomer read a letter of resignation from Trustee Larsen. She is moving out of the Meeteetse district and her resignation will be effective July 15, 2020. He then thanked Trustee Larsen for her diligent service and for the positive impact she has had on Northwest College.

Board President Spomer explained that the Board has the duty to fill the Board vacancy that will occur at the time Trustee Larsen's resignation. He proposed moving forward with expediency to advertise the vacancy and solicit letters of interest prior to the next Board meeting. It was determined to request the letters be submitted electronically with a limit of a single-page length.

Trustee Wurzel offered his thanks to Trustee Larsen for serving as a mentor to him. He also recommended that the Board take advantage of Trustee Larsen's experience and wisdom in planning training for new Board members. Board President Spomer indicated that he would send out an email inquiry to solicit input from Trustees on this topic.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS &  
FOLLOW-UP ON CITIZENS'  
OPEN FORUM TOPICS:**

Training for new Board members.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Next meeting, July 6, 2020, 4:00 p.m., mode of delivery to be determined based on Trustees preference for attending  
ACCT Leadership Congress, September 30-October 3, 2019, Chicago, IL

**A ADJOURNMENT:**

**The meeting was adjourned at 6:17 p.m.**

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MARK WURZEL, Vice President/Secretary

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Date