

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

November 9, 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, MR. BOB NEWSOME, and DR. LARRY TODD.
- MEMBERS ABSENT:**
- OTHERS PRESENT:** DR. STEFANI HICSWA, President; DR. GERRY GIRAUD, Vice President for Academic Affairs; MR. DEE HAVIG, Interim Vice President for Student Services; MS. LISA WATSON, Vice President for Administrative Services and Finance; MS. JILL ANDERSON; MS. BOBBIE BELL; MS. HOLLY BERRYMAN; MS. LESLIE BIGHAM; MR. BRAD BOWEN; MR. DEAN BRUCE; MS. JENNIFER CANNIZZARO; MS. ELAINE DEBUHR; DR. RENEÉ DECHERT; MR. DUSTIN DICKS; MS. AMANDA ENRIQUEZ; MR. BRIAN ERICKSON; MR. DAVE ERICKSON; MS. KIM FLETCHER; MS. TRACY GASAWAY; MS. NANCY GILMORE; MS. CHRISTI GREAHAM; MS. LAURA GWINN; DR. RACHEL HANAN; MS. JOANN HEIMER; MR. WAYNE HERR; MS. MICHAELA JONES; MS. TARA KUIPERS; MR. WEST HERNANDEZ; MS. JENNIFER LITTERER-TREVIÑO; MR. KEITH MCCALLISTER; DR. AMY MCKINNEY; MS. TERRI MEYERS; MS. CAREY MILLER; MS. NANCY MILLER; MR. DICK NELSON; MR. CORY OSTERMILLER; MR. DENNIS QUILLEN; MS. JENNIFER SCHNEIDER; MS. LISA SMITH; MS. HALEY SORENSON; MR. GREG THOMAS; MR. OSCAR TREVIÑO; MS. SHELBY WETZEL; MS. MARSHA WILSON; 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, November 9, 2020 at 2:34 p.m. in the Yellowstone Building Conference Center.
- A APPROVE THE AGENDA:** **A motion was made by Trustee Housel and seconded by Trustee Todd to approve the agenda. Motion carried.**
- EXECUTIVE SESSION:** **A motion was made by Trustee Housel and seconded by Trustee Anderson to move into executive session. Motion carried and the executive session convened at 2:37 p.m.**
- A motion was made by Trustee Danko and seconded by Trustee Wurzel to adjourn the executive session. Motion carried, the executive session adjourned, and the regular business meeting resumed at 4:39 p.m.**
- Trustee Todd reported that the Board has identified a candidate whom they would like to appoint as interim president.
- A motion was made by Trustee Todd and seconded by Trustee Danko for the Board Chair to negotiate with the candidate regarding compensation and the duties for the interim president position. Motion carried.**
- Trustee Todd explained that the Board discussed having an open search process which allows engagement and input from different constituent groups on what they desire in a new president. He also noted that the Board would conduct a national search.
- Board President Spomer explained that President Hicswa remains the president of NWC until January 8, 2021, but that she will be on leave starting Wednesday, November 11. At that time, Vice President Watson will serve as Acting President, as designated by President Hicswa. The Board will begin contract negotiations with the candidate for interim president and will make the appointment as soon as an agreement can be reached. Simultaneously, the

Board will initiate the aspects of a national presidential search.

A CONSENT AGENDA:

A motion was made by Trustee Wurzel and seconded by Trustee Todd to approve the consent agenda.

President Hicswa responded to questions on the check register and various reports included in the consent agenda.

Trustee Anderson reported that the Board Finance Committee has begun reviewing the 2019 support services program reviews, the 2016 criteria for academic program reviews, and 2016 academic program sustainability report. He noted that the committee recognizes that budget decisions affect many people and that the committee desires to minimize revenue interruption as much as possible. The committee will meet again November 17 to continue the process.

Motion carried and the consent agenda, including the minutes of the October 12, 2020 regular meeting, was approved.

**DISCUSSION/
INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

CARES Act Funding Update

President Hicswa reviewed the update on the CARES Act funding. She noted that of the \$4.7M awarded, \$1.6M has been spent. \$1.8M is outstanding, leaving a little over \$1M to be spent. The Incident Command planning team is finalizing procurement in preparation for the December 31 deadline.

Vice President Watson explained that there has been some confusion about the utilization of some of the CARES Act funding and that NWC continues to seek clarification. She reiterated that NWC is purposefully using the funds to provide training, support, and classroom modifications in preparation for the spring semester.

Statewide Legislative Update

President Hicswa presented an update on statewide legislative activities. She reported that the Special Committee on Community College Funding has been meeting to develop ideas for generating additional revenue, many of which would require taxation. She noted that the recent election moved the legislature to the right which is, generally speaking, opposed to additional taxation. This may impact how the recommendations from the special committee are received by the legislature.

President Hicswa then reported that the community colleges had their regular October budget hearing with the governor during which an additional 10% cut to the community colleges' budgets was discussed. She noted that there was discussion about the potential of using SLIB or LSRA money to cover 5% of the additional cut.

President Hicswa reported that at the last Joint Appropriation Committee meeting, the community colleges were asked to outline the effects of an additional 10% cut. All presidents reported that it would be devastating. Though the committee found their arguments compelling, the parting message from the committee was that the community colleges should plan for an additional 10% cut.

President Hicswa explained that there has been talk of moving the 2021 legislative session later in the spring or of simply gaveling-in and gaveling-out due to COVID concerns. If the session does not occur, the governor's budget recommendations, which will be released December 1, would stand. It would

also mean that the capital construction recommendations would not go forward nor would any revenue-generating tax initiatives.

President's Office Operational Plan Update

President Hicswa presented the FY21 President's Office Operational Plan based on the college priorities set for by the Board of Trustees at their December 2019 retreat. She noted that an interim president may want to make adjustments to the plan.

Board Officer Nomination Committee

Board President Spomer proposed that he, Trustee Wurzel and Trustee Danko serve as the nomination committee for next month's officer elections.

CITIZENS' OPEN FORUM:

The Citizens' Open Forum convened at 5:05 p.m. There were no citizens who requested to address the Board, so the Citizen's Open Forum adjourned.

A UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A NEW BUSINESS:

Audit Report

Mr. Wayne Herr, CPA and partner in McGee, Hearne and Paiz, LLP, reviewed the audit criteria and presented the audit report for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. He reported that Northwest College was issued a clear audit with no findings. President Hicswa recommended approval of the audit report.

A motion was made by Trustee Todd and seconded by Trustee Danko to accept the audit report as presented. Motion carried.

Academic Calendar

President Hicswa presented the proposed Academic Calendar for 2021-2023 and recommended approval.

In response to a question about canceling the 2021 Spring Break due to COVID, President Hicswa explained that the Incident Command team has determined that the best course of action will be to wait and monitor during the spring semester.

A motion was made by Trustee Anderson and seconded by Trustee Newsome to approve the 2021-2023 Academic Calendar as presented. Motion carried.

Recommended Policy Revisions:

1. 5200 Compensation
2. 5210 Paydays and Reporting Time
3. 5300 Position Descriptions
4. 5310 Position Classifications
5. 5320 Classification Review

Trustee Wurzel reported that the proposed revisions to these policies have been reviewed by the Board Policy and Student Success Committee. He noted that the revisions are mostly clean-up language and that the Board Policy and Student Success Committee recommends approval.

A motion was made by Trustee Wurzel and seconded by Trustee Danko to approve the proposed revisions to 5200 Compensation, 5210 Paydays and Reporting Time, 5300 Position Descriptions, 5310 Position Classifications, 5320 Classification Review as presented. Motion carried.

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

The Board discussed the Presidential selection committee process. Board President Spomer appointed Trustee Housel, Trustee Todd, and newly-elected Trustee Kuipers to serve as a special committee to help with the presidential search process.

Board President Spomer recognized Trustee Anderson for his service on the Board and on several of the Board committees. He presented to Trustee Anderson a jacket with the NWC logo.

Board President Spomer noted that this meeting would be President Hicswa's last meeting with the Board.

Trustee Danko expressed that it has been a pleasure and an uplifting experience to have President Hicswa serve as NWC's president.

Trustee Anderson commended President Hicswa for doing “a heck of a job” and wished her the best of luck on her new adventure.

Trustee Wurzel said President Hicswa has done a terrific job and has taken the college from being somewhat adrift to having a real direction. He noted that her contributions to NWC will last beyond her tenure. He expressed that her departure is a fairly grievous loss to NWC, but that MSUB will benefit greatly.

Trustee Housel reminisced about President Hicswa’s keen interest in NWC prior to her becoming the president, including his meeting her when she was still president at MCCC. He acknowledged that President Hicswa has been a marvelous leader and tremendous ambassador for NWC. He then recited a sonnet about friendship in honor of President Hicswa.

Trustee Todd noted that he has had the least amount of opportunity to work with President Hicswa, but commended her for her exceptional educational skills and thanked her for the great introduction to the Board and to NWC.

Trustee Newsome remembered his initiation to the Board and that President Hicswa was more than helpful in every encounter to help him become a better Trustee. He then thanked her for being a very good teacher.

Board President Spomer thanked President Hicswa for her service to the college and to the community and expressed his gratitude to her for all she has done.

The Board presented President Hicswa with a gift certificate to a spa in Billings.

President Hicswa expressed that it has been an honor to serve as president of NWC. She commended the staff and faculty for what they have accomplished during her tenure such as the highest graduation rates, the highest retention rates in 16 years, the best HLC visit in recent history, the creation of the Summer Leadership Institute and the Teaching & Learning Center, and the development of the Paint the Town Red event. She encouraged the Board to continue to support initiatives like these and to continue to push forward in transformational efforts.

President Hicswa explained that up to this point, she has been careful about expressing her opinion regarding a name change, but she feels strongly that a name change to Yellowstone College will give NWC an impetus to make the necessary changes for the college to thrive. She said a name change combined with implementation of an interdisciplinary curriculum tied to Yellowstone’s ecosystem would provide the college with a niche and would entice worldwide interest. She challenged the Board to continue to focus on the residence life plan and on facilities. She expressed that a new student center is imperative to the future of the college as well as focusing on the trades. She challenged the Board to find a way to break the Wyoming community college funding formula. She acknowledged that NWC is a special place to which she has given her heart and soul, and that it is the people who truly make this college special. She expressed that she is confident there is a bright future ahead for NWC. President Hicswa then offered her heartfelt thanks to all.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Next meeting, December 14, 2020, 3:00 p.m., Yellowstone Building

A ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:57 p.m.