



MEETING MINUTS AND AGENDA

August 27, 2021

1:00 PM

Casper College

Gateway Building/Room 225

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ACTION AND REPORT AGENDA ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION (ACTION ITEMS IN BOLD)

1:00 p.m. CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

Commissioners

- Commissioner Blikre - Present
- Commissioner Boal – Present
- Commissioner Dooley – Present
- Commissioner Goetz – Present
- Commissioner Newman – Present
- Commissioner Wyatt - Present
- Commissioner and Chair Freeze - Present

Ex Officio Members

- Honorable Governor Mark Gordon or Lachelle Brant – Lachelle Brant Present
- Superintendent of Public Instruction Jillian Balow or Shelley Hammel – Both Present
- Community College Commission Executive Director, Executive Director, Sandy Caldwell – Present

Commission Staff

- Ben Moritz, Deputy Director – Present
- Larry Buchholtz, Chief Financial Officer – Present
- Paris Edeburn, Chief Technology Officer – Present
- Christy Klaassen, Policy Analyst – Present
- Rob Dennis, Chief Operations Officer – Present

INTRODUCTIONS

Commissioner Freeze thanked all for joining the meeting and then requested a motion to approve the agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

**Commissioner Boal moved for approval of the day's agenda, Commissioner Dooley seconded.
Motion carried unanimously**

A. SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA:

- I. PUBLIC COMMENT (Comments should be limited to 3 minutes duration for each agenda item. Please state your name, affiliation, locale, and agenda item to address)

There were no public comments submitted

- II. New Gillette Community College District

Commission Freeze welcomed the eighth community college district to the state of Wyoming. She congratulated the trustees present on the tremendous voter response. She added it was an exciting time for all which will hopefully result in providing additional support and direction for students in the State of Wyoming. She noted the tremendous voter response, indicated the amount of work all put into the effort. She then asked Chairman Palmer if he had a few remarks.

Gillette Community College District Trustee and Chairman Palmer, thanked everyone and the Commission for all their assistance. He also recognized Commission staff for their assistance. He noted that it seems like it was a little over a year ago that the process started. He thanked all for their support and for the journey adding it has been 14 months. He updated that the Trustee's took their oath of office, elected officers, and had their first board meeting yesterday. He continued by introducing Gillette College trustees in attendance including Trustee McGrath, Oda Cove, Wasserburger, Key, and Stevens. He noted that the Trustees were all looking forward to working with the Commission and staff. He added that Director Caldwell has already reached out and provided a great template of things to complete, adding they were excited to work with colleagues at the other colleges. He recognized there are a lot of details to go through and behind the scenes work, as the district seeks accreditation. He noted the last college district formed, was Laramie County Community College in 1969. He reiterated his appreciation for everyone's help and then turned to the other Trustees for comments.

Commissioner Freeze recognized that there were 23 people running for the board which said something about the amount of interest in the college. She noted there is a lot of passion for the eighth Community College.

Trustee Williams echoed Trustee Palmer's comments. He added that their community really got behind our community college. And by the vote of 70% to 30%, they received support within our community including all types of businesses, their patrons, school

district, the county, and the city. All traveled down the same road. He noted one thing about all the trustees was they really had no agenda. He suggested they are friends and he recollected that he had come to Gillette in 73 from Indiana, and had visited all of Wyoming's colleges. His son was a basketball coach at Sheridan College for a couple years. And then his kids played basketball for Sheridan College.

Dr. Tribley thanked the Commission staff for the work done on the project. He recognized the amount of work done in the midst of a pandemic including providing meetings and making for a transparent process was certainly a heavy lift. He wishes Gillette College all the success. And on behalf of Sheridan College he welcomes and congratulates Gillette College. He noted that Sheridan College stands ready to make Wyoming's eighth college another example of excellence within the state.

Commissioner Freeze added that it will certainly be a heavy lift from here on. She thanked all for their support and recognized how good it was to hear discussion of collaboration between institutions and the Commission. Collaboration will be a critical issue moving forward. She wished Gillette College all the best noting the Commission will be excited to see future progress. She encouraged the Trustees to please share any questions and any concerns, not only with the commission staff, but with the trustees and presidents of the other institutions.

Trustee Palmer noted that they are also looking forward to celebrating successes and they desire for all to be a part of Gillette College District future accomplishments.

Superintendent Balow congratulated all. She added congratulations on a successful campaign that encompassed the dedication, passions, and interest of the community. She claims Gillette as her home town. She had taken dual and concurrent enrollment classes when in high school. At that time Gillette college was located in modular trailer and for which she received a fine education. She acknowledged what an opportunity, there is to spread education from the 10 kids that were in her class in the late 80s, to hundreds, and thousands, and not just with the education received at Gillette college, but also with the impact that the college has on the community at large. She again congratulated not just the new trustees, but Gillette college. She is really looking forward to working with all at the new college and watching as the new college grows.

Commissioner Blikre suggested there are a lot of people on zoom and in person who worked for over 40 years to get a Gillette College District and he is proud of all of them. All in Gillette, want us to move forward and have Gillette College become accredited as soon as possible. The new Trustees, are not going to rest for a week. They have already started. He also thanked all the people from all the other college districts for allowing Campbell County to put forward their vote, as it could have been stopped right here at the Commission. The Commission agreed to let the people vote and it moved forward. Then it went through the legislature and to the people. It resulted in an overwhelming vote. Gillette will be a bright spot, it will be one of the eight bright spots. Every college in this state is a very valuable resource, educating most of the people in our state. Community

colleges are our best hope for the future of this state period. And the colleges need to support each other. He asked that all continue to help these guys get going.

Director Caldwell noted she had sent a memo to the State Legislature and on to the individual 66 legislative members. There was also a meeting with Eloy Oakley who is the Special Advisor to U.S. Secretary of the Department of Education Cardona. They too sent their congratulations to the new Gillette Community College District.

III. State of the Agency

[TAB A](#)

Director Caldwell highlighted the portion of the budget pertaining to the State of the Agency document. The report was initiated by Governor Gordon and it gives an opportunity to share agency successes and challenges as they pertain to the Commission. It has been used regularly throughout the state legislative session and does lead off in the budget.

She highlighted some of the great achievements listed in the document. The Commission exists to support the community colleges. She noted the community colleges do so much work to serve the people of Wyoming. She recognized that all the achievements and challenges are completed through the Colleges. She also mentioned there was a need to edit the document and the budget to recognize Gillette Community College District and our eight community colleges. She started her review of all the achievements and challenges which are directly related to the work that goes on at the community colleges. Kudos for the colleges, and their amazing staff.

The Educational Attainment Executive Council is housed out of the Commission, and recently completed and passed foundational work. The group is actually working through the sunset of the Attainment Council, which will happen in 2022. Dr. Dale, Western's President is the co-chair along with President Seidel at the University of Wyoming. They both have done incredible work.

Recently, the Elbogen Foundation funded adult grants at all of the community colleges for women. This was completed while knowing the progress being made on the Wyoming's Tomorrow Scholarship.

There was incredible work done by the Commission which went into the Sustainable Funding Workgroup. The Commission, the colleges and many other entities supported the effort which was requested by the legislative Joint Appropriations Committee.

The Commission is moving along on the Statewide Longitudinal Education Data (SLEDS), is moving along, which sometimes feels like it is at a snail's pace. Frankly the effort is doing very, very well. The Educational Attainment Executive Council in partnership with University and the Commission launched SLEDS. Other contributing agencies included the Wyoming Department of Education, Workforce Services and the Wyoming Business Council.

The implementation of WyoTransfer has happened out of long time work. There was originally common transcript legislation which occurred. The outcome of the legislation was full implementation of WyoTransfer.

There was also implementation of the new Statewide College System Strategic plan. This plan is the basis through which funding requests are made and granted on behalf of the colleges.

Playing a prominent role as the Commission proceeds is the addition of the new Gillette Community College District. This portion of the State of the Agency will need edits as the measure to create the new district passed with a majority, around 70%, of the electorate voting in favor. The wording will be updated.

The Commission is still operating while facing some great challenges. It should be no surprise the number of requested legislative reports and appearances at committee meetings. One just occurred in July and two others will follow on the same day, September ninth.

Director Caldwell noted Technology costs were a large part of the exception requests included in the budget. She recognized that today it takes a lot of technology to make all of this work. The Commission and the colleges recently witnessed what happens when there are challenges around technology, as Dr. Travers can attest. There is an ongoing and continuing challenge for the colleges and Commission balancing expectations versus resources. The balance is felt greatly in the colleges and in the Commission.

Director Caldwell reminded that staffing issues continue to not be a surprise at both the colleges and the agency. All are concerned over long- term staffing. The colleges recruit on a national level. There are additional, significant challenges, around compensation and the ability to recruit effectively.

Director Caldwell mentioned, lastly are the priorities the Commission established at the July meeting. She concluded a quick, high level run through of the State of the Agency. She continued much of what has been brought up is reflected in the budget exception requests.

Commissioner Freeze complimented Dr. Caldwell noting it is always good to be reminded of where we have been and where we are going and what is important as we move forward. There are a lot of things going on, and it will continue to be a busy year focusing on funding for the community colleges.

III. GOVERNOR GORDON EXCEPTION REQUEST LETTER
(Executive Summary) (President's Letter of Support)

TAB B

Commissioner Freeze next transitioned to Governor Gordon's exception request letter and noted that also under the agenda tab was the letter from the college presidents.

Director Caldwell reminded all that she had talked in June about what an exception request might look like. Discussion on the topic was an outgrowth of the Sustainable Funding workgroup. It was agreed at the June meeting that agency staff would work directly on numbers.

Director Caldwell mentioned that item number three on the meeting agenda is the exception request letter. The letter is an action item because it is an important component of the budget request leading to the actual budget. It was previously discussed in detail at June's meeting along with a draft of the exception requests. College operations and institutions' employee compensation were evident issues and came out of the Sustainable Funding Work Group. During the June meeting it was agreed that the agency would work directly with the numbers assigned by the State Budget Department. However, the Commission cannot take-action on an exception request for state aid. Yet the Commission can ask that the Governor take action. Thus was the direction requested of the Agency to prepare. The current letter is very similar to the draft letter previously before the Commission last June. The difference between the two are in the amounts for the exception request within the state aid component. The state aid component was approached in two parts.

First a review of increases in the fixed costs clarified an erosion of the budget to pay for operations. Mr. Buchholtz and the college Administrative Vice Presidents took a really close look at what were the direct cost increases for mostly commodities. These increases have been discussed for some time. Director Caldwell noted she and Ms. Taylor had a conversation on this topic at the Joint Education Interim Committee in July. Commodity costs are related to water, electricity, natural gas, insurance, motor pool, etc. They include all those fixed costs required to run the institutions. There is a direct increase to those costs of about \$10.5 million per year. This is a straight-line increase and not an inflationary number.

The second part has to do with compensation. Members of the Joint Education Committee brought up their concern for compensation at the colleges. For the members of the Commission who have been here for a while, should recall that in 2019, when the budget request was presented, the Commission received a follow up inquiry from Joint Appropriations on what the gap in the salary ranges were at the colleges. The agency noted this has been a long-term conversation at the colleges. Mentioned previously, is how the colleges have had to manage their pay and salary. Each college is different in their management of salaries and compensation, it is not a one size fits all approach.

Agency staff looked at salaries and compensation system wide while providing individual colleges the ability to manage and navigate it themselves. Compensation was reviewed in two parts. Compensation from the colleges, system wide is below midpoint pay at the national level and as an average across community colleges and peer institutions in the

region. She added that Mr. Buchholtz and the administrative vice presidents can go into greater detail on compensation studies. A review of midpoint pay is used as a benchmark. The review identified that the colleges system on average is \$10 million below midpoint pay per biennium as a system average. She added the colleges have had to manage salaries differently. Agency staff then looked at the disparity as a system wide percent. If a one percent increase with salary and benefits were introduced one would need to roll up to a 4% increase to really reflect what the system needs. Director Caldwell summarized that the additional number of \$80 million came from.

When one combines the two numbers together, \$21 million for increased fixed costs and the \$19 million to bring the colleges to salary and compensation parity, those two amounts together equal \$40 million and are an attempt to get the colleges in parity, for compensation and to be competitive to recruit nationwide. The numbers are very direct and concrete that can be seen as an expense across the colleges and the more by which the colleges are having to cover. Less funding has been available to cover programmatic type projects. The need is very real. She finalized, the last difference in the letter is an increase in those amounts which were added to the graph presented in June.

Commissioner Freeze noted the importance of the letter and that it will be sent to the Governor. The letter will detail the loss of spending power of both the colleges and their employees.

Dr. Divine noted the letter from the Presidents was a collaboration among all the Presidents. He suggested their conversations are always tempered with how much should be asked for and how much the state can realistically support. The 4% presented was the result of tremendous discussion and what they expect can be realistic. They have also discussed this number with a few other entities around the state and this seemingly is where those other entities have landed too.

Commissioner Blikre asked if the President's letter could also be signed by all the Presidents to demonstrated unanimous support.

Commissioner Goetz asked for a reminder regarding any proposed solutions to account for the lack of standard of living, so to speak. She noted that this problem needs to be fixed rather than continuing to address. Secondly, she asked how future budgets will be impacted by the Gillette College District formation.

Director Caldwell reminded all that recommendations to address the budget were embedded in the sustainable funding workgroup report. The recommendations do allow for an increase to happen over time. The Legislature continues to grapple with a long-term view on sustainable funding for the colleges.

Mr. Buchholtz added agency staff have made it an initiative to educate the Joint Interim Education Committee to the fact that there is no built in ECA for community college funding, unlike what is included in K-12. And, unlike what UW has historically done

which is to come back to the Legislature in the form of an exception request. There is no mechanism for the colleges. The agency is taking on the issue and is making the committee aware. Hopefully, it spawns legislation in the near future.

Ms. Taylor echoed the words from Director Caldwell and Mr. Buchholtz. She noted WACCT has really undertaken an education effort to walk legislators and policymakers through how things work with the community colleges. Since K12, is really under fire, and getting a lot of attention. A lot of people do not understand how the mechanism works for community colleges. WACCT's work is in the same place with the Commission and agency.

Director Caldwell addressed the second part of Commissioner Goetz's questions, which is, "How does Gillette college as a new district fit into the budget process"? She continued this was a topic discussed heavily through the entire application review process. As Trustee Palmer knows, this was a part of the needs assessment study. Gillette Community College District will not be seeking any state funding until they assess all four mills and have established their accreditation. This is the heavy lift in the load of work before all. Right now funding will go to the seven community colleges. When the Commission submits the budget request this topic is addressed in the budget narrative. The narrative and documents explicitly state that Wyoming now has eight community colleges. Gillette Community College district is not eligible for receiving state funding yet.

Commissioner Freeze entertained a motion to approve the Commission letter to Governor Gordan, for an exception request in the amount of \$40,337,852 for community college state aid.

Commissioner Blikre moved. Commissioner Newman seconded. There was no further discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

IV. BIENNIAL BUDGET APPROVAL ([Executive Summary](#))

[TAB C](#)

- Update for 400 Series
- Governor Gordon Recalibration Waiver Request

[TAB D](#)

Director Caldwell reminded all that at the June meeting, the Commission adopted a draft budget which is standard to the process. She added there are some changes between the final draft being considered and the earlier version. Notably a \$40 million increase that the Commission just took action on in the letter to the Governor. There was a requirement from the State Budget Department to include the amount of the exception request in the final budget document. The Commission was also required to include recalibration, which would result in a negative adjustment of \$4.2 million dollars. This is addressed in a separate letter (attached) which was sent to the Governor. She reminded the Commission that this action was the direction given at the June meeting to submit the letter requesting recalibration not be imposed on the colleges, which would result in an additional loss of \$4.2 million. The letter is attached as a matter of public record. In the budget request Mr. Buchholtz will hit on the recent changes, consolidation of the

exception requests, and then the addition of the \$40 million because we did not know originally the amount.

The motion language is presented later. A special thanks is to be extended to our Attorney General representative, Mr. Mackenzie Williams. He assisted with a four-part motion which allows the Commission to move on the standard budget, move forward on the exception requests items that the Commission is permitted, ask the Governor to consider an increase to the state aid in the amount of \$40 million, and then for the Governor to not impose recalibration at a cost of \$4.2 million. Mr. Buchholtz has done a lot of work to get this to 69 pages and ready for the Commission's consideration.

Mr. Buchholtz opened by noting that the full document was some 69 pages, yet he clarified he would not cover everything. He planned to touch on only those things that are different. Some portions are significantly different and others not so much from what was presented in June.

The first several pages of the budget document are the State of the Agency, which was a standalone document shared earlier. The next section is the unit or department organization, this is also presented in Commissioner's packets and the budget document. Both show that the Wyoming Adjunct Professor loan program is still part of the Commission's charge. The program will sunset. To replace the chart pertaining to the program, requires action by the State Budget Department. Mr. Buchholtz had provided them an updated chart, which has yet to be embedded. Included was information from the last biennium. The current chart will change that part of the tree that shows the Wyoming Professor Loan program will go away upon submitting the budget to the State Budget Office.

Mr. Buchholtz continued by noting that the base budget or standard budget given last June is really close to the end result. He pointed out that in June the Commission acted on prioritizing 28 separate exceptions.

Upon putting the budget together, and by looking at past budgets, Mr. Buchholtz realized that portions of the prioritization could be consolidated into one exception request. He explained further that original priority numbers one, two, and three remain in the current budget document. Agency staff inserted number four and five which are for the state aid adjustments and include adjustments for fixed costs. The remainder of all of the other exception requests have been moved into priority number six. This included original priority numbers 8 through 28. They are all now in priority number six as one combined exception request money amount. Later in the budget document, each amount is listed separately creating the ability for the Governor or Legislature to line item any one component of that exception request. Then the exception request for increased storage capacity at Enterprise Technology Services, for centralized government agency services, moved from number seven to number eight. The Wyoming Investment in Nursing exception request moved from number six to number seven. All the movement provided

a mechanism of inserting the two components of the state aid exception request into this priority listing. It now falls in line and it all still fits.

The last one added separate from what was detailed in June is priority number 10, the recalibration to state aid. When recalibration was completed four years ago, the Commission asked the budget office to change the standard budget as to the way it published. The Commission also asked, Governor Mead, at that time, to add that money back into the standard budget. The Budget Department recently opined that they want to add a separate line item as a negative exception request. This has been done in the final draft. Mr. Buchholtz noted that this makes a whole lot of sense as it provides transparency to the state aid budget. All have the opportunity to weigh in on it separately as to the Commission's recommendation to the Governor, and the Governor's recommendation to the State Legislature. The priorities and their line items can be acted upon separately. In the event things don't go the way the Commission would prefer, the Governor or the Legislature can act independently from the Executive branch. This list provides enhanced transparency.

Mr. Buchholtz continued that the next part deals with one of the statutory reports the Commission is required to provide the Legislature, The Overseas Combat Veterans Tuition Assistance Program. Mr. Buchholtz noted the Commission made a very large cut to that program in Step three, to a magnitude of a little over 60% of available funding. In the last academic year, the Commission spent \$246,000 of the original \$1.2 million appropriation. The Commission really spends about \$490,000. The appropriation left after step three cuts was \$481,000. Mr. Buchholtz anticipates that the appropriation will remain solvent as what is not spent this biennium will carry forward into the next biennium. The amount of funding will supplant appropriations in the 2023-2024 biennium.

The budget as reviewed, mirrors the prioritization table. Mr. Buchholtz continued there is a standard budget for administration and then all the exception requests based on the priority adopted. Priorities one, two, and three are just like they were at the June Commission meeting. The narrative details what the money is for and the amount of each exception request. Priorities one, two, and three are in the Commission's administration budget. Number four and five appear later in the document, they are part of the state aid budget in entirety. The large one is number six which collapsed 24 exception requests into one. The Governor and the Legislature have the opportunity to question the Commission on any aspect of the total \$1.1 million exception request. Mr. Buchholtz noted that the budget figures coming from the Budget Department is pre-populated with the format and amounts from the prior biennium. In the prior budget all the related exception requests were consolidated into one item. Mr. Buchholtz repeated that process and included four pages of detail on each of the exception requests that relate to Information Technology.

Mr. Buchholtz continued, noting the rest of the administration budget are tables that detail where money is appropriated such as travel, ETS, salaries, etc.

The next unit is the state aid for the colleges. This unit reflects the changes he had previously mentioned he would complete which included in the budget the exception requests on page 31. On page 30 is the state aid community college standard budget narrative. He had presented \$151 million at the June meeting. Mr. Buchholtz reflected he was going to take a component of the amount of money attributed to reimbursing the colleges for their retirement reimbursements and that they pay on behalf of their employees. There is an amount within \$151 million that is calculated to create a reimbursement pool, that reimbursement pool was \$3.7 million. That pool is the difference between the \$147 million and \$151 million that you had seen in the funding allocation model. Unlike previous appropriations, the Budget Office said that the pool was not in the funding allocation model, because the amount for increased retirement was embedded within that specific line item. As such there was nothing to show to the public what the Commission had done with regard to taking money out and moving it to a separate unit in the accounting system. It was not transparent the amount of money that was appropriated to reimburse the colleges for their increased retirement costs experienced within their payroll.

Mr. Buchholtz added that the amount of money for retirements is recalculated every single biennium. It is based on what the colleges are really paying in April of every odd numbered year. He had surveyed the colleges in April as to what they were really paying that month. He then took a reimbursement amount and calculated it by multiplying it at 3.69% times the entire payroll. Then he adjusted that amount of money within the appropriation. Previously the process was not evident. One could not see this in the budget nor the funding allocation model. Instead he completed a net to zero change, by pulling money out of the unit and adding it into a new unit. The new unit had already been created in the accounting system, but was not in the budget system. The Budget Department had created that unit for this use. He subsequently moved that money to what is called Chapter 17 resulting in a net to zero change. It will now be separate budget line item going forward after this biennium. The money amount will change based on the salary survey done in April of every odd numbered year. And the adjustment to that line item will be a budget division adjustment, not a negative exception request. The budget is now completely transparent. This explains why the number is different than the \$151 million showed earlier by an amount of \$3.7 million. It is further explained in the second paragraph in the revenue portion on page 30.

Mr. Buchholtz noted the other change in the budget document, not seen in the prior draft, is where exception requests for state aid are detailed because of an Attorney General's opinion that instructs not to submit exception requests in this manner. As Director Caldwell previously indicated, the Agency complied with the wishes of the Budget Department and so it is included here. This topic is similar to what was noted in the Commission's recent letter to the Governor. The current motions before the Commission do not provide for approval of this specific exception request within the budget document. The budget department is aware that it is there, but it is not something the Commission can act on, so it is excluded in the final four-part motion. He continued that

those are the two-line items for that exception request. Which made sense so all can see what exactly will be done with the block grant for state aid. He continued there is an exception request in the positive for \$40 million. There is also an exception request in the negative for \$4.2 million thus showing an exception request of \$36 million. Mr. Buchholtz explained that when the Governor hopefully denies the exception requests on recalibration, the number will return to \$40 million.

Mr. Buchholtz continued, the next portion of the budget is health insurance for college employees. Again, it's a reimbursement pool, and entitlement. The budget is calculated on a survey of the colleges in April of every odd numbered year, what policies the colleges are actually paying, and then applying those numbers to what the state contribution will be for whatever policy mix the employees are enrolled. This calculation becomes the new standard budget. The number remains the same as what was presented in June. Right now there are no planned increases to policies for the next two years. As of now the corpus or excess of what is currently in the state funded health insurance pool is \$12 million. He believes they will be able to keep insurance reimbursement rates at a level amount and draw on that pool to make up any depth should it occur.

The next line item is library funding, a separate state aid line item. This is a flat dollar amount, it took a reduction in Step Two, it took a reduction in Step Three, what is listed is simply what is left.

The next line is a brand new unit, which was previously discussed and used to pull money out of the state aid line item and put it into the retirement distribution line item. This unit is at \$3.7 million. It is now in the budget as a separate line item. Giving this more transparency is the requirement to account for the money separately. If the money is not spent, the Commission is obligated to revert the funding, just like the health insurance funding pool. This provides a mechanism to do this within the budget.

The next unit, Contingency Reserve, consists of federal mineral royalty bonus funding. There is a portion of statute that provides for the colleges to receive a cut of this amount. However, the amount of income coming into the state never gets to the colleges in the distribution of the funding. It is in the budget yet there has not been a distribution since 2017. The unit is not a direct appropriation, rather it is an allocation if the money comes to the state of Wyoming from the federal government.

The Adult Education unit budget did not change at all from June. There is a prioritized, approved, exception request for this unit. Adult education is not part of the Administration unit, this exception request stands on its own. A subset of the Adult Education budget is the high school equivalency program. High school equivalency took big cuts during Step Two and Step Three, leaving \$1,000, which is reflected in the standard line item.

Up next is the Wyoming Investment in Nursing program. This has not changed since June. This unit, and the amount that goes in it, have been adopted as a prioritized

exception request. The exception request includes funding for a little over a million dollars that will fund the structural deficit in the program going into the next biennium which was unfunded from the last biennium. It is a lesser amount than what is outstanding from the previous biennium, because as some of the colleges did let some staff go. At the same time the program has grown as three of the colleges want to expand their individual programs. The colleges have the capacity and the student load for justification. The Commission is asking that the legislature fund for new nursing faculty positions including: one at Eastern, one at LCCC, and two at Northwest college. Reductions were taken to this program during Step Two and Step Three cuts. Cuts were applied to the student loan side since there are other ways for students to receive funding to attend school. The program is not a loan in the traditional sense but a revolving account. They receive the loan if after they graduate, they work as a nurse in the state and the loan is then paid back.

Mr. Buchholtz reminded that he had already noted the Veteran's Tuition unit and it too reflects a reduction in step three.

The part of the budget is Wyoming Public Television. It is part of the Commission's budget, but is a standalone budget because public television is part of the Commission's statute and responsibility. The budget was really crafted by Mr. Dugas, Executive Director of Wyoming Public Television. He provided the narrative and the needed exception request. Mr. Buchholtz invited Mr. Dugas to speak if necessary. Then Mr. Buchholtz continued this one does have an exception request though it is not part of the motion, because it is really not within the Commission's charge. The exception request is in the amount of \$125,000 which is a direct request to the Legislature. WPTV hopes to staff up two additional people for the next two years so that interim legislative committee meetings may be broadcast for the Legislature.

Mr. Dugas spoke, noting a minor correction on the exception request. As part of a 15% reduction in state aid, Wyoming PBS reduced staff by 2.5. FTE of 1.5 came from the Production Department. In March, the LSO asked WPTV to livestream double the number of interim committee hearings that were streamed in 2019. He responded that WPTV is not able to even do the number of meetings done in 2019, because of previously cutting 1.5 people out of that department. But, after consultation with Dr. Tyndall at CWC, it was determined that WPTV is such a critical part of the college mission, that federal care money would be used to fund one position for one year. The exception request funds one position for two years, to enable WPTV to continue to meet the demands of both Legislative and Executive office streaming needs.

Mr. Buchholtz added an additional note that he had done the same thing with Wyoming Public Television as was done with state aid to the community colleges. A portion of the state aid block grant was separated out for increased retirement contributions. He had done a net to zero move of the block grant into its own line item within the budget, thus there is a \$68,743 line item which is a little bit different than what was included in the

June budget draft. Mr. Buchholtz concluded his remarks by asking if the Commissioners had any follow up questions.

Commissioner Goetz applauded the Commission, Mr. Buchholtz, and Director Caldwell for the incredible job completed. She recognized the size of the project and the incredible amount of work put into it. She prefaced her comments with recognizing that they were coming from the 10,000 foot level. Commissioner Goetz commented that she is under the impression that certainly the Governor, Governor's Office, and Legislators really rely on the state of the agency. They read it and they absorb it. She wondered if there is an opportunity for the Commission to take a lot of what Mr. Buchholtz just detailed and further justify aspects within the document by breaking elements out into bullet points in the state of the agency section, even though it might be repetitive. She suggested it would be a better way to tell the story. She did not think there was a limit to how much one could say in the document. It is the first few pages that all of our legislators read and then ask, "Why are you asking for more money". The State of the Agency could point to what the colleges are doing to diversify the economy and why they could not accomplish the diversification they had hoped for. She suggested highlighting what projects and areas are carryover versus new priorities and why the priorities are not going to be met unless the money asked for is received. The colleges have the power to be such an economic diversification tool for the state and the work they do is incredible. This is an opportunity for the Commission and the colleges to tell the story. Everyone hates COVID, but it is the new reality and it has sucked for everyone, and it sucked for the colleges tremendously. She suggested one whole page devoted to how COVID wrecked the system and how the colleges and the entire system need to climb out of that hole. She added this was just her non-expert's observation.

Director Caldwell noted that Commissioner Goetz was "on it". She proposed that the Commission "beef up" a little bit the State of the Agency portion, in particular around the challenges. She thought this could be a strong anchor. The challenges are noted but not spelled out directly. There were a lot of things included and the challenges need to be spelled out more directly. Not expressly stated is the increase in fixed costs themselves. That too should be inserted into the document. Director Caldwell noted that they would certainly hit on those components. She also mentioned that one thing not in the budget was an additional request for cybersecurity. It had been in prior budgets but was denied and now Eastern has experienced the consequences. The document should also address redundancy and what was recently discovered at Casper College. Once the impact is fully clear and more is known on the recent cyberattack, the Commission may submit a supplemental budget request. She agreed it was a great idea to add to the State of the Agency.

Commissioner Boal asked Mr. Buchholtz if he was feeling good about the budget and if transparency had been increased? Commissioner Boal complimented Mr. Buchholtz for reaching out to the colleges to gather some real numbers to justify numbers within the budget. He also indicated it was a great practice moving retirement money into its own unit. He asked why this wasn't thought of earlier, brilliant. He thanked Mr. Buchholtz.

Commissioner Freeze asked if there were any other questions or comments. She then asked the Commissioners if they were comfortable with the multipart motion that has four pieces or if the Commissioners would like her to break the draft motion into four separate parts. All responded that they were good with the multiple motion format.

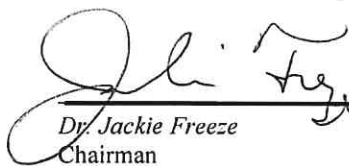
Commissioner Freeze entertained a motion to: one, approve the standard budget and department budget priorities as presented; two, approve exception budget priorities 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, and 9 and the amounts attached as presented; third, move to submit to the Budget Department a recommendation for an exception request reflected in and prioritized as numbers 4 and 5 in the total amount of \$40,337,852 for the community college state aid; and fourth, move to recommend the Budget Department and Governor do not adopt the negative exception request for the quadrennial recalibration of the base period also known as the enrollment adjustment based on priority 10. Commissioner Blikre moved. Commissioner Wyatt seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Director Caldwell recognized Mr. Buchholtz for his extensive work he does and for the college presidents and their staff for pulling this all together. The Presidents' staffs do amazing work to bring all these numbers forward.

Commissioner Freeze closed by noting that making the budget process transparent was a good thing. She also thanked Casper College for hosting the meeting.

All sang happy birthday to Dr. Tribley.

Meeting Adjourned



Dr. Jackie Freeze
Chairman

10-7-2021

Date



Dr. Sandy Caldwell
Executive Director

10/7/21

Date