

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

June 10, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: President MS. TARA KUIPERS (via Zoom); Vice President/Secretary MS. DENISE LAURSEN; Treasurer MR. BOB NEWSOME; and Trustees MR. JOHN HOUSEL, MR. R.J. KOST, DR. LARRY TODD, and DR. MARK WURZEL.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHERS PRESENT: MS. LISA WATSON, President; MR. DAVE ERICKSON, Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs; MR. TOM HAVRON, Vice President for Student Services; MS. JILL ANDERSON, MR. DUSTIN DICKS, MS. TRACY GASAWAY, MR. MARK GRANT, MS. JEN LITTERER-TREVIÑO, MR. CORY OSTERMILLER, MR. DENNIS QUILLEN, MS. LISA SMITH, MR. OSCAR TREVIÑO, MS. SHELBY WETZEL, MR. ZAC TAYLOR, *Powell Tribune*; and MS. KELI BORDERS, Executive Secretary to the President and Board of Trustees.

CALL TO ORDER: Vice President/Secretary Laursen called the regular meeting of the Northwest College Board of Trustees to order on Monday, June 10, 2024, at 4:01 p.m. in the Yellowstone Building.

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

A CONSENT AGENDA: **A motion was made by Trustee Wurzel and seconded by Trustee Kost to approve the consent agenda.**

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that while she has not had the opportunity to review the results of Hanover Research's community survey in detail, her initial assessment is that the community strongly supports the College and feels it is a valuable asset. They approve of the offerings but would like to see more programming that supports local businesses. She feels there was a decent response rate but would have liked to have seen more.

Trustee Housel was pleased to see that fifty-four individuals had received their CDLs since January 1, 2024.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that the College serves WYDOT and businesses that are sending their employees to be trained in the CDL program. They are also working with K-12 to provide training opportunities to age-eligible students for the program. Therefore, most individuals who obtain their licenses are local and regional workers.

President Watson stated that Christi Greaham, CTD's Training and Development Program Specialist, attended the Wyoming Truckers Association Conference in Rock Springs and took the simulator to Casper for WYDOT's annual Safety Training. Christi does an excellent job of building relationships with businesses in the State.

Trustee Housel commented on the success and number of student-athletes who graduated, especially from the Men's Soccer team. President Watson explained that Soccer Coach Rob Hill heavily recruited international students two years ago when the Welcome to Wyoming Scholarship first came out. Many of those student-athletes graduated this year. The Men's Soccer team also had a record number of students who received offers and scholarships for continued play at four-year institutions.

In response to a question from Trustee Wurzel, President Watson reminded the Trustees that during the pandemic, the College used federal money to write off past-due accounts and give more money to students, which partially explains the

increase in the bad debt expense in 2024.

Mark Grant further explained that the Business Office has closely examined how things have been done in the past and updated processes. For example, it was discovered that some of the Accounts Receivable codes used to process payments for dual and concurrent enrollment weren't posted as intended. There were several small charges to high school students, and rather than bill the high schools for mandatory fees from five years ago, the College wrote off the small transactions that hadn't been posted correctly.

Mark stated that a few other areas have also been cleaned up, making this year an outlier in terms of a higher percentage of bad debt expense. As they finish cleaning up the accounts, there may also be a slight carryover into the next fiscal year. While the auditors have determined everything has been materially correct, the Business Office is cleaning up the small transactions that have added up over time.

President Watson stated that dual and concurrent enrollment entry has always been manual. The College is working to improve the process with technology, which will improve efficiency. The high school counselors can now enter the student information and classes to be enrolled.

President Watson stated that the College diligently works with students to help them pay their bills. Larger institutions will drop students who have yet to pay by a specific date. Northwest College works with students throughout the semester to accommodate their needs, but it does come with challenges.

Mark added that, on average, the College is well below the national average of 3-5% of uncollectible debt. This is the first year the College has been inside that range.

In response to a question from Trustee Kost, Mark stated that the College receives approximately 20% recapture, the amount received after turning past-due accounts over to collections.

President Kuipers noted the constituency group reports and expressed her appreciation to the leadership of the faculty and staff constituencies for their involvement and engagement on campus and the work they do in general.

Motion carried, and the consent agenda, including the minutes of the May 13, 2024, regular meeting, and the May 28, 2024, special meeting/retreat, was approved.

DISCUSSION/ INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

2025 Board Goals

President Watson stated that the Trustees discussed the upcoming year and the Board's priorities and goals during the retreat. She and President Kuipers took the feedback and developed the bullet-point list in the Board packet.

President Kuipers stated that she and President Watson reviewed the 2024 Goals and Priorities and, based on the feedback from the retreat, determined what should continue and modified or refined the focus of others. It is important to keep the Board's goals at the governance level and President Watson's goals at the operational level and ensure that both are moving in the same direction as a team.

2025 President Goals

President Watson stated that she and President Kuipers developed the President's goals, which operationalize the Board's goals, to move the College forward.

Trustee Kost said he took two key items from the retreat's discussion. He feels it's important to lighten the President's load by hiring a Vice President for Administrative Services and Finance. Secondly, advocacy for the College at all levels is critical.

BOCES Budgets

PCSD#1

President Watson explained that the Powell BOCES budget includes \$100,000 for the NWC contract, which pays for the Community Education Program Specialist for PVCE. The College receives an 8% indirect cost to operate the grant administratively. Any money left over goes into a reserve account that can be used for extra classes, equipment, etc.

President Watson's brief review of the community interest survey feedback indicates that the community enjoys lifetime learning opportunities, such as those offered by PVCE.

Trustee Wurzel stated that PCSD1# BOCES has been taking money out of their reserve account yearly to help fund the Driver's Education classes and other special projects. The BOCES Board has elected to keep one year's expenses in reserves, which means the excess funds are nearly exhausted.

BHCSD#2

Trustee Housel stated that the Lovell BOCES strongly supports dual and concurrent enrollment programs and assists students by purchasing textbooks. They also support Northwest College in other ways, such as paying for high school students to take the CDL program. They have hired a new Executive Director, who is doing an excellent job, and things are going well.

BHCSD#3

Trustee Newsome stated that BOCES is well received in Greybull and puts the College in a good light. They support Driver's Education and various family programs and do an excellent job of helping the community they serve.

President Watson stated that the college presidents have discussed BOCES recently and remarked on how different each BOCES and their school district is. The history and perception of what BOCES should be vary greatly. Northwest College does not directly benefit from sustainable funding levels from BOCES. Other colleges in the state receive up to \$400,000 per year in BOCES support for dual and concurrent enrollment and other programming. She feels that over time and as needs change, BOCES Boards should continue to consider how best to meet their objectives and serve their communities.

Trustee Laursen stated that the PCSD#1 BOCES plans to hold a meeting in the fall where the School Board and the Northwest College Board of Trustees can discuss the best way for BOCES to serve the community.

CITIZENS' OPEN FORUM

The Citizens' Open Forum convened at 5:00 p.m. No citizens requested to address the Board; therefore, the Citizen's Open Forum adjourned.

A UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

There were no unfinished business items on the agenda.

A NEW BUSINESS:

Preliminary FY2025 Budget

President Watson directed the Trustees' attention to page 85 of the Budget Book, which describes the incremental changes to Unrestricted Operating Funds for the budget year 2025. She noted that the tuition and fees calculations changed slightly from the preliminary budget presented in May. The new calculations

include continuing education, such as the CDL program, which increased the tuition and fees budget to the plus. Due to the success of the CDL program and instructional time, the instructors' positions have been reclassified from adjunct to College employees, raising instruction costs by \$111,000 in salaries and benefits. There are also additional expenses for items such as mechanical maintenance.

Another change is in state appropriations, which includes the inflationary money allocated to the colleges and shows a \$725,000 increase. Local mil valuations and resulting revenue are estimated to be down 6.5%, or approximately \$388,000. Adjustments to mill levy revenue will be made once final numbers are known by the end of June.

The salary and benefits in the Student Services program are slightly increasing due to federal regulations necessitating redundancy and an added position in the Financial Aid department.

The addition of the Armory building and the opening of the new Student Center require a custodial support position, which also increased salary and benefit expenses in the Plant Administration program. Physical Plant's budget had been reduced significantly during the previous three budget cuts; therefore, limited funds have been added back to cover shortfalls in operating money. That budget line could change depending on final local levies and enrollment.

President Watson reminded Trustees that the Welcome to Wyoming Scholarship is a waiver that brings out-of-state tuition down to the WUI rate. It continues to be a robust recruiting tool. The Scholarships and Waivers line has been increased slightly to adjust for its success, reflecting an enrollment increase on the revenue side.

President Watson directed the Trustees' attention to page 86 of the Budget Book, noting the reduction in local appropriations and the offsetting operational support lines in the One Mill Fund 11. Last year, the extra funds were put into a contingency line for additional marketing and equipment replacements. The reduced local levies will not allow for the previous year's contingency.

In Auxiliary Fund 12, which includes the residence halls, food service, motor pool, etc., revenue is increased due to the increase in meal plan rates and the projections for residence hall occupancy.

President Watson referenced pages 93-95 of the budget book, which illustrate changes in revenue and expenses between FY2024 and FY2025. She noted that the Student Center and Soccer Field House projects will be completed this fiscal year. The budget reflects state-match money in restricted funds that will come off the books the following year.

President Watson stated that the State reimburses the colleges for health insurance based on the number of employees. Over the years, budget cuts and increased employee numbers meant the reimbursement pool was underfunded, and the colleges had to budget and pay their shortfall. When Gillette College separated from Sheridan College, their employees came out; the pool funds were freed up, eliminating the need for the College to budget and pay a shortfall. Because of this, the budget proposal now includes a 1.5% increase in employees' wages.

President Watson stated that the final budget will be presented in July, and she doesn't expect many changes. She expressed her appreciation to Finance Director Mark Grant for his hard work creating the budget and developing new efficiencies.

Project Pay

President Kuipers referenced the memo in the Board packet that describes the policy related to project pay for employees who fulfill duties in addition to their full-time positions. President Watson continues to fulfill the duties of Vice President for Administrative Services and Finance in addition to the President's role.

It was moved by President Kuipers and seconded by Trustee Wurzel to approve the project pay as presented. Trustee Housel abstained as he did not have the opportunity to review the memo. Motion carried.

July 2024 Board Meeting

It was moved by Trustee Wurzel and seconded by Trustee Newsome to move the July Board meeting to July 15, 2024. Motion carried.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS
FEEDBACK TO CITIZENS'
OPEN FORUM TOPICS:**

July 15, 2024, upcoming:

- Year-end Budget Adjustments
- Budget hearing
- Preliminary Budget
- Annual hearing for the Mil levy approval
- Policy updates review
- Other TBD

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Yellowstone Summer Music Camp, June 16-21, 2024, NPA
4th Annual Trapper Classic Car Show, June 29, 2024, Campus Mall
All-Skills Volleyball Camp, July 8-13, 2024, Cabre Gym
July Board meeting, July 15, 2024, 4:00 p.m., Yellowstone Building

President Watson introduced the newly hired Vice President for Student Services, Tom Havron. Vice President Havron came to Northwest College from Fort Scott, KS, and began his role on May 20, 2024.

A ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

DENISE LAURSEN, Vice President/Secretary

Date