

**NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINUTES  
Monday, May 19, 2025  
TJNIC 106/107**

**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, Mark B. Keely, Kennard R. Weaver, Chris M. Bott, Andrew K. Robitshek, Pamela T. Horne

**Trustees participating remotely:** Kenneth E. Warner at 5:34 p.m. remotely from (Washington, D.C.)

**Also present:** President Nick Nissley, Lynne Moritz, Diana Fairbanks, Troy Kierczynski, Kyle Morrison, Todd Neibauer, Stephen Siciliano, Jason Slade, Dino Hernandez, Marcus Bennett, Hollie DeWalt, Les Eckert, Cari Noga, Ryan Bernstein, Mark DeLonge, Becca Richardson, Rachel Johnson, Les Eckert, Kathryn DePauw

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

**STRATEGIC FOCUS**

**Mission & Values in Action**—Ryan Bernstein, Curriculum and Instructor Designer, and Mark DeLonge, Assistant Director of Instructional Technology, are both adjunct instructors and part of the Educational Technology team. Instructors are training to transition to a new learning management system platform which was piloted in Fall 2024 and will one hundred percent transition before Fall 2025. Canvas Camp had forty instructors participate last week to move their content to the new platform. The Board approved the change a year ago given the expense threshold of the new software, which provides instructors and students with more standardized layouts for courses.

**Strategic Initiatives Update: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging**—Jason Slade, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, and Marcus Bennett, Special Assistant to the President for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging, presented on the third strategy, as Vice President Slade reminded the Board of the remaining months in the current strategic plan. Slade highlighted additional events and work related to the strategy that were not in the original objectives—such as the mobile food pantry, Blair Elementary mentoring, and Ready for Life—that will continue in the future.

**REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS**

**Brand Strategy and Beyond**—Diana Fairbanks, Associate Vice President of Public Relations, Marketing, and Communications provided an update on the brand assessment and strategy work that has been done throughout the past year. President Nissley acknowledged the Board's focus and leadership of innovation before Slade presented a new strategic change model to increase internal capacity and align work related to brand strategy implementation, strategic plan development, and celebrating the college's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

**Faculty Report**—No report this month.

**FY26 Budget Update**—Vice President Troy Kierczynski provided an update on FY26 since the last presentation in March, which includes a balanced budget amidst uncertainty at the state and federal

levels. Kierczynski reviewed the budget assumptions, as well as the efforts for expense management and revenue enhancements.

**PUBLIC INPUT**—There was public input offered by Rachel Johnson.

## **UPDATES**

**President’s Update**—President Nick Nissley shared positive news from the college, such as the Taste of Success fundraiser for the Great Lakes Culinary Institute, before addressing developments at the state and federal levels that will impact higher education. As community colleges serve all students, regardless of academic history, economic background, or life circumstances, the proposed risk-sharing penalizes colleges for the financial hardships of their students, disregards the mission, and creates disincentives for serving the most at-risk learners. The proposal to increase Pell Grant requirements from 12 credits per semester to 15, risks excluding a large population of community college students who attend part-time. Many of these students must work full-time jobs or care for children and families while pursuing their education. Imposing a credit minimum that exceeds full-time status for federal aid will only drive students away or force them to choose between academic burnout and financial hardship.

**Board Chair Update**—Chair Laura Oblinger recognized Trustee Chris Bott for his ten years of service as a trustee, noting his long standing service to the college in many forms. Chair Oblinger noted the university partners moving to the Front Street Campus ahead of the fall semester and the need for a study session with the full Board to consider the future of the University Center campus, which the Board is considering to rename as the “Boardman Lake Campus” later on the agenda. Oblinger emphasized the Board needs to determine the best use of the asset: whether to sell, lease, or develop.

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

- Minutes of the April 28, 2025, regular meeting
- Enrollment Report—*Todd Neibauer, Vice President, Student Services and Technologies*
- Financial Report—*Troy Kierczynski, Vice President, Finance and Administration*
- Public Relations, Marketing, & Communications Report—*Diana Fairbanks, Associate Vice President, PRMC*
- Foundation Report—*Dino Hernandez, Vice President, Advancement*
- Building and Site Committee—*Kennard Weaver, Committee Chair*

## **ACTION ITEMS**

**Notice of Truth-in-Taxation Hearing**—Chris Bott made a motion, seconded by Andy Robitshek, to adopt the Truth-in-Taxation Resolution as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

**Fund for Transformation Investment**—On a motion by Pam Horne, seconded by Mark Keely, the Board authorized administration to utilize the Board designated Fund for Transformation for

investment in a new Strategic Change Model that supports innovation and the strategic goals of the college in the amount of \$150,000 annually for three years.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Lobdell’s Refrigeration Equipment**—Pam Horne made a motion, seconded by Mark Keely, to authorize administration to enter into a purchase agreement with Stafford-Smith, Inc. for the purchase of Delfield PTMB Series refrigeration equipment for the Lobdell’s display kitchen to be funded by the Plant Fund and program support from the NMC Foundation in the amount of \$50,839. The motion passed unanimously.

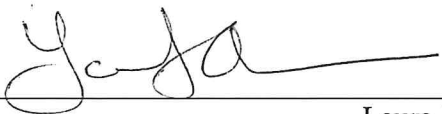
**Renaming of University Center Campus**—Kennard Weaver made a motion, seconded by Chris Bott, to formally rename the “University Center” campus to the “Boardman Lake Campus.” The motion passed unanimously.


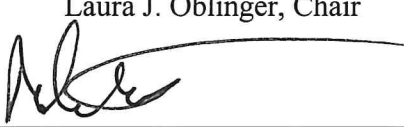
**Tribal Council 2% Funds Application**—Kennard Weaver made a motion, seconded by Mark Keely, to authorize administration to submit application for the 2% grant from the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians video gaming revenue as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

**REVIEW OF FOLLOW-UP REQUESTS**—Confirmed there were no requests made by the Board that require administrative follow-up.

**ADJOURNMENT**—The meeting adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

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

SIGNED   
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Laura J. Oblinger, Chair

ATTESTED    
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Andrew K. Robitshek, Treasurer