

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

October 10, 2022

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** President DR. MARK WURZEL; Treasurer MS. CAROLYN DANKO; and Trustees MR. JOHN HOUSEL, MS. TARA KUIPERS, MR. BOB NEWSOME, MR. DUSTY SPOMER

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Vice President/Secretary DR. LARRY TODD

**OTHERS PRESENT:** MS. LISA WATSON, President; DR. GERRY GIRAUD, Vice President for Academic Affairs; MR. DEE HAVIG, Interim Vice President for Student Services; MS. JILL ANDERSON; MR. DUSTIN DICKS; MS. AMANDA ENRIQUEZ; DR. TIM GLATZER; MR. WEST HERNANDEZ; MS. CAREY MILLER; MS. NANCY MILLER; MR. DENNIS QUILLEN; MS. LISA SMITH; MR. MARTIN STENSING; MR. ZACK THORINGTON; MR. OSCAR TREVIÑO; MR. ERIK WACHOB; MAYOR JOHN WETZEL; MS. SHELBY WETZEL; MR. ZAC TAYLOR, *Powell Tribune*; and MS. KELI BORDERS, 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, October 10, 2022, at 4:01 p.m. in the Yellowstone Building Conference Center.

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

Trustee Danko requested that the agenda be amended to include a proposal to rename the Intercultural House under New Business.

President Wurzel requested that the agenda be amended to include a WACCT update under Discussion/informational items.

**The motion carried, and the agenda was approved as amended.**

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

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that the commitment to transferability from Northwest College to the University of Wyoming is strong. There has been a transition in the style in which articulation and transfer are addressed, but the commitment to transfer remains.

Vice President Giraud stated that the original two-plus-two program initiated by the University was a significant step in making transfer more definite for community college students. Unfortunately, the two-plus-two agreements were not sustainable as UW occasionally changed its programming or curriculum.

In response to legislation for a common transcript, Vice President Giraud stated there is now a transfer portal that students from community colleges can use to determine which courses will transfer. There is also block programming, or essentially, blocks of courses that will transfer into specific programs at the University. This information is also available on the transfer portal.

Additionally, there has been significant work completed on common course numbering. Community college courses with the same course content as UWs, now carry the same course designator and transfer. Vice President Giraud feels the transfer structure is sustainable and assures students of a smooth transfer.

President Wurzel pointed out that the President's postcard was mailed to 23,000 businesses and households in the Big Horn Basin. President Watson stated that the postcard will be sent each semester and is meant to share good news from Northwest College with the community.

**The motion carried, and the consent agenda, including the minutes of the September 12, 2022, regular meeting, was approved.**

**DISCUSSION/  
INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

City of Powell Retention  
Pond/Storm Drain request

President Watson introduced Mr. John Wetzel, Mayor, City of Powell; Mr. Zack Thorington, City Administrator; and Erik Wachob, PE and Powell Office Manager, Engineering Associates; and invited them to present their proposal.

Erik Wachob stated that Engineering Associates is working on behalf of the City of Powell to design a retention pond/storm drain project that would benefit the City's residents and the College.

Erik explained that stormwater flows north and east in Powell. The western portion of the city's stormwater flows to the collection point of the 7th St. and Division St. intersection. The proposed system is intended to convey flow around the College and reduce flooding on the west side of town.

Erik stated the plan would be to collect stormwater into a subsurface pipe that would discharge north around Northwest College along Division St. and then east along Tenth St. over to an existing stormwater pipe on Absaroka St. The most significant impact to the College from the project is a requested easement for a stormwater detention basin located on college property along Tenth St. The purpose of the detention basin is to ensure the stormwater draining from the new pipe does not overwhelm the existing pipe along Absaroka St., as it allows the water to be discharged at a slower rate.

Erik stated that the proposed retention pond provides future benefits to the College by allowing the College to make a direct connection to the storm drain. As the campus grows, redirecting storm run-off is important in preventing adverse effects to new or existing buildings.

Erik described the basin proposed to be on college property is designed to be approximately one acre in top area, with a gradual slope to the bottom. It is a twenty-five-year design, meaning it is large enough to hold water generated by a significant storm with a 0.4% chance (infrequent) of occurring in any given year. The pond would hold the water generated by this type of storm but would then be drained into the Absaroka St. drain and infiltrated through the bottom into groundwater. The design of the basin is meant to disperse the water within twenty-four to forty-eight hours. The basin will be dry under almost all circumstances except immediately following a large storm.

Erik explained that one safety measure designed into the project includes a four-to-one side slope that is easily traversable so as not to be an entrapment hazard, and it can be easily mowed. The depth will be determined based on site-specific observations. The bottom of the basin needs to remain above the groundwater levels. Recently, the water table was measured at twelve feet below ground on the northwest corner of campus.

Erik stated that the purpose of the design is to be advantageous to the City of Powell for their long-term stormwater disposal needs and beneficial to Northwest College. The city is open to working with the College to change the design if there are ways in which it can be adjusted to accommodate the College's interests.

President Watson informed the Trustees that the Board Facilities Committee has met to review the proposal and the decisions made in determining its location on college property.

Zack Thorington reiterated the benefit to the College to tie into the proposed retention pond as the campus grows and stormwater needs increase.

In response to a question from Trustee Kuipers, Zack stated that the timing could possibly align with the construction of the Student Center for its use, or the city is also willing to store the dirt until it is needed. He is hopeful that if approved, the project could begin in the spring/summer of 2023.

In response to a question from Trustee Danko related to safety concerns, Zack reiterated that the pond would only hold water in the event of a very large storm that would be dispersed within 24-48 hours. Erik added that the four-to-one slope is meant to provide an additional safety measure as a young child can easily walk up the side.

Zack stated there is an existing retention basin west of the High School near the Rainwater Subdivision that is sometimes used as a soccer field. He encouraged Trustees to visit the site for reference.

Trustee Newsome expressed concern related to the College being landlocked. The City's proposal would prevent the College from being able to use the land for future development. Mayor Wetzel stated that even in future growth, the College could maintain an acre of green space in that area. The city is asking to encumber an acre of greenspace that could still be utilized as recreational space. The city is proposing a partnership and has worked with college staff to determine the best solution.

In response to a question from Trustee Newsome, Erik stated that the city considered subsurface water storage, but it is costly to construct. The cost could run five to ten times more for the equivalent infiltration volume.

In response to a question from President Wurzel, Erik stated that the depth of the basin would be designed to be above the highest seasonal groundwater level. The design illustrates the maximum amount of excavation that would be likely. It could be shallower after studies are completed. The soil consistency at four to six feet turns from fine grain sand and clay to sandy gravel, which allows water to drain quickly. There is little possibility of standing water if the bottom of the basin is above groundwater levels.

In response to a question from President Wurzel, Zack stated he would visit with the City attorney to determine who holds the liability for the pond were there to be an accident with standing water. He assumes that the City would carry the liability insurance since they would hold the easement on the property.

In response to a safety concern by Trustee Danko, Mayor Wurzel stated there had been zero incidents at the Rainwater retention pond in the twenty years since it was built. The water that gathers on Division St. after a significant storm is also a safety concern since children like to play in the puddles. He feels the proposed project presents the safest alternative for all citizens of Powell.

In response to a question directed to the Facilities Committee by Trustee Kuipers, Trustee Spomer stated that the proposal does not conflict with the current master plan. Still, there is concern about potential growth that is not yet determined. The success of Trapper Village Main apartments raises the question of whether more apartment-style housing will be needed in the future. The proposed easement is in the general vicinity of a desirable location for more apartments with ADA accessibility.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, Erik explained that the intensity of storms is often described by how rare they might be. A particularly large

storm may be referred to as “a 100-year flood,” meaning there is a very low probability of it occurring in any given year. He further explained that his reference to the design holding a twenty-five-year storm event means that statistics indicate it has a one in twenty-five percent chance of occurring in any given year.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, Erik stated that the design ensures that water draining into the pond can flow out faster through a larger pipe with greater capacity that also runs at a steeper slope. As a result of this project, a portion of the City’s stormwater will be rerouted through the new pipe, eliminating a possible bottleneck of water draining into the existing Absaroka St. pipe.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, Erik stated that the proposal involves removing several mature trees. An agreement should be reached between the city and the College as to where and what species should be replanted. The city has indicated it is willing to work with the College on desired landscaping.

Trustee Housel expressed concern about guaranteeing the exact groundwater level at its highest point in the season. If there ended up being standing water in the retention basin, it would provide a safety concern as well as a breeding ground for mosquitos. Erik stated he has professional experience working throughout the area and can make safe assumptions that the groundwater level does not extend beyond eight feet below grade or basement level. Further testing will be conducted as well.

In response to a question from Trustee Spomer, Erik stated that the project requires excavating the existing irrigation pipe canal that runs through the intersection of Seventh St. and Division St. to determine the lowest elevation of the pipe. The curb, gutter, and ADA ramps will need to be replaced. The project does not include those improvements along Tenth St.

In response to a question from Trustee Spomer, Erik stated that the tile drain in the area would be crossed in two separate locations. The project calls for repair to the tile drain if it is inadvertently damaged.

In response to a question from Trustee Spomer, a storm more significant than what the project is designed for would not generate additional flow into the retention basin. The pipe would not be able to accept more water and would instead cause water to back up in intersections, yards, and driveways.

In response to a question from Trustee Spomer, Erik stated that if the bottom of the infiltration basin needs to be raised due to the discovery of a higher-than-anticipated water table, his recommendation to the City would not include expanding the surface area, as there is still benefit to the City as the project provides massive improvement to the existing system.

Trustee Spomer clarified to the Board that every storm event will discharge water into the pond. Smaller storms will produce much less water with a faster disbursement rate.

In response to a question from President Watson, Erik stated that the pond is designed to have a layer of imported sand that would support grass growth but allow water to infiltrate very quickly. He would not expect standing water or even wet soil from miscellaneous water events such as someone over-watering their lawn.

Trustee Spomer stated that if the project were to move forward, he would like an agreement that the City would be willing to remedy issues such as water

table levels or other concerns in the future.

In response to a question from Trustee Danko, Erik stated that while the project does not tie into irrigation infrastructure, the Irrigation District will need to be notified since it crosses their drains.

President Watson stated that the Facilities Committee would revisit the proposal and seek answers to any additional questions or concerns. A recommendation will come from the Committee to the Board at a later date.

## Longitudinal Enrollment Report

Lisa Smith stated that the Longitudinal Enrollment report helps to inform decisions based on how the student population changes over time.

Lisa stated that as of September 24, the preliminary fall 2022 report indicates there are 1,409 students enrolled, which is very similar to Fall 2021 numbers. The top five program areas of study are Health Sciences (non-nursing), General Studies, Agriculture, Business, and Nursing. There are multiple degrees and certificates offered in each of these areas.

President Watson stated that decisions are based on these data points when the College considers staffing, budgets, and serving students. She feels this information is helpful to Trustees as they approach budget approval.

Lisa stated that the historical fall enrollment report shows varying peaks and drops in enrollment since 1995. Based on information from the National Center for Education Statistics, enrollment for all public, two-year institutions follow a remarkably similar path to Northwest College's, except for the last few years when national enrollments dropped drastically more than Northwest College. Lisa noted that while previous recessions have positively affected the overall national enrollment, the most recent recession did not have the same effect.

Lisa stated that the following chart in the report, Fall and Spring Enrollment, indicates that fall to spring headcount typically remains about the same year to year. However, FTE is always lower in the spring as the same students tend to take fewer credits.

The Enrollment by First-Time and Degree-Seeking Status report indicates that fall 2020 is the first year where part-time enrollment was larger than full-time enrollment. In fall 2022, the largest group is part-time non-degree-seeking students (primarily concurrent and dual students), making up 35% of the total student population. The next largest group making up 25% of the population, is full-time all other degree-seeking students, namely returning and transfer students. The third largest population group is first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students, accounting for 19% of the population.

Lisa stated that for many years, enrollment by full-time students has always been higher than by part-time students. In the fall of 2020, there was a shift in which part-time students outnumbered full-time student populations. It is an ongoing national trend in which students are taking smaller course loads. Northwest College has the highest percentage of full-time students of all the Wyoming community colleges.

Lisa referenced the Enrollment by Credit Hour Load and noted that the number of students who take fifteen credits and above has decreased, corresponding to when tuition flat rates were eliminated. The report also indicates an increase in students enrolled in six to eleven credits.

The Enrollment by Residence report shows that the largest population of students by far are from Northwest College's service area. The second largest group is from WUE states.

The largest group of students are eighteen to twenty-one; however, the gap has

been closing in recent years. There is also an increase in students under eighteen years, corresponding to the rise in dual and concurrent enrollment. The average age is twenty-three, and the median age is nineteen.

Lisa explained that face-to-face class enrollment has decreased over time; however, online enrollment has increased over the past ten years. That is in part due to the convenience for students and the College's attempt to offer more online courses because of the pandemic.

Lisa stated there are a few larger-than-normal high school classes in the service area that will graduate in the next few years. After this peak, class sizes tend to get smaller over the next ten to twelve years. Lisa shared the number of graduates from each area high school who typically enroll at Northwest College. The highest comes from Powell high school, while the lowest percentage comes from Worland high school.

Northwest College has increased its health care program offerings at the Cody Center. As a result, FTE at the Cody Center has been greater than the headcount, which indicates students are taking larger course loads.

Preliminary results show that sixty percent of the full-time, first-time, degree-seeking students in fall 2021 returned to NWC or graduated by fall 2022. This percentage is up slightly from the previous two years. Part-time student retention rates have increased as well. The fall-to-spring retention rate for both full-time and part-time students over the past year has been roughly eighty percent.

Lisa explained that graduation rates track full-time degree-seeking students who enter in one fall term and graduate with a degree or certificate within three years. Northwest College has seen record graduation rates for the previous three years, year after year. The last cohort year shows a slight decrease, but Lisa reminded Trustees that the College also experienced lower retention rates, and the pandemic occurred during that time. Also, while it decreased slightly, Northwest College's graduation rate is typically higher than the state average.

#### Marketing Update – FY22

Carey Miller shared an Enrollment Marketing Campaign update for FY22. She stated that the target audiences, key messages, target programs, and generations targeted had followed the five-year plan.

In addition to the typical media used, such as paid social media ads, social media posts, newspaper inserts, and billboards, the College entered a contract with Amplified Digital (Billings Gazette), which includes both print and digital deliverables. This contract included ten feature articles, targeted digital display, local display, sponsored Facebook posts, targeted emails, streaming video ads, etc.

Carey stated that some advertising budget is reserved yearly for new efforts. While she was pleased with Amplified Digital, she could not get real-time data, making it difficult to assess effectiveness.

Carey stated that FY23 marks the fifth and final year of the Plan. Most core elements will remain the same for the new plan, but there will also be some changes. There will be two additional target audiences: out-of-state students for the Welcome to Wyoming scholarship and prospective BAS students.

The new agency she has contracted with is Advance 360 Education, a full-service agency specializing in higher education. They will provide a dashboard for Carey to view next-day analytics and a dedicated analyst assigned to the College's campaign. The contract includes a pay-per-click campaign and a social lead generation campaign.

Other exciting developments include a website redesign project, a video integration project, and a partnership with niche.com. Carey noted the section of her report that includes an explanation of both CampusReel, a video recruitment strategy, as well as niche.com, which is a college search service.

Trustee Housel expressed his appreciation for the reports and the work that Carey does with the limited budget she receives. He is especially pleased about the website redesign project. He noted the drastic decrease in enrolling freshmen from area high schools as reported in the Longitudinal Enrollment report. Trustee Housel shared examples of mailings he has received recently from the University of Wyoming and noted that Northwest College's budget does not allow the same type of marketing due to fewer dollars from the legislature. He feels the disparity should be communicated with legislators to be remedied for the community colleges to be able to recruit students as aggressively as the University does.

Carey stated that the community colleges' marketing directors have been meeting regularly with Erin Taylor, Executive Director of WACCT and Linden marketing. Together, they are working on a joint digital marketing campaign. While it is not an extensive campaign, it aims to promote community colleges in Wyoming.

#### Board self-assessment

President Watson stated it is the time of year the Board self-assessment is distributed to Trustees and will be sent via email. Once completed, it will be sent to the Board.

#### Winter Board Retreat

President Watson stated that the fall Board Retreat is scheduled to take place on October 19, 2022, at Thomas the Apostle Center in Cody, at 8:30 a.m. She will be sending an agenda later in the week.

#### WACCT update

President Wurzel stated he attended the WACCT (Wyoming Association of Community College Trustees) meeting held in Gillette the previous week. He reminded Trustees that in the past, WACCT had an award program for trustee of the year, outstanding faculty, staff, and students. The award was presented each year at a reception during the legislative session. Going forward, each college will nominate a student for the award. The winner will be presented in conjunction with the Wyoming Business Alliance and will then be in the running for a national award with other students from each state. WACCT, WCCC, and the community colleges will all contribute toward a \$10k sponsorship.

President Wurzel stated that the Legislative session would begin in January. WACCT would like to have a uniform advocacy platform for community colleges. He distributed a listing of six main advocacy points for Trustees to use when advocating for the colleges to legislators.

In response to a question from Trustee Spomer, President Wurzel stated that each college provided input to develop the advocacy talking points. Erin Taylor, WACCT Director, will be holding a Zoom informational session to educate Trustees, and there is more information available on the website regarding the advocacy platform as well.

President Wurzel stated that the WCCC (Wyoming Community College Commission) also held a work session and meeting in Gillette. They discussed the funding and regulations regarding the Wyoming Tomorrow Scholarship for non-traditional-aged students.

The WCCC approved Northwest College's request to offer a BAS in Criminal Justice. In addition to President Wurzel, President Watson, Vice President

Giraud, Chairperson of Social Science and Education Division Dave Erickson, and Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice Dave Patterson presented the proposal. Commissioners gave a round of applause once the proposal was approved. President Wurzel expressed his appreciation to the team who presented and stated they were extraordinarily well-prepared. It will now go before HLC for final approval.

Trustee Spomer stated he would like to have Dave Erickson and Dave Patterson present at a meeting so the Trustees can congratulate and show appreciation for their work on the proposal.

## **CITIZENS' OPEN FORUM**

The Citizens' Open Forum convened at 5:02 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:**

NWC 2030 Strategic Plan draft –  
1<sup>st</sup> reading

President Watson stated that the Strategic Plan outline was presented at the last meeting. The Plan as it is presented today has the complete narrative along with the strategies and tactics. She expressed her appreciation to President's Staff, academic leaders, staff, and everyone who worked to its completion. Once approved, the real work will begin.

In response to a question from President Wurzel, President Watson stated the Board could revisit the Mission statement or develop a Purpose statement as a separate work project if the Trustees feel it is necessary.

Trustee Kuipers questioned, once the tactics are placed into operationalized plans, how will oversight of that be connected to the Board's fiduciary duty. She hopes to ensure resources are aligned with the Strategic Plan. Trustee Spomer agreed with Trustee Kuipers and stated that it is difficult to tie the budget that Trustees receive back to the actual application of those funds.

In response to a question from Trustee Spomer, President Watson stated that the plan's operationalization would fall on varying departments and committees. The Vice Presidents and Directors will take on the lead of each.

In response to a question from Trustee Spomer, President Watson stated that work plans would be created with goals and outcomes. With the past strategic vision, the Institutional Effectiveness Committee developed key performance indicators to measure the goals and determine if the work had been successful. She stated that the work and results would be reported to the Board annually at a higher level.

Trustee Housel expressed his appreciation of the history of the process being included in the document. In reference to whether the Strategic Plan can be voted on during the current meeting, he feels that because the agenda states it is the first reading, the vote should be deferred until the next meeting.

President Wurzel stated that since it is an action item, he feels there needs to be a motion to table it until the next meeting. If there are suggested changes, they should be part of the motion.

In response to a question from Trustee Kuipers, President Watson stated that the Plan could be reviewed annually because things change over time. She is happy with the proposed Strategic Plan as presented. She said she would defer to the Board on whether to act.



Trustee Spomer questioned how the Board would be able to discern how the College is performing in terms of reaching the goals of the Strategic Plan at any given time. He feels it lacks the element of being measurable. He wonders what the role of the Board is in guiding the Institution.

In response to Trustee Danko's suggestion of timely progress reports, President Watson stated that some tactics have straightforward projects to accomplish, and some would be phased ongoing efforts with changes over the years. She feels people need to start working on the Plan to operationalize it. Trustee Spomer stated he would like it to be more quantifiable in a way that would indicate to college staff and Trustees when the goals were achieved.

Trustee Kuipers stated she wants to avoid micro-managing at the Trustee level. She has complete trust in the work that faculty and staff will be doing. She is more interested in the sum of the work, not the parts. As Trustees, she feels the oversight should be concentrated on ensuring the Pillars are being met, not the details of the work being done to achieve those things. She would like reports related to how the College is moving forward. She suggested assigning metrics to the pillars so that Trustees can monitor the appropriate components of the plan and not the operations.

Trustee Spomer suggested the Board set companion goals, such as reducing deferred maintenance by a certain amount in a given time. In response, President Watson stated that she has yet to see where Boards typically set companion goals to the Strategic Plan. If they were to set a big goal, such as reducing deferred maintenance, big decisions would be necessary to make that happen.

Trustee Kuipers stated she favors the Strategic Plan as written and would not hesitate to make a motion to pass it, as is. She feels the conversation could continue at the upcoming Board retreat regarding what reporting is necessary and corresponding metrics.

**A motion was made by Trustee Kuipers and seconded by Trustee Danko to approve the Strategic Plan in its draft form with the expectation of continued development by President Watson, College staff, and Trustees.**

Trustee Housel raised a point of order in that the item is listed as the first reading, and according to established protocols, it must come before the Board for a second reading before a motion can be brought forward. Since the agenda is publicized, there is an expectation that the Board will not be taking action on an item listed as the first reading.

**Motion withdrawn.**

**A motion was made by Trustee Spomer and seconded by Trustee Kuipers to table the Strategic Plan until the next regular Board meeting. Motion carried.**

#### Renaming of Intercultural House

Trustee Danko presented a proposal brought forth by the NWC Foundation to rename the Intercultural House in honor of Professor Emerita Harriet Bloom-Wilson. The proposed name would be The Bloom-Wilson Intercultural House, a.k.a. "Harriet's House."

The proposal states that Harriet Bloom-Wilson has made substantial professional and personal contributions to NWC and assisted the Foundation in securing significant financial resources that made the Intercultural House possible.

**A motion was made by Trustee Danko and seconded by Trustee Spomer to approve the renaming of the Intercultural House to The Bloom-Wilson Intercultural House, a.k.a. “Harriet’s House.” Motion carried.**

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

November 14, 2022, upcoming:

- Wyoming Postsecondary Education Options
- Review Board self-assessment
- Distribute President’s evaluation
- Academic calendars
- Preliminary audit report
- Statewide legislative update
- Nomination committee for Board officers
- Winter Board professional development/retreat reminder
- Holiday party
- Other TBD

Trustee Housel requested a site review of the proposed retention pond/storm drain and the existing retention pond on the east side of town. It was decided that the site visit would occur during the work session before the November regular Board meeting.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Taste of Nations: Celebrating a Legacy October 13, 2022, 6:00 p.m., YB  
ACCT Leadership Congress, October 26-29, 2022, New York, NY  
Concert Band, Collegiate Choir and Percussion November 7, 2022, NPA  
Preview Day, November 11, 2022, 8:30 a.m. YB  
Jazz Expo w/Combos, November 12, 2022, NPA  
Next meeting, November 14, 2022, 4:00 p.m., YB

**A ADJOURNMENT:**

**The meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.**

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LARRY TODD, Vice President/Secretary

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Date