

Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University
Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting Minutes
March 13, 2025

A meeting of the Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee of the Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University was convened on Thursday, March 13, 2025 in the Student Union – Golden Eagles Room located at 5500 N. St. Louis Avenue, Chicago, IL 60625. Trustee J. Todd Phillips, Chair of the Committee, called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m.

Roll was called and the following Trustee committee members were present: Anna Meresidis and J. Todd Phillips

Other Trustees present: Carlos Garcia

Also present: Katrina Bell-Jordan, President; Karl Voigt, Assistant Secretary to the Board; vice presidents, students, staff, and University community members attending in person and viewing via video

Opportunity for Public Comment in Accordance with P. A. 91-0715

Chair Phillips announced the opportunity for public comment. The one registration received in advance was withdrawn.

Chair's and President's Remarks

President Bell-Jordan announced the appointment of Beni Ortiz as Vice President for Finance and Administration effective March 17. Ms. Ortiz has served as the Interim Vice President for the past year. NEIU will be presenting to the Senate Higher Education Committee on March 18 and again on March 27 to the House Higher Education Committee, both times in Springfield. Today is the fourth of several data summits being held on the main campus as part of the University's strategic planning process. Stakeholder summits will be scheduled soon. Construction of the new education building began February 28. A dedication ceremony is being planned for early summer.

Chair Phillips echoed his excitement about the new education building. Although the country is in an interesting place, politically, the Board is committed to the University and community to advocate for and partner with other agencies, and remains committed to transparency, stewardship, and partnership.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

FY2026 Budget Update

Interim Vice President for Finance and Administration, Beni Ortiz, reported on the FY2026 budget development. The estimated total operating budget as of today for FY26 is \$94,403,717. Based on current information, the University is assuming a 4.7% increase in total student headcount and a 2.9% increase in credit hours for Fall 2025. Other assumptions include a 3% increase in state appropriations, \$3.2 million in interest income, \$600,000 in miscellaneous income and total credit hour enrollment of 118,930. More information about anticipated expenses will be presented at the May Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee meeting.

Purchases of at Least \$100,000 but Less Than \$250,000

Beni Ortiz reported that the University has amended its contract with Davis & Campbell, LLC for legal services and litigation support from \$90,000 to \$140,000.

FY24 Business Enterprise Program (BEP) Annual Report

Director of Procurement Services, Opal Walls, presented the FY24 BEP Annual Report. The University set an aspirational goal of 30% of purchases with BEP vendors, or \$2,446,347. The actual spend was \$2,873,425 representing 35% of the total institutional goal of \$8,154,490.

Risk Assessment: Vacant Property

Executive Director of Facilities Management, Josh Sumner, presented a report on the University's vacant properties. The buildings on the north and south side of the block of Bryn Mawr west of Kimball and east of Bernard have extensive water damage, biological growth, and compromised roof and building envelopes. All of the non-leased space is 100% uninhabitable/unusable. The University has not pursued renovation estimates for these buildings. The vacant industrial buildings on the El Centro site are subject to regular trespassing and vandalism, as cited by the University Police, along with unsightly broken windows, roof degradation, and structural damage. The University estimates it spends roughly \$19,850 per year in related costs for police, facilities and labor, and for outside services such as graffiti removal, to maintain all vacant buildings in their current states. Estimates for demolition-only of the Bryn Mawr properties ranges between \$219,950.00 and \$539,100.00 and between \$259,278.00 and \$480,000.00 for the El Centro buildings. Additional expenses for environmental testing/remediation, utilities removal, engineering and site restoration, construction fencing, site maintenance following demolition, and other related expenses would need further investigation to gain the true cost for removal.

Risk Assessment: Federal Grants

Beni Ortiz reported on the University's federal grant status. In the current year, NEIU is a grantee or recipient on 44 grants through 8 federal agencies or funding sources, totaling \$13,751,209. 19 grants totaling \$6,407,000 will sunset on September 30, 2025. Over the last six months, the University has disbursed average monthly totals of \$755,000 of total grant expenses, \$396,091 in payroll and benefits, and \$118,827 in scholarships and awards. Of the 75 total employees affected by federal grants, 44 positions are fully-funded and 31 are partially funded across most every employee classification. While there are still many unknowns, Trustees have recommended creation of a framework through which the University makes decisions based on worst-case scenarios should all federal grants disappear.

Motion to Convene in Closed Session

At 11:35 a.m. Trustee Meresidis, seconded by Trustee Phillips, moved to convene in Closed Session pursuant to Section 2(c)2 of the Open Meetings Act. Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Meresidis: Yes Phillips: Yes

The motion carried.

Motion to Reconvene in Open Session

At 12:11 p.m. Trustee Phillips, seconded by Trustee Meresidis, moved to reconvene in Open Session. The motion carried by unanimous acclamation.

Old / New Business

Trustee Phillips asked if there was any old or new business to address. Hearing none, there was no further business.

Motion to Adjourn

At 12:13 p.m. Trustee Meresidis, seconded by Trustee Phillips, moved to adjourn. The motion carried by unanimous acclamation.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Todd Phillips, Chair of the Committee
Karl Voigt, Assistant Secretary to the Board
Approved April 17, 2025