

Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University
Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting Minutes
September 19, 2024

A meeting of the Finance, Buildings and Grounds Committee of the Board of Trustees of Northeastern Illinois University was convened on Thursday, September 19, 2024 in the Student Union Alumni Hall located at 5500 N. St. Louis Avenue, Chicago, IL 60625. Trustee Paula Wolff, presiding chair, called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

Roll was called and the following Trustee committee members were present: Anna Meresidis and Paula Wolff

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

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

Trustee Wolff announced the opportunity for public comment. There were two registrations placed in advance and one presentation.

1. **Heather Carper**, representing herself
Topic: the troubling state of the University's facilities

Chair's and President's Remarks

Welcome everyone to the Fall 2024 semester. Pleased to report that the University has reached 98% of its Fall 2024 enrollment goal. NEIU's FTE rates are some of the highest in the state among public universities.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

FY24 4th Quarter Budget to Actual Report

Interim Vice President for Finance and Administration, Beni Ortiz reported the operating budget for FY2024 totaled \$133,063,200, with an additional authorization for spending up to \$2.5 million by the Board. The unrestricted general operating budget supported by State appropriations and student tuition, totaled \$85,300,000. The restricted funds budget supported by student fee programs, auxiliary services, grants, and contracts totaled \$47,763,200.

As of June 30, 2024 the University has collected \$87,787,862 representing 104% of its projected income for FY24, which represents a \$3.5 million increase in revenues over the same period last year. The University spent \$86,528,200 representing 101% of its projected budget, which represents an increase of expenditures of \$1,228,200 over the same period last year. The University's expected excess revenue over expenses for FY24 is \$2,259,662.

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

Beni Ortiz reported that a purchasing agreement was issued to Stuckey Construction Co. in the amount of \$208,934.50 for Recital Hall and Stage Center renovations.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

Committee Recommendation Regarding the Final FY25 Operating Budget

Trustee Meresidis, seconded by Trustee Wolff, moved to recommend approval of the FY25 final operating budget as presented.

Discussion: The University is recommending an operating budget of \$90,913,000 for Fiscal Year 2025. This represents an increase of 6.6 percent from FY2024. The FY2025 budget is based on a 2.0 percent increase in the State appropriation and a 7.4 percent increase in projected tuition revenue. The operating budget is balanced between revenues and expenditures, in part due to relying on favorable returns from investment income, although this funding source may not be as robust in FY2026. Expenditures are budgeted to increase by \$5.6 million or 6.6 percent in FY2025. The increase in expenses was primarily due to the expiration of Board of Trustees reserve allocation of \$2.5 million, costs previously covered by grants that are returning to operations, and salary increases based on the assumed or contracted wage increases in FY2025.

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Meresidis: Yes Wolff: Yes

The motion carried.

Committee Recommendation Regarding the FY26 Preliminary Operating and Capital Budgets Request

Trustee Meresidis, seconded by Trustees Wolff, moved to recommend approval of the FY26 preliminary operating and capital request budgets as presented.

Discussion: the University's Unrestricted Operating Budget request for FY2026 totals \$101,766,600, an increase of \$13,497,800, or 14.8% percent, above the FY2025 Unrestricted Operating Budget. The FY2026 Unrestricted Operating Budget request includes salary and cost increases totaling \$10,047,800, and requests of \$3,450,000 for strategic planning initiatives. The FY2026 Capital Budget Request is \$399,143,400, which represents \$332,633,300 for regular capital projects and \$66,510,100 for capital renewal projects.

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Meresidis: Yes Wolff: Yes

The motion carried.

Committee Recommendation Regarding Shortfall Funding for Capital Development Board (CDB) Project No. 817-010-082

Trustee Meresidis, seconded by Trustee Wolff, moved to recommend approval of the requested shortfall funding for CDB project no. 817-010-082 as presented.

Discussion: the Capital Development Board (CDB) appropriated funds in the amount of \$2,360,209 to upgrade the HVAC system located in the Science Building (BBH) at the University's main campus. After several project budget cost reviews, it was determined that the project will actually cost \$2,731,300 resulting in an appropriated funds shortfall totaling \$371,091. NEIU has been asked to fund the shortfall for this project. The University funding source for this project will come the Academic Enhancement Fee.

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Meresidis: Yes Wolff: Yes

The motion carried.

Committee Recommendation Regarding the Markham Prairie

Trustee Meresidis, seconded by Trustee Wolff, moved to recommend approval of certain land parcels at the Gensburg-Markham Prairie to be dedicated as Illinois State Nature Preserve additions and Illinois State Nature Preserve buffer zones as provided for under the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act. This recommendation is made with the understanding that approval of such changes to the Gensburg-Markham Prairie does not financially bind the University.

Discussion: Northeastern Illinois University's (NEIU) Gensburg-Markham Prairie, a 100-acre remnant prairie, is a live picture of what once covered the state of Illinois. Saved from development by NEIU, The Nature Conservancy, and Natural Land Institute in the 1970's, the prairie is now a dedicated Illinois Nature Preserve and National Natural Landmark. The Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC) serves as the state agency that assists private and public landowners, including Northeastern Illinois University, to protect high quality natural areas and habitats of threatened and endangered species. The recommendation is for approval from the Board that certain currently undedicated land parcels at the Gensburg-Markham Prairie be dedicated as Illinois State Nature Preserve additions and Illinois State Nature Preserve buffer zones as provided for under the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act. Trustees thanked Dr. Lopez-Salazar for her work on this important preservation endeavor and for her work at the Prairie.

Roll was called and the vote was as follows:

Meresidis: Yes

Wolff: Yes

The motion carried.

Old / New Business

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

Motion to Adjourn

At 11:12 a.m. Trustee Meresidis, seconded by Trustee Wolff, moved to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned by acclamation.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Wolff, Presiding Committee Chair
Karl Voigt, Assistant Secretary to the Board
Approved November 21, 2024