

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

May 11, 2020

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHERS PRESENT: DR. STEFANI HICSWA, President; DR. GERRY GIRAUD, Vice President for Academic Affairs; MS. LISA WATSON, Vice President for Administrative Services and Finance; MS. JILL ANDERSON, MR. BRAD BOWEN, MR. DEAN BRUCE, DR. JENNIFER DARE, MR. MARK DAVIS, MR. CASEY DEARCORN, MR. DUSTIN DICKS, MS. NANCY MILLER, MR. DENNIS QUILLEN, MS. HALEY SORENSEN, MR. GREG THOMAS, MR. OSCAR TREVINO, 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, May 11, 2020 at 4:01 p.m. via Zoom.

A APPROVE THE AGENDA: **A motion was made by Trustee Anderson 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 Danko to approve the consent agenda as presented.**

President Hicswa responded to questions on the check register and other reports.

A roll call vote was taken, the motion carried unanimously, and the consent agenda, including the minutes of the April 6, 2020 regular meeting, was approved.

**DISCUSSION/
INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

COVID-19 Response Update President Hicswa gave an update on COVID-19 related activities. She reported that planning for the fall semester is underway, but it is unclear when the final decisions will be made. NWC continues to monitor and follow county, state, and federal guidelines; and per those guidelines will implement a three-phase reopening – phases 1, 2, and 3 with contingency planning for each phase.

The Incident Command Team currently anticipates that NWC may not be fully open in the fall and campus will need to do additional contingency planning for fall classes. Athletics and residence halls remain big issues with regard to COVID-19 social distancing restrictions. Students will be notified as soon as decisions are made. Some colleges and universities are making decisions now, but NWC does not want to make the decision too hastily and then have to back-track.

At the end of April, it was determined to develop planning based on a month-to-month analysis. Currently, campus will be closed until May 31 and employees will continue to telework. Event and travel cancellations will continue. Decisions for June operations will be made within the week. Due to the continued closure of campus, a virtual commencement ceremony will be held on Friday, May 15 at 7:00 p.m. Social media links will be sent out so that employees, trustees, friends, family, and community members may participate. President Hicswa presented the contents of the celebration box that was sent to all graduates.

President Hicswa reported that the summer semester will be mostly online. An exception has been granted by the county to offer some select face-to-face courses. Planning continues for career and technical, non-credit programming in the hopes of being able to offer them this summer.

There are various potential options for access to federal stimulus funds. NWC is applying for the different funding types, but is still awaiting further information and regulations on the use and application of the funds.

A special session of the legislature has been called to review the funding that the state of Wyoming has received for stimulus-related expenses in the amount of \$1.25B. The legislature has developed four separate bills for determining how the funding is to be applied. The state budget review team will determine how to distribute the various funds. The Wyoming community colleges will submit requests for funding allocation.

A second special session of legislature will be held, following the release of a special CREG report, to look at revenue projections for the state and to determine if the Governor's budget needs to be adjusted for the biennium.

President Hicswa reported that when the COVID crisis began, there were concerns about students withdrawing or not finishing their classes; however, NWC had only a few incompletes. Some students dropped a class, but maintained full-time status. Only three of the 17 students who withdrew were full-time; most were taking one class and were non-degree seeking students. The 2020 spring completion data is comparable to previous four years' data.

Looking ahead, NWC will continue to follow all county, state, and federal guidelines. The Board will be asked to weigh-in on decisions as planning for reopening occurs. It is imperative to ensure that employees and students feel safe in returning, even if CDC and other agencies allow reopening.

Major Maintenance Projects Update

Vice President Watson presented the annual update on the list of major maintenance projects as well as projected delays and changes to the plan due to COVID-19. She reminded the Board that NWC is currently at the beginning of a new biennium and that NWC had submitted a list of projects last spring for this biennium. Due to the current crisis, many questions regarding major maintenance have arisen. One of the governor's orders froze the fund from which major maintenance comes. The order did allow for support of projects already in progress. The NWC electrical infrastructure project was one of the projects already in progress. The City of Powell has requested that NWC update the electrical infrastructure. The College is currently a burden on the city because it is the only remaining entity on the old system and the city has had to maintain special equipment to meet NWC's electrical needs.

Vice President Watson then reviewed the list of major maintenance projects identified for FY20, FY21 and FY22. She explained that NWC has worked hard to get caught up with major maintenance projects. Last year was spent catching up with bigger projects, so funds decreased in correlation. The projects are up-to-date and moving forward. She also reviewed the list of projects that have been held or canceled for various reasons.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, Vice President Watson explained that state's recommendation for the Carillon project was to roll it into a larger mall infrastructure improvement project. Because infrastructure projects are higher priority, rolling the Carillon into another project is beneficial.

President Hicswa reminded the Board of the process for major maintenance project approval. Projects are first approved to move forward by the Board, then are submitted to the state. The state does not always move projects forward in the anticipated timeline, so projects may be listed in a different phase than originally planned.

A list has been prepared and submitted to the Governor of “shovel-ready” projects that could go forward quickly as part of stimulus funding, should funding be allocated. In response to a question from Trustee Spomer, Vice President Watson explained that phases of the electrical project were part of the “shovel-ready” projects list. The phases of the project were consolidated in order to accomplish more over a period of two or three summers, pending available funding. She also explained that the irrigation improvement project has been done in three phases and should be completed next summer.

A motion was made by Trustee Larsen and seconded by Trustee Danko to approve the Major Maintenance Project update. Motion carried.

Preliminary FY21 Budget Review

President Hicswa presented the FY21 Preliminary Budget for review by the Board of Trustees. She explained that this budget has been quite challenging to develop. The first reading of the budget will be done at the June Board meeting with a second reading and approval needed at the July Board meeting. She also explained that there were changes made just recently to state insurance premium rates and the employer/employee split which have not been included in this preliminary budget. Hopefully, NWC will also soon know how much of the COVID-related expense stimulus money will be received.

Vice President Watson prefaced the budget review by explaining that these are times like no other. She explained that trying to manage this budget in such uncertain times has been a challenge, but that the focus should be on what needs to happen now. She also reported on her recent research about how best to move forward in times like these. She learned that decisions should be made based on best planning and efforts. Strategic scenario planning should be done. Changing too many things in times of uncertainty can actually put a burden on an institution. Though it is hard to know what is coming, staying the course is best. Rash decisions should not be made in times of uncertainty, if the financial condition will allow an institution to remain stable for certain period of time.

Vice President Watson then reported that the operating budget shows a projected shortfall of approximately \$487,000. NWC was fine going into the legislative session, but the recalibration of the funding formula at the end of the session resulted in a recalculation decline.

Fall enrollment is uncertain, so it is important to maintain stability in staffing. NWC is working hard to recruit, but will most likely be looking at a decrease in fall enrollment. Projections have been made very conservatively and different options for future projections are being explored. As tuition and enrollment will drive one part of revenue, the COVID stimulus money may provide some flexibility for the next year.

Vice President Watson explained that local levies are currently holding, but she expects them to change due to the decline in the oil and gas industries. Because there is so much unknown, she recommends supporting a stable budget until the special session of legislature is done and NWC knows better what its budget will be.

President Hicswa stated that budget developments will continue to be monitored and the budget refined, but the Board may need to do a budget adjustment in the fall depending on changes to state revenue, stimulus money received, and surplus money available from this year.

CITIZENS' OPEN FORUM:

The Citizens' Open Forum convened at 5:07 p.m. There were no citizens that wished to address the Board, so the Citizen's Open Forum adjourned.

**DISCUSSION/
INFORMATIONAL ITEMS
(CONTINUED):**

Preliminary FY21 Budget Review
(continued)

In response to a question about modifications to services if NWC is still closed or partially closed in the fall, President Hicswa explained that most services have been or can be transitioned to an online format. The plan is to keep employees working through telework and to keep students served. Food services and residence halls present a challenge. Vice President Watson has been working with Sodexo on different scenarios based on various possibilities for fall. Contingency planning is also being done for the residence halls.

President Hicswa explained that because of so many unknowns, the Board will be given the fullest, best information available at the time of the June meeting, but the budget may not be very complete until the July meeting when the Board needs to approve it. Even then, the Board may need to approve the budget with a caveat allowing for adjustment based on future information.

Board President Spomer asked that given the current situation, should the Board open up a discussion with the Foundation to see what role, if any, they can play in this one-time event. In response, Executive Director Wetzel explained that though she wishes there was a way the Foundation could give assets to NWC, it has been charged with making an income on those funds for scholarships. The Foundation has many obligations and its' cash-flow is already encumbered. It simply does not have money to give away. Even if the Foundation did have money to use, it would be on a loan basis because the money is invested and the Foundation would lose money in taking it out. The loan scenario would then create a debt on NWC's books. Executive Director Wetzel did assure the Board that the Foundation will continue to look at partnership opportunities, but it has to be cautious because of the many restrictions on passing money back and forth to the College. The Foundation has recently created a new scholarship for students who wish to take a free online summer class.

Vice President Watson stated that the best bet would be to capitalize on any carry-over from this year in starting out the next fiscal year. Trying to make big decisions will be difficult without knowing some of the current unknowns. She expressed that it would be doubly challenging to manage any budget cuts in addition to the current COVID crisis.

Board of Trustees Budget Review

The Board reviewed its' five-year budget-to-actual report. There was a brief discussion regarding the necessity of expenditures for professional development. At its upcoming retreat, the Board will discuss future professional development opportunities. There was also discussion about the fees associated with the WACCT advocate's salary.

President's Office Budget Review

The Board reviewed the President's Office five-year budget-to-actual report.

A UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A NEW BUSINESS:

Course/Lab Fee Proposals

President Hicswa explained that the proposed course/lab fee proposals are for pass through fees for applied music lessons and reflects the current adjunct rate

of \$700/credit hour. She recommended approval of the Fall 2020 course fee proposals as presented.

A motion was made by Trustee Larsen and seconded by Trustee Anderson to approve the Fall 2020 Course Fee proposals as presented. Motion carried.

Recommended Policy Revisions

1. 5700 Sexual Misconduct
2. 7100 Campus Safety, Security and Access
3. 7310 Information Technology Responsible Use

Trustee Wurzel reviewed the proposed revisions to policies 5700 Sexual Misconduct, 7100 Campus Safety, Security and Access, and 7310 Information Technology Responsible Use. He explained that these revisions correct information such as titles and office names due to changes in the college's organizational structure. The Board Policy and Student Success Committee recommends approving these policies en bloc.

A motion was made by Trustee Wurzel and seconded by Trustee Larsen to approve the revisions to policies 5700 Sexual Misconduct, 7100 Campus Safety, Security and Access, and 7310 Information Technology Responsible Use as presented. Motion carried.

Recommended Policy Language Updates

1. "College" and "Board" President language updates

Trustee Wurzel explained that the Board Policy and Student Success Committee had requested all references to President throughout the Board Policy Manual be updated to specify "College" or "Board" where applicable. He noted that the policies being considered by the Board at this meeting do not include any policies from section 3000 of the Board Policy Manual, as they have not been through the review process as outlined in policy 3800 Faculty Employment Policies. He also noted that this is an example of having multiple processes for policy approval, revision, etc. The goal of the Board Policy and Student Success Committee is to have one process for all policies. He recommended that the language updates be approved as presented.

President Hicswa clarified that the policies from section 3000 will be sent through the faculty policy revision process, as outlined in policy 3800, in the fall.

A motion was made by Trustee Wurzel and seconded by Trustee Larsen to approve the proposed language updates to specify "College" and "Board" in all references to President throughout the Board Policy Manual as presented. Motion carried.

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

COVID-19 and related costs update

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Trustee Wurzel commended the faculty members who achieved tenure and received promotions this year.
Trustee Larsen congratulated Sandy Feyhl for being named the Outstanding Faculty Service award winner and the Distinguished Faculty this year.
Board President Spomer commended all the employees who have put in numerous years of service to NWC.
President Hicswa commended faculty for the tremendous work they have done this semester to ensure students finished on-time.
Virtual Commencement Ceremony, May 15 via various social media platforms
WACCT Meeting, June 3, 2020, via Zoom
WCCC Meeting, June 4, 2020, via Zoom
Next meeting, June 8, 2020, 3:00 p.m., Yellowstone Building or Zoom, TBD
The meeting was adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

A ADJOURNMENT:

MARK WURZEL, Vice President/Secretary

Date