



**Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 5, 2021**

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees was held on May 5, 2021.

Committee members present: Jay Cowles, Chair; Roger Moe, Vice Chair; Alex Cirillo, Dawn Erlandson, April Nishimura, Cheryl Tefer, and Michael Vekich

Committee members absent: None

Other board members present: Asani Ajogun

Staff present: Devinder Malhotra, Chancellor; Kari Campbell, Interim Board Director

An audio recording of the meeting is available [here](#).

Chair Cowles called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m.

Chair's Update

As we gather today, once again in a virtual format, I want to make committee members and other trustees aware that I've started discussions with Kari about what a potential return to in-person meetings could look like as we start a new fiscal year in July. To that end, Kari will be working on development of a transition plan and related scenarios for review and discussion at the June Executive Committee meeting. Today's agenda includes a first reading of a revised meeting calendar for next fiscal year and a proposed calendar for FY2023 so I encourage committee members to share their thoughts about transition back to in-person meetings to aid the development of a transition plan.

Today's agenda also includes review of the FY2022 Board Operating Budget. Kari will walk us through the specifics of what is proposed for next fiscal year. I would like to make mention of one specific item, which is the annual subscription cost of the Passageways OnBoard software which is our online board management portal. This will be the third year that the board is being asked to invest in this resource. The benefits of the OnBoard portal are many: a one-stop site for all information related to the board including meeting materials, calendars, communications and other resources, all accessible via browser from any device. This resource has the potential to make board operations more efficient and allow trustees more timely and convenient access to

information and resources. The original implementation plan was for the portal to be fully utilized by March 2020 but we unfortunately have not achieved this goal. Board Office staff remain at the ready to provide support to trustees in accessing and using the portal and I encourage trustees to take advantage of this support so that as a board we are appropriately leveraging our investment in this resource. I'll also be asking Kari to schedule training sessions in the coming months to offer additional opportunities for trustees to learn how to navigate and utilize the board portal.

As a reminder: our next board and committee meetings are scheduled for May 18-19 in a Zoom format for both days.

Chancellor's Updates

Chair Cowles, Vice Chair Moe, members of the committee, other trustees,

We're now at the two-week mark until the legislative session ends. The Higher Education Conference committee has met a few times and just yesterday, Vice Chancellor Maki had the opportunity to address the committee. He was joined by other Minnesota State stakeholders too. Yesterday Bill again shared our position on many elements in the current House and Senate versions of the bill, including the financial concerns of cutting and freezing ongoing tuition revenue with the mistaken impression that one time federal dollars can substitute for the loss of tuition revenue. We stressed our shared belief that tuition should be set by this Board of Trustees, which is the responsibility prescribed for all of you in the statute. We know that legislators, along with me, our presidents and senior leaders, and this board share in the commitment to college affordability of our students and that is first and foremost in all of our minds.

As we shared during the April finance committee meeting, Vice Chancellor Maki again yesterday to the committee reinforced the federal guidelines, which has shaped how the first two rounds of federal stimulus funds, which included both student and institutional aid, has been used. And I think the emphasis here is has been used. The first two rounds of those funds have already been expanded. They are not there to be available for another purpose. As we shared before, we simply have not yet received the guidance or the funding from the Department of Education on the higher education portion of the American Recovery Plan, the third stimulus package passed by the Congress. If their guidance is consistent with the first two bills, we do not believe supplanting tuition dollars would be allowable under their guidance. Joint targets have not yet been released although we hear that the news is forthcoming, perhaps as early as the end of this week. Then Committee negotiations will move into the next phase of the work. There has been talk already about if the legislature is not able to finalize the state budget that they could pass possibly pass a "lights on" bill that would continue to provide spending at the current levels, but no new money would be provided or, worse, could lead to a shutdown. I want to reassure the board that if a shutdown were to occur, Minnesota State has the ability to continue our operations based on language

added in the statute in 2012 to keep our campuses open and to continue to serve our students.

I want to thank Chair Cowles and Vice Chair Moe for your engagement over the past few weeks, as we have met with the leaders of the legislature to reinforce the needs of our 54 campuses, our students, and the work of our faculty and staff. In my conversations with Chair Tomassoni and Chair Bernardy, I know they are committed to continuing to be the best stewards for higher education. They understand and value the work of our colleges and universities and the value we bring to the state of Minnesota. We hope to bring you good news to a successful end of the session when the board meets this month, just days after the legislature adjourns.

I also want to update you with regard to executive searches. Last month, we brought to culmination our five presidential searches. I've begun meeting with them as they begin their transitions to their new roles. The next month continues the busy search schedule with the announcement this week of the finalists for both the Vice Chancellor for equity and inclusion and the Vice Chancellor for Information Technology. For both Vice Chancellor searches, finalists will experience a very full day meeting by Zoom, a variety of Minnesota State's stakeholders. Each candidate will meet with myself, a panel of trustees, presidents, their respective campus colleagues, cabinet, system office division leadership, and new this year, a forum just for students. In addition, we will convene an open forum for each candidate that is available to anybody within the Minnesota State community and beyond. Everyone who attend the session will have an opportunity to provide feedback. I take this feedback very seriously and it informs my own deliberations in a very fundamental way. I look forward to bringing forth my recommendations to the board's June meeting. Once finalists are named, we will share that information with trustees in addition to the open forum schedule.

I also want to provide you with an update that we are at an inflection point in our response to the pandemic. Up to this point, we were focused on two major goals: to continue to provide safety protocols which are consistent for the safety of our students, faculty and staff; and for colleges and universities to stay open to provide our students the ability to continue on their educational journey. But now with vaccinations taking hold and looking forward to gradual lifting of the restrictions by the governor, the Minnesota Department of Health, CDC, we are appropriately in real time working with our colleges and universities and communicating to them revised guidelines and framework to respond to the changing and evolving information as it becomes available. In that context, both at the system office and at colleges and universities, we are actively working on developing plans and strategies to return to workplace. As you can all appreciate, that will be gradual, thoughtful, and deliberate. We hope that by the time fall semester starts, we have the necessary complement of faculty and staff for the additional activities which will occur on our campuses with response to students coming back to campus in a much higher complement of in-person classes than there was last fall and this spring.

Agenda Item 4: Revised FY2022 and Proposed FY2023 Meeting Calendar (First Reading)

Chair Cowles invited Interim Board Director Campbell to present a first reading of the revised FY2022 and proposed FY2023 meeting calendar. The meeting materials for this can be found [here](#).

This being the first reading of the item, there was no vote taken.

Agenda Item 5: Proposed FY2022 Board Operating Budget

Chair Cowles invited Interim Board Director Campbell to present the proposed FY2022 board operating budget. The meeting materials for this can be found [here](#). Vice Chair Moe also provided comments.

Chair Cowles asked committee members to consider the following recommended committee motion:

The Executive Committee approves the FY2022 Board Operating Budget of \$189,000 and refers it to the Finance Committee to be included in the overall FY2022 budget that will be presented to the Board of Trustees for a first reading in May and second reading and approval in June.

Trustee Moe made the motion and Trustee Cirillo seconded. A roll call vote was conducted. The vote was as follows:

Trustee Cirillo	Yes
Trustee Cowles	Yes
Trustee Erlandson	Yes
Trustee Moe	Yes
Trustee Nishimura	Yes
Trustee Tefer	Yes
Trustee Vekich	Absent

The committee voted to approve the recommended motion.

Adjournment

The committee chair adjourned the meeting at 8:47 a.m.