

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

June 8, 2026

MEMBERS PRESENT: President Ms. DENISE LAURSEN; Vice President/Secretary MR. R.J. KOST; Treasurer MR. BOB NEWSOME; Trustees MR. JOHN HOUSEL (VIA ZOOM), Ms. TARA KUIPERS (VIA ZOOM), and MR. SHANE OGDEN.

MEMBERS ABSENT: DR. MARK WURZEL.

OTHERS PRESENT: MS. LISA WATSON, President; MR. DAVE ERICKSON, Vice President for Academic Affairs; MR. TOM HAVRON, Vice President for Student Services; MR. BURT REYNOLDS, Vice President for Administrative Services and Finance; MS. KAREN BERCHTOLD; MS. AMY BURTON, MR. AUSTIN BURTON, MR. DUSTIN DICKS, MS. TRACY GASAWAY, MR. MARK GRANT, MS. CHRISTI GREAHAM, MS. CAREY MILLER, MR. DENNIS QUILLEN, MS. LISA SMITH, DR. GREG SMITH, MS. LINDA SPOMER, MR. MARTIN STENSING, MS. TORI SUMPTER-MOTO, MR. OSCAR TREVIÑO, MR. ZAC TAYLOR, *Powell Tribune*; and MS. KELI BORDERS, Executive Secretary to the President and Board of Trustees.

CALL TO ORDER: President Denise Laursen called the regular meeting of the Northwest College Board of Trustees to order on Monday, June 8, 2026, at 4:00 p.m. in the Yellowstone Building Conference Center.

A APPROVE THE AGENDA: **A motion was made by Trustee Ogden, and seconded by Trustee Kost, to approve the agenda. Motion carried.**

A CONSENT AGENDA: **A motion was made by Trustee Kost, seconded by Trustee Ogden, to approve the consent agenda.**

President Watson stated that as part of year-end procedures, Trustees are asked to approve the FY2026 Accounts Receivable bad debt. The College uses various methods to mitigate bad debt, and while no amount is desirable, she notes that Northwest College's bad debt is well below the national average for community colleges.

Trustee Housel suggested that in the future, Accounts Receivable bad debt be removed from the Consent Agenda and be placed as a separate action item on the agenda.

From Trustee Housel's comment, President Watson agreed that the College has made excellent progress on major maintenance projects over the past few years. Analysis of areas needing work is taking place for future projects. She is grateful to the State for providing Major Maintenance funding to the College, as there is a large amount of square footage to maintain that is aging over time.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson reminded Trustees that she provided an annual update on the work conducted with Hanover Research earlier in the spring. The College has been taking action on research findings, such as developing the Ski Operations certificate and meeting with departments to share the feedback received.

The College's contract with Hanover runs through the fall, when it will be determined if more work is needed and if the contract will be extended.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that the College has considered including trips to Yellowstone as part of Kick-off Weekend; however, there is little capacity at that time of year. Finding time before the park closes is a challenge, as is addressing the cost. The International and Scholars Services office takes international students, who pay

a fee each year to offset the cost of organized activities.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, the abbreviations in the Student Services report related to Financial Aid stand for: Institutional Student Information Record (ICER); Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA); and One Beautiful Bill (OBB).

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that the students who are staying on campus this summer are housed in Trapper Main, which has kitchenettes in the apartments. The Dining Hall and Sips 'n Such are open Monday-Thursday, providing additional meal options. The College also provides bikes for use as transportation to grocery stores and restaurants if students do not have their own transportation.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that most information technology expenditures are small and not considered capital equipment; therefore, they flow through supply budgets and are not easily broken out for reporting. She suggested that the Finance Committee could discuss the value of different reporting methods for expenditures at its next meeting.

In response to a question from Trustee Kuipers, President Watson stated that the Wyoming Innovation Partnership (WIP) is working to establish a grant to continue funding the leadership position that facilitates ongoing collaboration among the colleges and the Wyoming Business Alliance (WBA). The position has been funded by the Governor's office through June 30th and will transition to the WBA going forward.

Motion carried, and the consent agenda, including the minutes of the May 5, 2026, special meeting/retreat and the May 11, 2026, regular meeting, was approved.

DISCUSSION/ INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

TRiO

President Watson announced that this is Vice President for Student Services Tom Havron's last Board meeting as he is taking a position that will allow him to be closer to family.

President Watson stated that the College is grateful to have had VP Havron's leadership for the last two years. She expressed her appreciation for his service, leadership, and management of his direct reports and their operational areas comprising Student Services.

VP Havron expressed his appreciation to the Trustees and the College. He stated that he learned more about higher education in the past two years than at any other point previously in his career. There are many great people who work at the College, ensuring that students succeed.

VP Havron stated that Northwest College's TRiO program is by far one of the best that he has been a part of. TRiO Program Manager Rebecca Moncur, TRiO Career and Transfer Associate Amy Burton, and Interim TRiO Academic Success Associate Kianna Maples currently serve 154 students, which can sometimes rise to 170.

Amy Burton explained that TRiO was developed nationally during the 1960s during Lyndon B. Johnson's Presidency and the War on Poverty. She estimates that the TRiO program grant has been maintained by Northwest College for at least 25 years, and it was recently awarded another 5-year grant cycle. The

College operates one of three TRiO grants in Wyoming.

Amy stated that the program is funded to serve 165 students. The main qualifiers are that students must be first-generation, meet federal poverty-level income guidelines, or have a documented disability. These students face several challenges, and the program has services in place to help them succeed, such as advising, peer mentoring, and people who understand their challenges and provide support and a feeling of community.

Tori Sumpter-Moto stated that she is a first-generation student and a Graphic Design major at Northwest College. Tori explained that TRiO has provided excellent support and directed her to many resources she wouldn't have known about otherwise during her two years at the College. In addition, her experience with TRiO has helped her become a leader, develop time management skills, and assist other students facing difficulties. Tori credits her success at Northwest College to TRiO.

Austin Burton stated that he had just graduated from the Nursing program at Northwest College. He is a first-generation student and is very grateful to TRiO for its support during his three years at the College. They provided assistance with the FAFSA and scholarships and advised him on required classes. He utilized every aspect of TRiO, whether by using the quiet room when he needed a break or by accessing the computer and printer. Austin was also able to work as a receptionist in the TRiO office. He feels that peer mentoring was especially helpful to him, and he also enjoyed assisting other students when needed.

President Watson stated that the TRiO space is a great place for students to congregate, study, rest, receive advising, and learn life skills. The TRiO program has a lot to offer students who need support. She feels that the College should educate K-12 counselors and teachers, as well as parents of dual and concurrent students, of its TRiO program and the pathway it provides students.

PVCE Contract for Services

President Watson stated that the PVCE contract for services is the agreement between the College and the Powell School District through BOCES for the College to operate Powell Valley Community Education. The \$100k is treated as a grant and is used in part to pay for an employee and benefits. Christi Greaham has been overseeing PVCE for the past year, which offers enrichment and non-credit educational programming.

2027 Board and President Goals

President Watson stated that she appreciated the Trustees' work during the retreat to develop the 2027 Board and President's goals. There is plenty to accomplish within the next year. She has shared the goals with the President's Staff, and they will appear on Board agendas going forward to inform the campus community of next year's priorities.

Policy Review – 2110 Board Powers and Responsibilities

As part of their commitment to review existing policy, Trustees reviewed *Policy 2110 – Board Powers and Responsibilities*.

In response to a question from Trustee Ogden, President Watson stated that the College is statutorily required to use an independent auditor to conduct annual audits due to its revenue size. Therefore, the wording in section *VI. College Audits* could be changed from "It is the general practice of the Board of Trustees to engage the services..." to "The Board of Trustees shall engage the services..." She noted that such a change would not alter the intent or affect the college's daily operations or its employees. Trustees could elect to make the change.

A motion was made by Trustee Ogden. And seconded by Trustee Kuipers, to change the wording in Policy 2110 – Board Powers and Responsibilities, Section VI. College Audits to read, “The Board of Trustees shall engage the services of an independent accountant to conduct annual audits.” Motion carried.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that *Policy 6360 – Purchasing* states that purchases over \$50,000 must be approved by the Board of Trustees and probably needs to be reviewed for inflation.

July Board meeting date

President Laursen reminded Trustees that the July regular meeting and Budget Hearing will take place on Wednesday, July 8, 2026, at 4:00 p.m., in the Yellowstone Building, Room 240.

CITIZENS' OPEN FORUM

The Citizens' Open Forum convened at 5:00 p.m. No citizens requested to address the Board; therefore, the Citizens' Open Forum adjourned.

A UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

There were no unfinished business items on the agenda.

A NEW BUSINESS:

Preliminary FY2027 budget

VP Reynolds announced that he is pleased to present a balanced budget, utilizing no reserves or carryover from previous years.

The budget was built with various frameworks in mind. The College's Vision and Strategic Plan were top of mind, as were the FY2027 Board and President's Goals. Feedback is also gathered from various stakeholders, such as the Academic Advisory Council, the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, and Budget Managers. Budget requests are tracked throughout the year and are included where applicable and appropriate. This year, the budget was adjusted based on departments' needs and the overwhelming support received from the legislature.

The College is very grateful to legislators for their support for the community colleges during the legislative session. Over \$14 million was awarded for compensation over the biennium, with Northwest College receiving over \$700,000 per year, which is being distributed to employees. Additional programmatic funding was granted to the Colleges, including \$7.5 million for CTE and a \$5 million inflationary increase. These increases are included in the state appropriations to each college.

The College is projecting that enrollment will be fairly flat in the coming year. However, the Wyoming Community College Commission voted to increase tuition, naturally increasing tuition revenue. There is also increased revenue from student fees, particularly in the Aviation program. Last year, the College budgeted to receive \$550,000 in aviation fees but received closer to \$850,000 due to increased enrollment in the program.

The College's general operating fund revenue is divided into three main categories: state appropriations, tuition and fees, and local appropriations. The County Assessor has indicated a slight increase in the projected local assessed valuation, allowing the College to increase its local appropriation estimates by approximately \$100,000.

The overall revenue outlook for the coming year is very positive, allowing the College to plan strategically. Tuition and fees are projected to see an increase of \$700,000; \$1.5 million from state appropriations; and \$105,000 from local

appropriations.

The largest increase in expenses is due to salary increases and the resulting benefit costs. There is also an increase of \$218,000 in Student Services for the scholarships the College is providing to offset the tuition increase for students, and \$350,000 in Institutional Support Programs for marketing projects. Overall, projected year-end expenses are approximately \$2.4 million.

VP Reynolds stated that this is the first reading of the budget, and no action is required. The budget will come before the Board during the Budget Hearing in July, when Trustees will also be asked to approve the 1 mill levy as well.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, VP Reynolds stated that on page 68 of the Board packet, the fourth paragraph, first sentence, should read, "For Northwest College, current local assessed valuation projections, after tax exemptions, have increased from approximately..."

President Watson reminded Trustees that previous year budgets have reflected the influx of funds from the state for capital construction of the Student Center and Orendorff projects. The College is not expecting large inflows from the state for capital construction next year.

President Watson extended her appreciation to VP Reynolds and Finance Director Grant for their work on the budget. She also appreciates everyone's efforts to be thoughtful about spending to ensure that every dollar goes to the highest priority.

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

July 8, 2026, upcoming:

- Year-end budget Adjustments FY2026
- Budget hearing
- Annual hearing for the Mill levy approval
- Policy Review – 2120 Restriction of Individual Authority
- Policy update review
- BOCES Budgets for Greybull, Lovell, and Powell
- Adult Education presentation
- Other TBD

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

New Student Registration, June 8, 2026, NWC
Yellowstone Summer Music Camp, June 14-19, 2026, NPA
College National Finals Rodeo, June 14-20, 2026, Casper
6th Annual Trapper Classic Car Show, June 27, 2026, Campus Mall
New Student Registration, June 29, 2026, NWC
July Board meeting, July 8, 2026, 4:00 p.m., Yellowstone Building, Room 240
Paint the Town Red, August 28, 2026, downtown Powell

A ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 5:31 p.m.

R.J. KOST, Vice President/Secretary

Date