

**NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES
Monday, May 24, 2021
Virtual Zoom Webinar ID: 971 7014 3919
Traverse City, MI**

CALL TO ORDER—Chair Chris M. Bott called the regular meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

In compliance with PA 254 each trustee should publicly announce if they are attending remotely and provide their current physical location. The member's announcement must identify specifically the member's physical location by stating the county, city, township, or village and state from which he or she is attending the meeting remotely.

Trustees present: **Chris M. Bott**, attending remotely from Traverse City, Grand Traverse County, Michigan; **Rachel A. Johnson**, attending remotely from Garfield Township, Grand Traverse County, Michigan; **Laura J. Oblinger**, attending remotely from Garfield Township, Grand Traverse County, Michigan; **Kenneth E. Warner**, attending remotely from East Bay Township, Grand Traverse County, Michigan; **Kennard R. Weaver**, attending remotely from Peninsula Township, Grand Traverse County, Michigan

Trustees absent: Douglas S. Bishop, Michael Estes

Also present: President Nick Nissley, Vicki Cook, Marguerite Cotto, John Dancer, Jerry Dobek, Diana Fairbanks, Joy Goodchild, Holly Gorton, Troy Kierczynski, Mark Liebling, Lynne Moritz, Kyle Morrison, Todd Neibauer, Denny Nguyen, Mallory Sajewski, Stephen Siciliano, Rebecca Teahen, Bob Verschaeve

REVIEW OF AGENDA—The agenda was accepted as presented.

REPORTS

Faculty Report—Viewing Images Through the NMC Telescope Without Physically Looking—Jerry Dobek, Science & Math Faculty in Astronomy and Science Department Head, explained the problem solving he utilized at the beginning of the pandemic to bring images from the Rogers Observatory telescope into the classroom. Images were projected in 'real-time' to a screen in the classroom and could be broadcast via Zoom to guests without physically attending the Observatory. COVID-19 restrictions would not allow students or guests to physically observe through the eyepiece of the telescopes. Dobek noted recent virtual events, including one in which 453 people participated in a collaboration with Sleeping Bear Dunes; participants were from Hawaii, Alaska, and other distant locations. Using old technology for a new innovation, Dobek shared images of the moon, Jupiter, Saturn, star clusters, and a galaxy eight million light years away. The images would be utilized in future courses, both face-to-face and virtual. Dobek noted the pandemic pivot illustrated he could teach the course virtually, which he never thought possible before.

Enrollment Report—Todd Neibauer, Vice President for Student Services and Technology, provided the enrollment report, noting summer count day was in about a month and it was still early for fall enrollment numbers. Up 12% for summer, Neibauer attributes the increase to the Michigan Reconnect program.

Financial Report—Troy Kierczynski, Interim Vice President of Finance and Administration, reviewed the financial report for the period ending April 30, 2021. Kierczynski focused on projections for finishing FY 2021, which he anticipates will break even. Tuition and fees are behind almost \$1 million due to limited offerings during COVID, but anticipated state budget cuts were not as dire as budgeted. Expense savings is evident in almost every category.

Foundation Report—Rebecca Teahen, Associate Vice President for Resource Development and Executive Director of Foundation, provided the May 2021 Foundation update. The largest direct mail appeal had gone to households throughout the region recently as the campaign neared its conclusion at the end of June. In response to a question, Teahen described ways in which trustees can further support the campaign and encourage sustainable donors.

PRMC Report—Diana Fairbanks, Executive Director of Public Relations, Marketing, and Communications, stated there were many positive news stories in April, including stories regarding the \$3 million donation from Diana and Richard Milock, as well as eSports. Fairbanks noted the next issue of Nexus was coming to mailboxes soon.

Strategic Planning Report—Stephen Siciliano, Vice President for Educational Services, provided an update on the strategic planning process, which had been very busy with over twenty focus groups held for various stakeholders. Siciliano reported on the process to develop the Learner Experience Statement, which had great student input. The Future Summit would be held the afternoon of June 23, and open to everyone in the community. Board Chair Chris Bott noted students were requesting variety and flexibility in terms of course offering options.

Executive Committee Report—Committee Chair Chris Bott provided a report on the work of the Board Executive Committee. Among topics discussed at the May 13 meeting, Bott highlighted the action item later in the agenda to recommend authorization to utilize an executive search firm for the Vice President of Innovation and Strategy position. Bott noted the position would be critical to ensure proper implementation of the strategic plan.

Building and Site Committee Report—Rachel Johnson, Committee Chair, summarized the West Hall Innovation Center Dewatering Project, emphasizing the importance of the funding timeline and the committee's concern regarding impact on neighbors and future development. Future development plans for the Osterlin Building were also discussed.

Audit Committee Report—Kennard Weaver, Committee Chair, explained the committee approved the scope of the audit, which concludes the last year of a five-year contract with current auditors of Plante Moran. There was discussion pertaining to the best practices of selecting an auditor and it was determined a Request for Proposals (RFP) would go out in the spring of 2022.

Legislative Issues Report—President Nick Nissley discussed recent developments in the state budget process, noting he and legislative consultant Gabe Schneider had met with Rep. Roth and Rep. O'Malley recently.

PUBLIC INPUT—There was no public input offered.

UPDATES

President's Update—President Nick Nissley began his update by noting significant developments in pandemic protocol. Campus moved to stage three of the re-opening plan and masks were not required on campus for those fully vaccinated. Nissley commended Jeff Cobb for the recent choral concert on campus and Registrar Cindy Deemer and the Commencement Committee for a successful May 1 walk-through commencement.

Board Chair Update—Chair Chris Bott initiated a discussion regarding meeting formats going forward. With the county health department concluding its use of the Hagerty Center as a mass vaccination site, there was potential for the June 28 meeting to be held in person. Trustees expressed interest in holding the June meeting in person, provided it can be held in full and not adjourned early due to capacity limits.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

FY22 Budget Development Considerations—Troy Kierczynski, Interim Vice President of Finance and Administration, presented on Budget Development Considerations for FY22. Most students would pay less next year, as eliminating the flexible learning online (FLO) fee would offset the recommended 3% tuition increase. While there would be increased funding for professional development, capital equipment, and deferred maintenance, as well as strategic investments in areas such as Aviation and PRMC, Kierczynski did present a balanced budget.

CONSENT ITEMS—On a motion by Kennard Weaver, seconded by Rachel Johnson, the following items were approved by a unanimous vote as a group without discussion:

- Minutes of the April 26, 2021, regular meeting
- Minutes of the May 11, 2021, special meeting

ACTION ITEMS

Notice of Truth in Taxation Hearing Notice—On a motion by Laura Oblinger, seconded by Rachel Johnson, the Board recommended that the Truth-in-Taxation First Resolution be adopted as presented. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Search Firm for Vice President of Strategy and Innovation—On a motion by Laura Oblinger, seconded by Kennard Weaver, the Board authorized administration to spend up to \$45,000 to engage an executive search firm for the Vice President of Innovation and Strategy position. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

West Hall Innovation Center Dewatering Project—On a motion by Rachel Johnson, seconded by Ken Warner, the Board authorized administration to accept the lowest practical bid for a dewatering system, within an estimated budget of \$246,200 with a 25% contingency, for a total of \$308,000. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Native American Grant Application—On a motion by Kennard Weaver, seconded by Rachel Johnson, the Board authorized administration to submit application for the 2% grant from the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians video gaming revenue as presented. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Closed Session—Kennard Weaver made a motion, seconded by Rachel Johnson, that the Board convene in closed session as permitted by Section 8(h) of the Open Meetings Act, MCL 15.268(h), to consider one privileged legal memo prepared by the college’s outside counsel, Miller Canfield, PLC, which are materials exempt from discussion or disclosure under state or federal statute as written attorney-client communications in connection with Section 13(1)(g) of Michigan’s Freedom of Information Act, MCL 15.243(1)(g). The motion passed with the following roll call vote: Yes—Kennard Weaver, Ken Warner, Laura Oblinger, Rachel Johnson, Chris Bott; No—none; and the Board went into closed session at 7:57 p.m.

Reconvene Regular Meeting—On a motion by Rachel Johnson, seconded by Kennard Weaver, the closed session was adjourned and the open session was reconvened at 8:42 p.m. with the following roll call vote: Yes—Rachel Johnson, Kennard Weaver, Ken Warner, Laura Oblinger, Chris Bott; No—none.


REVIEW OF FOLLOW-UP REQUESTS—Confirmed requests made by the Board that require administrative follow-up for information to be provided to the Board at a later date.

ADJOURNMENT—The meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

Recorded by Holly Gorton, Chief of Staff to the President and Board of Trustees.

SIGNED _____

Chris M. Bott, Chair

ATTESTED _____

Kenneth E. Warner, Secretary