



**EASTERN WYOMING COLLEGE  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, June 9, 2026  
EWC Dolores Kaufman Board Room

**Attendance**

**Present:**

Members: Bob Baumgartner, Doug Mercer, Katherine Patrick, Kurt Sittner, Jackie VanMark, and Rick Vonburg

**Absent:**

Members: Jim Willox

**1. Call Meeting to Order**

Chairman VanMark called the meeting to order at 5:47 pm.

**2. Approval of the Agenda**

Chairman VanMark called for approval of the Agenda.

Trustee Baumgartner called for a motion to approve with Section 12.1 being moved to Section 6. This motion was seconded by Trustee Katherine Patrick.

Moved by: Bob Baumgartner; seconded by: Katherine Patrick

**Motion Carried**

**3. Approval of the Minutes as Presented**

The minutes were approved and accepted as presented.

3.1 Minutes Board of Trustees May 12, 2026.pdf

**4. Introductions**

**5. Public Comment**

**6. Next Gen Trucking Award:**

## **Dean of Workforce and Career Technical Careers Darryl Spitzer**

### **Bo Baumgartner**

Dean of Workforce and Career Technical Education, Darryl Spitzer presented the NextGen Trucking Student of the Month award for May to a high school CDL student Bo Baumgartner.

- Dean Spitzer explained that NextGen Trucking is a Kentucky-based national association focused on high school CDL programs. EWC joined in 2023, and 29 students are currently enrolled with a 100% pass rate.
- Bo was nominated by Ed Kimes and selected by NextGen Trucking. He received a letter from NextGen, a nomination letter from Ed Kimes, and a commemorative plaque.
- Trustee Sittner asked Bo about his background, Bo shared that he farms with his father and grandfather about 20 miles south of Torrington and plans to use his CDL for hauling agricultural commodities.

## **7. Announcement of New Trustee**

Chairman VanMark announced the selection of a new trustee to replace the resigned Trustee Adams.

- Chairman VanMark stated that three excellent candidates were considered and that Julie Newman from Goshen County was selected.
- Chairman VanMark noted that Julie Newman was not able to be present at the meeting but would be sworn in within the 10 day period allowed.

## **8. Faculty Contracts:**

### **HR Director Catherine Conard**

HR Director Conard presented three new faculty candidates for board ratification.

- Director Conard presented Rui Wang, currently employed in academic and student services, transitioning to a full-time Business Instructor role. She holds a master's degree in finance from the University of St. Andrews.
- Director Conard presented Jake Floyd, a 22-year United States Marine Corps veteran with extensive leadership experience, who will continue the legacy of the gunsmithing program started by Glenn Morovitz. He will be based in Douglas and starts July 13. Mr. Floyd was present via Zoom and the Board warmly welcomed him to EWC.
- Director Conard presented Bradley Phillips, the new Foundational Math Instructor, originally from Illinois and currently in Florida. He is highly enthusiastic, attended graduation, and has a personal passion for math tutoring and math lab.

## **9. Rodeo Projects:**

### **Vice President of Administrative Services Patrick Korell**

#### **Head Rodeo Coach Whit Peterson**

VP Patrick Korell and Rodeo Coach Whit Peterson presented updates on the rodeo program's livestock purchasing challenges and the fairgrounds contract renewal.

#### **9.1 Purchase of Practice Livestock**

- Coach Peterson explained that the U.S.-Mexico border closure due to ringworm virus has prevented access to M-branded PRCA steers for two years, significantly

driving up costs.

- Calf prices have increased by over \$375 per head in the first year; current prices are approximately \$1,800–\$2,000 per head. Lease costs for one calf per day are \$3.50–\$4.00. Team rope steer leases alone are expected to exceed \$20,000. Tie-down calf leases could reach approximately \$25,000 for the season.
- The rodeo club currently holds approximately \$70,000 in the club account with \$30,000 in assets. The program has been profitable in buying and selling calves.
- The total livestock purchase authorization requested was not to exceed \$100,000.

9.2 Continuing contract with Goshen County Fairgrounds

VP Patrick Korell recommended approval of the fairgrounds contract, noting it is on an as-needed/as-used basis. The outdoor arena rate remains at \$20/hour; indoor rates were simplified at the fairgrounds manager's request.

**10. Update on Gymnasium Repairs:**

**Vice President of Administrative Services Patrick Korell**

VP Patrick Korell provided a detailed update on the activity center roof completion and the gymnasium floor damage.

- The roof on the main activity center is complete. The fitness center reopened on Monday. The air conditioning unit was damaged in a storm and requires 5–7 working days to connect.
- Water intrusion from minor rain events caused significant moisture damage to the gym floor. At peak, some areas had 30% moisture content (normal is 6–8%). Three flooring companies from Montana, Denver, and Minnesota all recommended full floor replacement.
- The new floor will be a narrower, shallower engineered wood (three-quarter inch thickness vs. the old 33/32nds), which is the current industry standard and offers improved injury prevention for athletes.
- Estimated replacement cost is between \$150,000 and \$500,000, with the midpoint being the most likely figure. Time is critical as volleyball begins in late July.
- Discussions are underway with local schools to accommodate volleyball, men's basketball, and women's basketball practices during the floor replacement period.
- An insurance claim has been filed. Approximately \$27,000 was spent on temporary roofing mitigation prior to the claim.
- Trustee Sittner asked whether the floor is part of the insurance claim; VP Korell confirmed it has been submitted.

**11. Administrative Reports**

**President's Report**

Dr. Hawes provided updates on state submissions, grants, and strategic initiatives.

- An engineering submission for deferred maintenance on the Fine Arts Center, Tebbit Building, and Student Center identified \$5–\$7 million in capital renewal needs, primarily for HVAC systems. This will proceed to the State Building Commission in fall and the legislature in spring.
- The Certified Nursing Assistant and Medical Assistant certificates are now approved for Wyoming Works funding, making them eligible for additional scholarships and federal

financial aid.

- VP Patrick Korell and CIO Auka Dane have secured a \$575,000 federal grant (through Wyoming Department of Homeland Security) for IT infrastructure renewal, replacing systems installed after the June 2021 cyber attack.
- Wyoming has been approved for a \$200 million Wyoming Rural Healthcare Grant. EWC's requested share, written by John Hansen, is approximately \$35 million over five years. Sub-award applications are pending. The award amount could differ from the request. Spending could begin as early as October 2026, though Dr. Hawes acknowledged that timeline is optimistic.
- The marketing internship program, funded by the EWC Foundation and led by Marketing Director Kristin Sampson and Brad Stamen, hired a dozen interns. The program enabled live online broadcasting of the high school homecoming Grand March, which drew over 1,000 online viewers in addition to 850 in-person attendees.
- Internship programs will be expanded across all college departments, including library services, food services, facilities, and grounds.
- Plans are underway to activate the Fine Arts Center more frequently through community education events, concerts, and community programming, with Donna White leading community education efforts. Interns will be vital to providing these community interactions.
- A dual enrollment agreement with the University of Wyoming is being finalized, under which students enrolling at EWC will simultaneously be enrolled at UW. Plans exist for EWC to replicate this with other partner institutions.

### **Financial Report:**

#### **Interim CFO Ronald Laher**

Interim CFO Ron Lehrer presented the financial summary through May 31.

- EWC's operational fund revenue year-to-date is \$16,893,295 against a budget of approximately \$18,000,000 — approximately 94% collected with one month remaining.
- A \$172,000 reduction to state appropriation will be recorded this month for last year's recapture redistribution. With health insurance and retirement reimbursements pending, state appropriation collection is expected to reach approximately 98%.
- Local revenue is expected to exceed budget by end of June. Institutional revenue is at 99.65% collected; the CDL program is \$142,000 above budget in non-credit revenue.
- A \$400,000 cash carryover will be added to the revenue picture in the next report.
- Year-to-date expenses are \$15,494,435 with a budget variance of approximately \$2.4 million. Approximately \$250,000 in campus-based program scholarships recharacterized as Title IV will be recorded this month.
- Auxiliary fund revenue is at 99% of budget (\$1,956,008 year-to-date); the remaining \$18,135 gap is expected to close this month.
- Auxiliary fund expenses are \$1,895,687; a slight overage is anticipated due to unexpected motor pool and bookstore expenses and outstanding Sodexo invoices.

## **12. Approval of the Consent Agenda**

- 12.1 Ratification of the April and May 2026 Expenditure Report  
BR #101.pdf

Chairman VanMark called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.  
Moved by: Bob Baumgartner; seconded by: Doug Mercer

**Motion Carried**

**13. Board Approval of Action Items**

- 13.1 Board Approval of the Contract with Rui Wang for Business Instructor.  
BR #102.pdf

Chairman Van Mark called for a motion to approve the contract for Rui Wang.  
Moved by: Katherine Patrick; seconded by: Rick Vonburg

**Motion Carried**

- 13.2 Board Approval of the Contract with Jake Floyd for Gunsmithing Instructor.  
BR #103.pdf

Chairman Van Mark called for a motion to approve the contract for Jake Floyd.  
Moved by: Rick Vonburg; seconded by: Bob Baumgartner

**Motion Carried**

- 13.3 Board Approval of the Contract with Bradley Phillips for Fundamental Math Instructor.  
BR #104.pdf

Chairman Van Mark called for a motion to approve the contract for Bradley Phillips.  
Moved by: Katherine Patrick; seconded by: Doug Mercer

**Motion Carried**

- 13.4 Board Approval to extend the Contract with Goshen County Fairgrounds for the purpose of the Rodeo Club. See General Session 6.2  
BR #105.pdf

Chairman Van Mark called for a motion to approve the continued contract with Goshen County Fairgrounds.  
Moved by: Rick Vonburg; seconded by: Katherine Patrick

**Motion Carried**

- 13.5 Board Approval of the Purchase of Practice Livestock for the Rodeo Program. Funding will come from Club Funds. See General Session 6.1  
BR #106.pdf

Chairman Van Mark called for a motion to approve the purchase of Rodeo Livestock.  
Moved by: Bob Baumgartner; seconded by: Rick Vonburg

**Motion Carried**

- 13.6 Board approval for Vice President of Administrative Services Patrick Korell for Direct Negotiation for Gymnasium Floor and Bleacher Repairs. See General Session Section 7  
BR #107

Chairman Van Mark called for a motion to approve VP Korell to directly negotiate on the

Gym Floor and Bleacher repair project.

Moved by: Katherine Patrick; seconded by: Doug Mercer

**Motion Carried**

- 13.7 Board approval for direct negotiation by Dr. Jeffry Hawes and Martin Winchell to purchase a Skid Steer, Not to Exceed \$80,000.00. This purchase will be made solely using WIP Grant funds.

BR #108.pdf

Chairman Van Mark called for a motion to approve for Dr. Hawes and Martin Winchell to directly negotiate for the purchase of a Skid Steer.

Moved by: Bob Baumgartner; seconded by: Katherine Patrick

**Motion Carried**

#### **14. Public Comments - Library Staffing Concerns**

Two community members, Janet Bass and former library employee Madelon Daniels, addressed the board outside of the standard public comment period at the chair's discretion.

- Janet Bass noted that she was unable to find the meeting agenda for today's meeting. The latest one she had been able to find was April, requiring her to call the college directly. She also noted the building doors were locked upon arrival.
- Madelon Daniels expressed strong concern about the reassignment of library staff member Jessica Anders from the library to an administrative role coordinating students with advisors. She argued that Jessica Anders holds a library degree, has served the library for 3-4 years, and is being moved to a role she has no background in.
- She stated that with Jessica Anders' reassignment only one person, Casey Debus, the library director, remains to manage the library, which previously required three staff members.
- She questioned the financial logic of giving Jessica Anders a raise to take on a new role while leaving the library understaffed, and suggested cost savings could come from other areas such as., deferring light fixture replacements, reducing travel, cutting proposed ag center stalls.
- Madelon Daniels challenged the accuracy of library usage statistics, arguing that students use the library at times outside of when counts are taken.
- Chairman VanMark thanked the speakers, acknowledged their concerns as valuable, and committed to arranging a follow-up meeting with HR staff present.

#### **15. Department Reports**

- 15.1 Registrar Dave Bluemel presented the annual review of the Office of the Registrar for academic year 2025-2026.

- Registrar Bluemel stated that EWC has implemented SmartPlan software, enabling students and advisors to view real-time degree completion pathways, run "what if" major change scenarios, and plan across full academic years. EWC is the only community college in Wyoming using SmartPlan.
- Registrar Bluemel explained that EWC is the only community college in Wyoming to successfully award reverse transfer degrees through a partnership with the University of Wyoming and AcademyOne. Central Wyoming College attempted

- implementation but could not award degrees due to program limitations.
- The Registrar's Office and Admissions have automated the admissions and registration process for concurrent and traditional students to reduce manual bottlenecks and improve data quality from the point of application.
- The office has consolidated physical student records from multiple storage areas into a single location, returning space to the financial aid office and improving file management across admissions, financial aid, and the registrar's office.
- Updated Administrative Regulations and procedures:
  - Updated add/drop timelines from an ambiguous eight-day schedule to a week-by-week schedule with Friday deadlines, improving clarity for students and staff.
  - Revised the incomplete grade policy to require resolution within one semester, citing AACRAO research showing students are 60% less likely to complete a course if it extends beyond one semester.
  - Revised academic amnesty policy to allow students returning after a five-year absence to have up to two prior semesters of poor grades removed from GPA calculations.
  - Updated course repetition policy: students may retake a failed course up to three times without special permission; retaking a passed course requires advisor approval. The new policy will use the student's best attempt (not most recent) for GPA calculation.
  - Increased the standard maximum credit load from 18 to 19 hours, eliminating the need for most overload petitions. A carve-out allows up to 22 hours for specific programs (e.g., Vet Tech, Cosmetology) with a 2.5 GPA and advisor sign-off.
  - Standardized graduation application deadlines to the last business day of the first month of the graduating semester. This change resulted in a 9% increase in graduation applications, a 10.5% increase in spring completions, and a 21% reduction in summer degree spillage compared to the prior year.
  - Corrected fee tracking by replacing pseudo-class fee structures with proper fee codes tied to the graduation application, resolving audit issues and enabling commencement costs to be fully covered by fees.
  - Implemented a small fee for third-party degree verification through the National Student Clearinghouse, generating micro-revenue at no cost to students.

Trustee Sittner confirmed that all advisors have full access to SmartPlan and can review student degree pathways in real time.

#### **16. Trustee Topics**

Trustee Sittner inquired to the status of the ERC Tax Filing.

- VP Patrick Korell provided an update on the college's ERC claims with the IRS.
- Three ERC claim denials were produced, one was received, but none have been officially recorded on the IRS transcript, creating a procedural anomaly.
- The college's hired firm (based in Chicago) confirmed that the denials are not showing on

the IRS ledger and advised against responding to the one notice received, as it was deemed incorrect.

- The college will file appeals on all three cases. The process requires reopening a taxpayer advocate case (estimated 30–60 days) before the appeal can be filed. The two-year appeal window runs from May 2025.
- Senator Loomis's office assisted in obtaining copies of all three denial documents. Kathy Lenz from Senator Loomis's office has also been supportive.
- The college's case is well-documented, including weekly event logs, staff retention records, student services provided during COVID, and compliance with state health orders. The firm's attorney-CPA team expressed confidence in the strength of the case.
- Public institutions have generally fared worse than private institutions under ERC claims, potentially due to indirect ties to student-based revenue. However, some public entities have succeeded.
- VP Korell acknowledged that new, less experienced IRS enforcement agents have been encountered, sometimes requiring escalation to three levels before finding competent reviewers.

Trustee Sittner inquired to the recruitment software the college had purchased and if it was in operation.

- Dr. Hawes provided an update on technology platforms being evaluated or implemented for student recruitment and enrollment management.
- Element 451, a CRM/recruitment platform, is fully operational and considered the best product currently on the market. EWC is one of four Wyoming colleges using it.
- The college is evaluating Encoura, a name-buy recruiting tool tied to ACT data, to expand student outreach. VP Patrick Korell has completed a legal review of the product. Negotiations are ongoing regarding liability limitations related to FERPA and student data.
- SmartPlan is being used to track student pathways from high school through university, with the goal of aligning with the forthcoming dual enrollment agreement with UW.
- A dual enrollment agreement with UW is being finalized; students enrolling at EWC will simultaneously be enrolled at UW. Plans exist to replicate this model with Chadron State and other regional institutions.

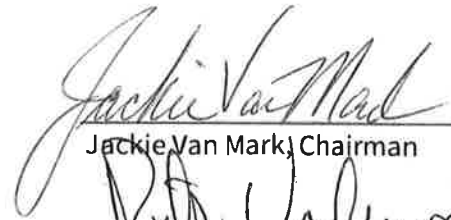
Dr. Hawes announced that Trustee Mercer will not seek re-election. Trustee Sittner, Chairman VanMark, and Dr. Hawes expressed gratitude for his service and contributions, particularly to the CDL program.

Chairman VanMark noted that Trustee Vonburg, Trustee Mercer, and Trustee VanMark are up for re-election, with a filing deadline in August for the November Election.

Councillor Bush had no additional items.

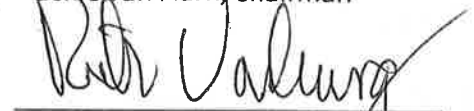
## **17. Adjournment**

Chairman VanMark called to adjourn the meeting at 7:53 pm.



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Jackie Van Mark, Chairman



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Rick Vonburg, Vice Chairman



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Lynda Dean, Executive Assistant