

**NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINUTES  
Monday, March 17, 2025  
Timothy J. Nelson Innovation Center  
Room 106/107**

The Board hosted Student Government Association (SGA) representatives prior to the start of the regular meeting.

**CALL TO ORDER**—Chair Laura J. Oblinger called the regular meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

**Trustees present:** Laura J. Oblinger, Kennard R. Weaver, Chris M. Bott, Kenneth E. Warner, Andrew K. Robitshek

**Trustees absent:** None

**Also present:** President Nick Nissley, Lynne Moritz, Troy Kierczynski, Todd Neibauer, Stephen Siciliano, Jason Slade, Marcus Bennett, Diana Fairbanks, Lindsey Lipke, Kyle Morrison, Molly Norville, Ali Thornton, Lisa Thomas, Becca Richardson, Janet Lively, SGA Members

**REVIEW OF AGENDA**—The agenda was accepted as presented.

**STRATEGIC FOCUS**

Student Government Association—SGA members presented activities this academic year. The group fosters new connections between student group leaders and SGA, addresses concerns from the student body, and supports various student groups and activities. There was discussion regarding how to increase the number of students engaged in SGA.

Future-Focused Education—Jason Slade, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, and Stephen Siciliano, Vice President for Educational Services, presented an update on the first strategy in the current strategic plan. The board expressed encouragement to include experiential learning goals in the next strategic plan.

**REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS**

Faculty Report: Native American History—Julieanna Frost, Humanities Instructor, shared her philosophy of studying history and that “all history is local.” Frost shared an example assignment in the course that requires students to conduct primary and secondary source research connected to local and state history.

FY26 Budget Process—Chair Oblinger reviewed the budget review process, which includes a final draft in May and approval of the FY26 budget in June. Troy Kierczynski, Vice President of Finance and Administration, reviewed budget considerations including the higher education landscape and college initiatives. Looking at revenue assumptions, Kierczynski shared that an

increase in contact hours is anticipated as a result of state support programs such as the Community College Guarantee. Vice President of Student Services and Technologies Todd Neibauer provided context regarding enrollment projections. Chair Oblinger emphasized the importance of ensuring healthy strategic fund balances.

**PUBLIC INPUT**—There was no public input offered.

## **UPDATES**

**President's Update**—President Nick Nissley focused this month's update on legislative advocacy, referencing a meeting earlier in the day with State Representative Betsy Coffia and State Senator John Damoose. This upcoming Wednesday, President Nissley will join MCCA and two other community colleges in testifying before the House Higher Education and Community Colleges Subcommittee advocating for increased appropriations and ITEMS funding for infrastructure. Nissley also acknowledged advocacy work being done by various areas of the college, such as Strategic Initiatives and the Great Lakes Maritime Academy.

**Board Chair Update**—Chair Laura Oblinger highlighted the work of board committees, reviewing the current committee chairs and encouraging trustees to read the committee minutes included in the Consent Items section of the meeting agenda and packet.

**CONSENT ITEMS**—On a motion by Pam Horne, seconded by Ken Warner, the following items were approved by a unanimous vote as a group without discussion:

- Minutes of the February 24, 2025, regular meeting
- Minutes of the March 10, 2025, study session
- Enrollment Report
- Financial Report
- Public Relations, Marketing, & Communications Report
- Foundation Report
- Building and Site Committee—Kennard Weaver, Committee Chair

## **ACTION ITEMS**

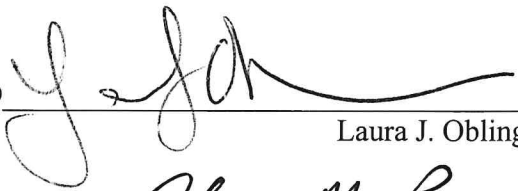
### **Contract for Legislative Advocacy**

On a motion by Kennard Weaver, seconded by Pamela Horne, administration was authorized to enter into a contract with Kelley Cawthorne, LLC to provide legislative advocacy services for a period of one year, beginning March 18, 2025, with a monthly fee of \$5,500, totaling \$66,000 annually. This contract will be funded through the College's general fund. There was discussion regarding past engagement with Kelley Cawthorne and other advocacy firms. The motion passed unanimously.

**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 7:08 p.m.

Recorded by Lynne Moritz, Executive Director of the President's Office and Board Operations.

SIGNED  \_\_\_\_\_  
Laura J. Oblinger, Chair

ATTESTED  \_\_\_\_\_  
Chris M. Bott, Secretary