

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

August 12, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: President MS. TARA KUIPERS; 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; DR. GERRY GIRAUD; MR. MARK GRANT; MS. JEN LITTERER-TREVINO; MS. CAREY MILLER; MR. DENNIS QUILLEN; MS. LISA SMITH; MR. OSCAR TREVINO; MS. SHELBY WETZEL; MR. ZAC TAYLOR, *Powell Tribune*; and MS. KELI BORDERS, Executive Secretary to the President and Board of Trustees.

STUDY SESSION:

Housing Master Plan
Summary Review

President Watson stated that in October, there will be a Study Session related to the Master Plan of the College. Since the Housing Master Plan is scheduled for review and a part of the overall Master Plan, she felt the timing was perfect as a part of the master planning process. The current Housing Master Plan was prepared in February 2020.

President Watson reminded the Trustees that all buildings designated as Residence Life buildings are not eligible for state funding. Repairs and improvements are paid for with rent revenue. Over the last few years, when enrollment declined, residence hall numbers decreased, which also resulted in fewer funds for deferred maintenance.

As residence hall occupancy and revenue dropped, the College began consolidating and prioritizing expenditures and occupancy utilization in the halls of greatest interest to students. When mold was found in Cody Hall, it necessitated that the College closely examine the long-term needs and the flexibility of all residential buildings. Occupancy levels, building conditions, location on campus, and long-term student needs were considered when developing the current plan.

Most residence hall buildings are not flexible because the interior support structure does not allow renovation to be anything but single or double-occupancy rooms. The exception is Lewis and Clark Hall, a steel-frame building in good condition that could be redesigned in many ways. Colter Hall is small and older but also in very good condition.

All five halls were evaluated and tested for mold, and phased improvements and repairs have been made in-house to save money. When updating the plan, decisions will need to be made regarding which halls the College should continue to invest in going forward.

President Watson stated that Trapper Main apartments were consistently popular with the students, as they liked the proximity and the apartment-style living arrangement. Utilization eventually dropped off somewhat, and the College invested in updating and renovating the apartments, mainly using in-house labor. With the current generation's cost-consciousness, Trapper Main remains appealing to sophomores since they are not forced to pay utilities in addition to rent to live in an apartment.

The College has peripheral land north of Trapper Main and Ashley Hall, where apartments or duplexes could be built later. Land south of Frisby and Colter could also be utilized.

The College acquired Trapper West from the military department in the early 1990s. The facility has only been at full occupancy a few times since 1992. It is challenging because it is run as an auxiliary, meaning revenue is needed to manage deferred maintenance costs. In 2020, there was a discussion of divesting itself of that property. However, the College recognizes that it has served a purpose for many years.

When the area's housing market became tight, the College opened Trapper West for employee living. It currently runs at approximately a 50/50 split between students and employees who reside there. Utilization has almost doubled, and there is still availability for students. Six units are being repaired; eight are entirely offline and can't be lived in without further investment.

While the College does not receive major maintenance money for the auxiliaries, it has made several improvements in-house over the past four years. The Board decided several years ago during budget cuts to stop spending College funds on improvements. Finally, enough revenue was generated last summer to pay for the reserve utilization spent at Trapper West thus far.

Trapper West is currently being run on a repair/replacement as-needed model. Uninhabited units were stripped of useable materials to improve other units. Two units were lost last year due to sewer failure. There continue to be electrical and plumbing infrastructure issues that could become urgent. As the College begins the Master Planning process, it will be necessary to determine whether to invest or divest of Trapper Village West.

President Watson encouraged Trustees to visit with Facilities Committee members if they have additional questions or ideas about the Residence Life Master Plan. Trustees will be asked to provide input on Master Planning work in October when the College considers all assets and prioritizes its investments while keeping the future in mind.

CALL TO ORDER:

President Tara Kuipers called the regular meeting of the Northwest College Board of Trustees to order on Monday, August 12, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. in the Yellowstone Building.

A APPROVE THE AGENDA:

President Watson requested that the agenda be amended to include a proposal under New Business for the Retention Basin and Division Street Storm Drain project.

A motion was made by Trustee Kost and seconded by Trustee Laursen to approve the amended agenda. Motion carried.

A CONSENT AGENDA:

A motion was made by Trustee Laursen and seconded by Trustee Kost to approve the consent agenda.

In response to a question from Trustee Wurzel, President Watson stated that the Powell MakerSpace and equipment hadn't been used for many years, was outdated, and was no longer viable. The entity that has purchased the building will also take the old equipment as part of its nonprofit work.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that in addition to the Community Needs Survey, Hanover Research will work with the College to perform additional focus sessions for K-12 and Allied Health partners to understand better how the College can serve them.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that the new Content Management System that will be utilized with the new website allows fewer site monitors. These individuals are the employees responsible for

department/division website content. Once the new website is launched, it will be necessary to consolidate responsibilities for monitoring and maintaining content.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that employee utilization of the College's Employee Assistance Plan (EAP) is higher (17.84%) than the national average (below 10%). The cost per employee is relatively low at \$32.67/employee. Employees have access to legal and mental health assistance and professional development opportunities. She feels that the value to employees far exceeds the cost to the College.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that the search for the Instructor/Assistant Professor of Graphic Design – Tenure Track has been canceled due to a lack of qualified candidates. The College will now search for a Fixed Term position.

Trustee Housel stated that the Wyoming All-State Marching Band is an excellent addition to the Cody Stampede Parade and appreciates the College's hospitality during their stay there.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that the Videographer/Photographer is currently a grant-funded, full-time, interim position held by Ronnie Wolfe. Tim Carpenter has also taken additional coursework in Photography and provides those services as well. Knowing how potential and current students use video today, she feels the position has been an excellent addition to the College and should not go without videography. Between the two positions, they cover many campus events and post those on social media.

Motion carried, and the consent agenda, including the minutes of the July 15, 2024, regular meeting and the July 15, 2024, Budget Hearing, was approved.

DISCUSSION/ INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

Annual Contract Review

President Watson stated that the report in the Board material contains high-level contracts the College holds. However, a new platform has been purchased and worked on to keep all agreements in one repository. The new system will allow tracking of each contract's expiration and other essential details.

In response to a question from Trustee Wurzel, President Watson stated that the Ellucian Grant Services contract will not go away immediately upon filling the new Grant Writer position. Ellucian assisted the College in establishing procedures and building the job description. Their services will continue by helping the College write nine grants during the contract period, training faculty and staff, and reviewing College written grants. She is delighted with the quality of work they have provided thus far as part of the Strategic Plan.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that the Hord Coplan Macht contract is for the design and project management associated with the Soccer Fieldhouse conversion.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that NICHE is an online source that high school students and counselors use to learn about different schools. It is a free service in which all schools are listed, but Colleges can pay a fee for NICHE to upgrade their information to generate more student interest. Reports indicate that utilization is much higher since Northwest College contracted with them.

Community Needs Survey

President Watson stated that all three counties in the service area were surveyed last Spring, as were current students. The College also sought input from the Foundation Board, the Alumni Board, and other interest groups.

The information included in the board meeting material is an overview of respondent characteristics and key findings. The full report has been provided to the Trustees in hard copy form and will be shared electronically with the campus community.

President Watson stated that the survey results are overwhelmingly positive and indicated that the community feels it is important to have a community college in the Big Horn Basin.

Based on the survey results, Hanover suggested the following opportunities: prioritize career-focused programs such as healthcare, medical fields, trades, technical skills, and computer sciences; attract local community members and prospective students; consider increasing the number of family-friendly events; and target community members by leveraging mail marketing, social media, and word-of-mouth through current and former students.

In response to a comment from Trustee Wurzel, President Watson stated that even though the College had mailings, newspaper, radio, and social media ads inviting participation in the survey, participation rates are generally low unless they are incentivized. When speaking to Hanover, they felt that the College should not be disappointed in the response rate and that the focused interviews that have yet to take place will be very beneficial.

President Watson stated that a decent number of community members, students, and employees responded to the survey. Within the community respondents, a good demographic spread of ages was represented. Responses varied by age, such as retirees who would reply differently to questions, such as if they were interested in programs with a degree outcome.

President Watson stated that the key findings indicated respondents are interested in programs focusing on workforce training and healthcare. They also view agriculture as a beneficial program for the community.

Northwest College's flexible program format and financial aid and scholarships appeal to respondents. While the College heavily markets the value of attending Northwest College, President Watson stated that communicating with and educating decision influencers such as high school counselors on scholarships could be an opportunity.

In response to a question from Trustee Kuipers, President Watson stated that workforce training can be defined as technical education outside of traditional coursework and classroom instruction. In general, the community would like to see more trades programming and training that allows students to gain employment while advancing through graduate levels.

President Watson encouraged the Trustees to review the report and let her know if any questions arose. She will continue to share information as work continues with Hanover Research.

Citizens' Open Forum Procedure Review

Trustees reviewed the Citizens' Open Forum Guidelines and determined no modifications were needed.

President's Contract

President Kuipers reminded the Trustees that during the Spring Board Retreat, they authorized her to work with President Watson on her FY 2025 contract

renewal. Negotiations resulted in the President receiving the salary increase offered to all Northwest College employees, in addition to fine point adjustments unrelated to compensation. The process was concluded quickly, and the contract has been finalized.

Schedule Fall Board Retreat

President Watson stated that the Trustees will receive a Doodle Poll to determine a date for the fall retreat that works well with everyone's schedule.

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:

Student Center Donor Signage

President Watson is excited to share the list of spaces in the new Student Center named by donors. These donors have made generous contributions to the project, and she requests that the Board approve the proposed names according to the College's Facility Naming Policy 6610 so that the Foundation can move forward on signage.

It was moved by Trustee Wurzel and seconded by Trustee Kost to approve the proposed names for specified areas in the Student Center as presented. Motion carried.

Ashley Hall Improvements

President Watson stated that the College has been making another phase of improvements to Ashley Hall, which were made possible by diligent Foundation campaign work for the residence halls and endowed facility improvement funds. The project has gone well, but additional support from a contractor is needed to complete the job so that students can move in at the start of school. She requests the Board approve the Ashley Hall lobby and student lounge project using Foundation Residence Hall Campaign funds, Facilities Improvements funds, and NWC auxiliary plant fund reserves, not to exceed \$80,000 of auxiliary plant funds.

A motion was made by Trustee Laursen and seconded by Trustee Kost to approve the Ashley Hall improvement project using auxiliary plant funds not to exceed \$80,000, as presented. Motion carried.

Retention Basin and Division
Street Storm Drainage Project

President Watson thanked the Board Facilities Committee and Facilities Director Dennis Quillen for diligently working with her on a draft agreement that would benefit the College and the City of Powell.

The project utilizes land owned by the College and puts a limited-purpose easement in place. The Facilities Committee decided that the agreement was favorable and that President Watson should be allowed to move forward and finalize the details. Because the project utilizes College land, President Watson requests formal approval from the Board to finalize the agreement and to ensure that they understand the limited-purpose easement associated with the project and the use of College land.

A motion was made by Trustee Laursen and seconded by Trustee Wurzel to authorize President Watson to finalize the Retention Basin and Division Street Storm Drainage Project contingent on Northwest College and the City of Powell reaching a mutually beneficial agreement. Motion carried.

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

September 9, 2024, upcoming:

- Host campus open house
- Quarterly budget adjustments
- Employee satisfaction/PACE results
- Big Horn Basin High School Report
- New employee introductions
- Course/lab fee proposals (for Spring)
- Reserve overview
- President's Operational Plan update
- Discuss compensation plan
- Distribute Board self-assessment (to complete for Retreat)
- Distribute President's evaluation (to be completed for Retreat)
- Other TBD

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

New Faculty Orientation, August 15-16, 2024, Main Campus
Kick-off Weekend, August 17-20, 2024, Main Campus
State of the College Address, August 19, 2024, 8:30 a.m. Yellowstone Bldg
1st day of fall classes, August 21, 2024, NWC
Paint the Town Red Event, August 23, 2024, 4:00 p.m., Powell
WCCC Meeting (special), August 23, 2024, Casper
2nd Annual Run for Berry, August 24, 2024, Campus Mall
Joint Education Committee, August 28-29, 2024, Casper
Upcoming Board meeting, September 9, 2024, Yellowstone Bldg
Joint Appropriations Committee, September 26-27, 2024, Casper
WCCC Meeting, October 2-3, 2024, 8:30 a.m., Rock Springs

A ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

DENISE LAURSEN, Vice President/Secretary

Date