

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

January 10, 2022

MEMBERS PRESENT: President DR. MARK WURZEL; Vice President/Secretary DR. LARRY TODD; Treasurer Ms. CAROLYN DANKO; and Trustees MR. JOHN HOUSEL, MS. TARA KUIPERS, MR. BOB NEWSOME, and MR. DUSTY SPOMER

MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHERS PRESENT: MS. LISA WATSON, Interim President; DR. GERRY GIRAUD, Vice President for Academic Affairs; MR. DEE HAVIG, Vice President for Student Services; MS. JILL ANDERSON; MR. BRAD BOWEN; MS. ANNA CRAGOE; DR. MICHAEL CUDDY; MS. ELAINE DEBUHR; DR. RENEE DECHERT; MR. DUSTIN DICKS; MR. DAVE ERICKSON; MS. TRACY GASAWAY; MS. NANCY GILMORE; MS. DEB JACOBS; MS. CAREY MILLER; MS. NANCY MILLER; MS. ASTRID NORTHRUP; MR. CORY OSTERMILLER; MR. DENNIS QUILLEN; MS. LISA SMITH; MS. LINDA SPOMER; MR. MARTIN STENSING; MR. OSCAR TREVIÑO; MS. SHELBY WETZEL; MR. KEVIN KILLOUGH, *Powell Tribune*; and MS. KELI BORDERS, Interim 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, January 10, 2022, at 4:01 p.m. in the Yellowstone Building Conference Center.

Interim President Watson presented each Trustee with an outreach mailing she also sent to area Legislators, School District Superintendents, Commissioners, Newspapers, and the Governor. The mailing included the *Visualize Verbalize* magazine, which students prepare to showcase student writing, artwork, and photography every year. Interim President Watson included a holiday message, Northwest College 75th Anniversary memorabilia, and locally made candy. She expressed her desire to share the fantastic work that Northwest College students are doing every year with Trustees and others who received the mailing.

President Wurzel expressed his appreciation to those Trustees who served on the Nomination Committee.

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

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

Trustee Housel referenced the President's report and noted the very low number of COVID cases on campus, stating he feels it speaks very highly of the protocols put into place at the beginning of the pandemic.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, Interim President Watson stated that no cases of Omicron had been reported for Park County, according to the Wyoming Department of Health website. She will continue to monitor the health situation in the area but feels that with classes starting January 19, there is time to evaluate and adjust protocols as needed before the beginning of the spring semester.

Upon invitation from Interim President Watson in response to a question from Trustee Housel, NWC Foundation Director Shelby Wetzel stated that Workforce Development and the Center for Training and Development had not had scholarship money available for non-credit course offerings in the past. Through the CARES Act grant funding awarded to the Foundation by the Park County Commissioners, the Foundation has provided funding to individuals

participating in Surgical Tech, Phlebotomy, CDL, HVAC, Plumbing, etc. In all, forty-seven students have received scholarship funds used towards tuition and fees. While traditionally, scholarship funds have gone to credit-based classes within traditional programs, this money has provided a model opportunity to look into other ways to invest money in the future.

Interim President Watson stated that she plans to update the Foundation to the Board within the next couple of months to expand everyone's knowledge of the efforts in several areas related to scholarship work.

As a follow-up to the December Work Session, Trustee Kuipers stated that Erin Taylor, Executive Director of the Wyoming Association of Community College Trustees (WACCT), hosted a webinar on Community College advocacy going into the Legislative Session. Once the link and slides are available, she will forward the information to the Trustees.

In response to President Wurzel, Interim President Watson stated the Governor released a list of his recommendations for the APRPA funds for the Legislature to consider. The Community Colleges, along with the University of Wyoming, put forth a request for \$100 million, of which the Governor recommended supporting \$55 million. The full proposal is available on the Governor's website: <https://governor.wyo.gov/>

Motion carried, and the consent agenda, including the minutes of the December 13, 2021, regular meeting, were approved.

**DISCUSSION/
INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

Student Center Project Status

Interim President Watson gave a brief overview of the timeline of the Student Center project thus far. She reminded Trustees of her decision to utilize the Construction Manager at Risk model. In this model, the Construction Manager assists with the planning and design to keep costs down. The selection process is complete, notifications sent, and Groathouse Construction, based in Cody, WY, was selected from the three candidates.

The project team has been meeting weekly with the architect. Critical path items have been identified, which are those items that must be resolved for the project to continue smoothly. The first critical path item is the determination of a temporary dining facility or alternative dining space on campus, specifically related to the use of modular kitchen trailers. Many companies nationwide provide mobile kitchen options, so they are working on identifying the layout needs and a cost-effective choice. The initial cost estimate on the temporary dining facility was very high; therefore, we've asked the architect to revisit the design, simplify the structure, and bring the price down. The cost estimate on the new design will be available this week.

There is a team working on the design of the kitchen in the new Student Center and a team working on the design for a potential Tourism and Recreation addition. Interim President Watson reminded Trustees that Northwest College was awarded \$1.8 million to expand the Tourism and Outdoor Recreation program, but those funds cannot be used for capital construction. The funds can be utilized to create the lab space and purchase equipment such as a climbing wall, ropes, etc. Other funding sources will be explored for the construction costs depending on the overall Student Center funds available.

Interim President Watson stated the timeline reflects a tight schedule in which the project would be completed and the building opened in the fall of 2023. If there are any delays, completion could be pushed to spring 2024.

Interim President Watson noted that the basic design of the building remains the same; however, there have been some programmatic changes with the elimination of the bookstore and a desire to move the coffee shop within the existing dining service space. Sodexo has been included in conversations to ensure the building design will serve their needs.

Interim President Watson referenced the handout of the 2019 Executive Summary and cost estimate. These handouts indicate the project total to be \$18.5 million at that time. There are inflationary increases and supply chain cost overruns that must be considered. Once the CMAR is involved, they will finalize the design and estimated costs of the project. She stated the costing piece is critical, and once the estimates are complete, the College and the Board will need to determine the best funding options.

Interim President Watson stated that if everything goes according to plan, theoretically, construction on the temporary dining space could begin this spring. She has been sharing relevant information with the Board Facilities and Finance Committees, but she wanted to bring the entire Board up-to-date on the project. She will be updating the Board monthly and as cost estimates begin to come in.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, Interim President Watson stated the Board approved the design as part of the Level I and Level II work. She noted there might be design modifications due to cost estimates or available funding. If cost estimates are higher than expected, there may be a reduction in the square footage and elimination of program space from the original design. The College could also decide to change the amount they are willing to invest in the project. The top priority of the building is to provide a well-designed and functional dining space for our students.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, Interim President Watson stated that during the level one and two processes, a temporary dining space was determined to be more cost-effective than a phased approach due to the condition of the DeWitt Student Center building. There are two spaces identified as potential sites for a temporary dining facility. The first choice is by the Soccer Field, where a small structure could be built that could later be utilized by the Soccer program as a previously identified need in the master plan. The other site is the Trapper Gym, with a modular kitchen on the south side of the Johnson Fitness Center.

In response to a question from Trustee Danko, Interim President Watson stated that as the project moves further along, she will invite NWC Foundation Director Shelby Wetzel to inform the Board on the Vibrancy campaign and naming opportunities.

In response to a clarifying question from Trustee Kuipers, Interim President Watson stated that the \$1.8 million received for Tourism and Outdoor Recreation program expansion could only be utilized for furniture, fixtures and equipment, architectural design, or curriculum development. The Level I plan included Outdoor Recreation as a programmatic space in the original design and as an alternate in the Level II design. These were later approved by the Legislature. Including the program in the Student Center project now will depend on the cost estimates and priorities.

Trustee Spomer, speaking on behalf of the Board Facilities Committee, stated that he is personally very supportive of the project and believes it's very important to the future of the campus and community. However, he has concerns about how the project is defined and would like to inquire the Board if they too have the same concerns. For a project of this type to be successful for the students and the Board, the community must see it as successful, and the three pillars of managing a project must be met: scope, budget, and schedule. He feels these are items that still need to be addressed. He feels the Level II Feasibility Report that includes costing is outdated. He estimates costs for the project as summarized in the 2019 report to be above \$22.5 million. He is concerned that the scope, budget, and timeline are still in question. He questions whether the project is being designed to a budget or designed to a scope and doesn't feel it can be both. He would be more comfortable if the Board were able to reaffirm that the budget is aligned with the scope and that there is a funding plan in place very soon. His intention is not to cast doubt on the good work of those involved in the project but hopes these concerns are resolved very soon. He inquired if this should be the work of the Board as a whole or if it should be delegated to the Board Finance Committee in conjunction with College Administration.

Trustee Housel stated that the Legislature's decision to approve the funding continues to be unknown. He feels it will eventually get approval, but it has already delayed the project by two years, and these are contingencies that cannot be controlled. He stated that he feels it is at Interim President Watson's discretion to bring changes to the Facilities Committee followed by an update to the Board. He is satisfied with the presentation of the project by Interim President Watson. Trustee Housel stated the project could be delayed further based on the outcome of the budget session, but in the meantime, it is still progressing, and the Board will continue to advocate for its completion. There are currently too many vagaries and contingencies to define the items Trustee Spomer spoke of at this time.

Trustee Kuipers questions the vagaries and feels the Board plays a role in balancing the governance vs. the management and setting parameters in finding the balance between scope and budget. She also questions what the response should be depending on the outcome of the Legislative Session. Without a clear understanding of the Level II work the Board approved previously, she feels it provides a lot of flexibility. She feels there needs to be firm parameters in terms of scope and budget.

In response to President Wurzel, Interim President Watson stated we had not been granted the funding for the construction of the Student Center as of yet. The College was funded \$1 million for the Level III work for the \$20 million project. The assumption is that the funding for construction would also be granted. This amount has since been inflated by the State Construction Department and other state capital construction projects.

Interim President Watson stated that she, too, has wrestled with balancing the scope vs. budget vs. timeline aspects. She feels the scope was defined in the Level II work. The architects are currently fine-tuning the programmatic spaces that are of top priority. With the scope set, we must now determine how far outside the original budget earmark of \$18.5 million the project falls. At the beginning of the Level III work, Interim President Watson felt it would be necessary to eliminate some of the programmatic space to stay within the budget framework. However, she has been encouraged by the State Construction Department to let the project progress to the costing cycle. While

it's unknown when or if the student center will be funded, she has been told many times that this project is at the top of the state's priorities. She stated that capital construction is included in the Governor's budget. Unknown factors such as if the Legislature will provide ARPA funds without a match requirement, fund the project with a dollar-for-dollar match requirement, or if there may be funds available from other federal sources contributes to the Construction Department's recommendation to move forward with the original scope in mind.

Interim President Watson stated the project timeline is very aggressive, and she has held to it intentionally. Once the CMAR is involved, they will be able to inform the group of the realities of material procurement related to the design.

Interim President Watson stated that in terms of the governance question raised before, she feels that these are decisions the College President would make with profound regard for the feedback and guidelines that have been defined by the Board.

In response to President Wurzel, Interim President Watson stated the dollar amount initially approved for the construction phase is roughly \$21 million and includes the match requirement. The Legislature could decide to change that amount. It will be essential to educate the Legislators in terms of the needs and cost concerns for the project.

President Wurzel stated that in terms of the governance question raised before, he would prefer Interim President Watson work closely with the Board Committees and have robust conversations about the project and expectations to eliminate any perception that Board trustees do not support the project.

Interim President Watson responded that she intends to include a standing report to the Board throughout the project. The report could also feed through the Facilities Committee, and if there are decision points along the way, such as construction scheduling or budget analysis, the Committee will work through that as well.

Trustee Spomer reiterated that he is not suggesting the Board should be involved in the decisions regarding the design layout, etc., but he is concerned that the original cost estimations were completed in the third quarter of 2019. He is uncomfortable not being certain where the funding is coming from and that the design team is moving forward with the project's original scope. He feels this uncertainty becomes a governance issue. He feels it is unreasonable to be moving forward with a design without an updated cost estimate.

Trustee Housel reiterated his confidence in Interim President Watson's vast knowledge of the project and its history. He feels she has an understanding that the design may need to be scaled back due to inflation and trusts her ability to work with the State Construction Department. If there are significant changes to the original project, he has confidence that she can then bring updates and seek approval from the Board.

President Wurzel stated he is grateful for the discussion and that Trustee Spomer's point is well-taken, understanding that the project could be different in either scope, cost, or both. He feels Trustees have faith that Interim President Watson will bring these significant changes to the Board for education, discussion, and approval.

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:

President Wurzel stated that at the December 13, 2021, meeting, Trustee Housel requested a committee reassignment. Moving forward, Trustee Housel will serve on the Board Facilities Committee, and President Wurzel will serve on the Board Policy and Student Success Committee.

A NEW BUSINESS:

Course/lab fee proposals

A motion was made by Trustee Danko and seconded by Trustee Spomer to approve the Course/Lab Fee proposals as presented. Motion carried.

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

February Upcoming:

- Designation of depositories
- Disclosure of Interest forms
- FY2022 Proposed residence hall rates
- FY2022 Propose meal plan rates
- FY2022 Proposed mandatory student fees
- Other TBD

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

WCCC Meeting, February 5, 2022, Virtual
ACCT National Legislative Summit, February 7-10, 2022, Virtual
Next meeting, January 21, 2022, 12 p.m., Yellowstone Building

A ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 5:19 p.m.

LARRY TODD, Vice President/Secretary

Date