COT Regular Meeting Minutes
May 12, 2015  4:00 p.m. Admin. Bldg.

COT present: Dean, Sue, Tracy, Mike, Joy, Joan.
Others present: Terry, Landa, Deb, Jeff Morreau.
Recorded by Patty S.

Approval of agenda: Agenda approved with the addition of the Phase III architect contract, MMCDC loan contract, large expenditures of HLC and MSUM contract, resolution required for USDA equipment grant, and request for closed session (president’s evaluation) by Joy. One additional signature required on the BIE application. Swearing in of new Trustee will be moved to after approval of minutes. Motion made by Joy to approve the agenda with changes; Second by Dean. All in favor, agenda approved.

Approval of Minutes: Motion made by Dean to approve meeting minutes of 3/10/15; Second by Tracy. All in favor, motion carried. Request for Special Meeting Minutes of 4/9/15. Special meeting of 4/27/15 to be filed as informational only, due to lack of quorum. Review of Bylaws confirms 4 Trustees are needed for a quorum, even with vacant seats.

Swearing in of new Trustee: Joan conducted the swearing in of Sue Heisler, for the alumni position.

Reports: President Janis:
Terry’s report included the current status of the Strategic Planning process and the need to create an actual product in regards to assessment and strategic planning.
He confirmed that the College cannot operate without Tribal appropriations and the resolution to this lies in increasing student enrollment and fundraising.
He shared that we should receive a letter from the HLC in 2 weeks, to which we will have 3-4 weeks to respond; commission to make final decision in June. At the Chicago hearing, the team left no indication of their recommendation/decision. Terry will inform the Trustees when we receive the letter.
He has made a change in our organizational structure, moving HR from under Finance, to under the President.
He provided an update on Phase III; Jeff Morreau will be presenting.
Student enrollment is at 50% retention, latest news on the Summer Tuition Waiver is 30 students have pre-registered for Fall 2015, 3 on waivers, 50 students are in the works with admissions.
PSEO enrollment at COL was 9 students in Fall 2014, 8 of those continued at WETCC in Spring 2015. Of those students, 4-5 were graduating HS seniors, the remainder were juniors. COL is our targeted school, WHS is open to PSEO, and MHS is not so receptive. We need to get the word out, since the high school doesn’t promote it as an option (newspaper and radio ads, mail-outs, talk to parents, etc.)
Our academic programs are now on a 6 semester rotation schedule.
We will be reviewing/revising the Student Handbook; pulling out policies, adding in references instead.
The new Handbook will focus on relevance to students’ education.
Terry asked how the COT will integrate input for the Strategic Plan.
In external relations, ABE issues are critical, with zero graduates, the College suffers from the fallout.
We have submitted the LOI as the lead proposer for the Bush Proposal for Distance Learning in Tribal Colleges, main focus being to share resources such as teachers and equipment. We will meet tomorrow
with the other TCU leaders in Walker. The proposal is due June 11. Terry said historically, COT hasn’t approved proposals, and he asked what direction they wish to go. Dean said yes, if a responsibility exists for money. Landa explained WETCC will be the primary, and other TCUs will sub-contract. MN TCU Supplemental Grant Assistance-March 2015, AICF Restoration and Preservation of Traditional Art Forms and Knowledge Grant, Title III 5 year grant applications to DOE, to fund salaries. Terry requested the Board to indicate priority placement of Anishinaabe Arts.

Joan would like to schedule a Special Meeting after Memorial Day to address Strategic Planning and the HLC letter only.

**Phase III Update:** Jeff Morreau
Jeff provided a snapshot of the floor plan, construction schedule, and contract. He explained the floor plan, and most recent changes, including plan for natural gas use. The Construction Schedule process should see us taking bids for entire package to ensure integration in 4 weeks. We should expect few options with a low bid. Construction will start in July, shut down Dec.-Feb. to save on heating costs, and be complete in July 2016. Jeff left to allow time to review the service contract. *Joy also left the meeting at this time 6:00 p.m.*

**MMCDC Tax Credit Loan:** Landa Moore
Landa explained how the tax credit financing structure works. It is not a cash loan, but an allocation, a tax credit realization. We will be able to pay off the loan earlier if possible, depending on funds we raise during duration of the loan, but we must pay 7 years of interest, which may vary, and has not been determined yet. We must pay the WETCC Foundation monthly; interest payments go to the Foundation, which acts as our bank. We will be reviving the Foundation, which began before the College started, for fundraising. This may allow us to recycle some of the interest payments back to ourselves. WE will be committed to $10-20k monthly; returning interest will reduce payment by half. We have earmarked a $200k preliminary budget for next year. We are seeking a 7 year agreement with a Board; amount is not finalized yet. We could need to borrow $2.3-2.8M, due to construction variables. Dean agreed this is our best financial option, and recommended budgeting more per month.

*Motion made by Sue to approve the Phase III Construction Plan; Second by Tracy. All in favor, motion carried.*

*Motion made by Dean to accept the new market tax credit allocation up to $3.5M; Second by Mike. 1 abstention, 4 in favor, motion carried.*

*Motion made by Sue to accept the Artekta Service Agreement; after checking to make sure 7% is the standard, Second by Dean. All in favor, motion carried.*

**Finance Report:** Landa Moore
Landa has been working with Dean to present the budget in an easier to understand layout, which monitor per 12 months with the total compared to the budget. She is working to get the current financials, the problem is getting the bank statements in time to prepare information for the meeting. For reference, Joan requested annual and year-to-date. Landa will add one more column for a budget to reflect 6/12 months. Landa explained that Title III is separate; income and expenses are correct, but it
needs budget numbers. Tracy pointed out that the Board doesn’t see how grant money flows into the budgets. Landa also will incorporate USDA funds. COT has oversight of tuition and budgets; Financial Aid is taken care of by Annual Financial Aid Audits, and the program itself. Terry said we can collect the Financial Aid Audit details, and include it in the COT Calendar. Joan questioned if we need to change the meeting date or meet more often, to keep up. Landa will look into receiving the bank statements electronically. Deb will do the reconciliation as her schedule allows to reduce lag.

Large Expenditures:
Health Benefits: Landa and Terry said we are working on a solution with Scott Omlid to pay our health benefits. Our current benefits billing is at $165k, due in part to irregular billing, bills being misdirected, and RTC staff turnover. Our monthly benefits billing should be approximately $10-11k. We are 6 months into the fiscal year, and have not received any Tribal appropriations. Landa requested Board permission to pay the benefits billing out of construction reserve funds, which is risky. Mike will ask for the appropriations to be paid. Landa will let the Board know if the bills are ignored.

Motion made by Dean to approve paying the benefits bill of $165k from construction reserves; Second by Tracy. All in favor, motion carried.
Motion made by Mike to approve the financial statements; Second by Sue. All in favor, motion carried.

Joan asked that ‘large expenditures’ be arranged under the Finance Report on the agenda in the future.

RUS Grant: BSU is the fiscal agent grant recipient; WETCC is a sub. BSU needed a PO for $109k; we are responsible for $31k/year for 3 years for the Distance Learning Grant for Phase III. We will receive $80k. This gives BSU proof that we are aware of our match obligation. This was not budgeted for this year; the grant began under Pellegrino’s Presidency, so we were unaware of it until recently. We are waiting to hear from Robert Griggs. Landa would like a contract, to avoid having a PO outstanding for 3 years. The Board is uncomfortable with this amount, but they are okay with the match amount. Joan is not comfortable with email voting, they will address this in 2 weeks at the Special meeting.

MSUM Contract for Karen Brandon: Requesting approval of Karen’s contract for the past year. MSUM should have had the contract to us sooner. According to Bylaws Item B., it should have had Board approval before she started. Terry said he felt it was a personnel issue that didn’t require Board approval and explained that we pay for adjuncts to cover her course at MSUM, and she retains her position there. She has not been paid yet, and the contract ends 5/15/15. Terry plans to continue her contract through next year. Joan said no further contracts are to be allowed without COT approval. Joan feels it may be necessary to return to monthly Board meetings due to too many items and too many new contracts, which was not typical in the past. Motion made by Sue to amend Karen’s contract to accurately reflect ‘interim’ status of Dean of Student Services, and to approve Karen’s contract through 5/15/15; Second by Dean. All in favor, motion carried.

HLC Visit Expenditure: Motion made by Dean to approve; Second by Tracy. All in favor, motion carried.

Wellstone Building: Patty will research further why there was a question regarding the Wellstone Building on the agenda.
Benefits carryover: Terry asked for the Board to approve previously.

Motion made by Tracy to make the following resolution: “Understanding that White Earth Tribal and Community College is a separate entity from White Earth Reservation Tribal Council, any employee resigning from the Tribe ends their PTO from RTC. All employee benefits will continue uninterrupted.” Second by Mike. All in favor, motion carried.

New Business:

Graduation: Patty informed the Trustees they will have reserved front row seating at the Graduation Ceremony. All declined the option to borrow a robe for the event.

Organizational Chart change:
Terry has moved the HR Technician from under Finance Director to under the President.

Motion made by Dean to approve structural change; Second by Sue. All in favor, motion carried.

Board requested changing ‘Bookstore’ to ‘Procurement/Bookstore’.

President’s Annual Review:
Board gave authority to the Executive Committee to create the President’s contract and conduct the annual review.

Policy Review:

Transfer Credit Policy change: Mainly, the proposed change will require a transfer student to take a minimum of 15 semester hours at WETCC, instead of the previously required 20 semester hours. This change is proposed due to HLC-recommended best practices, this enables a transfer student to complete their degree in one semester, it fits in better with Financial Aid lifetime limits, and this also gives us flexibility in individual circumstances.

Motion made by Mike to approve the policy change; Second by Tracy. All in favor, motion carried.

USDA Equipment Grant:
Deb has collected equipment requests for this grant from various departments. She is waiting on 2 more quotes. She is requesting Board approval to move forward with the CNA/EMT proposal from Doreen Stone. It would be Doreen’s project, she would rent our space. Maximum quotes are not to exceed $125k total. Dean made a motion to approve, with pending quotes not to exceed $125k total; Second by Tracy. All in favor, motion carried.

Executive Session:
Board entered Executive Session at 8:35 p.m.

Adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Secretary signature 7/14/15