BOARD OF TRUSTEES
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

USNH SYSTEM OFFICE
FARNUM HALL
28 COLLEGE DRIVE, CONCORD, NH

MEETING MINUTES
August 27, 2026
Draft for Approval

Attendance

Committee members present at meeting location: Kass Ardinger, Kevin Knarr, Peter Paul, Mike Pilot (Chair), Christiana Thornton

Committee members participating remotely: Brian McCabe (out-of-state travel)

Committee members absent: Patrick Griffin

Other trustees participating: Maureen Beauregard (remote), Donald Birx, Jamie Burnett, Elizabeth Chilton, Evan Christensen, James Gray (remote), Catherine Provencher, David Westover (remote)

Call to Order

Chair Pilot called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum sufficient to do business.

Approval of Consent Agenda

The following motion was moved by Trustee Thornton, seconded by Trustee Paul, and approved by roll call with no dissenting votes:

> ***VOTED**, that the Executive Committee approves the consent agenda as presented.*

Approval of State Operating Budget Request

Chancellor Provencher presented this item. The Chancellor reported that the Governor's office provided budget guidance that the USNH state appropriation be $92 million per year in the coming biennium. If approved by the legislature, this would increase funding by $10 million per year over current System budget projections. .

The Chancellor recommends that the Board adopt this baseline level of requested funding. Trustees then discussed other possible approaches that might clarify how the state funding serves as a subsidy to support New Hampshire resident students. Trustees also discussed possible additional targeted funding requests, such as temporary additional funding for Keene State or funding designed to offset the cost of state-mandated tuition waivers for particular groups. Trustees further discussed the pros and cons of block grant versus line-item funding. Trustees generally agreed that clearer messaging of the uses of state funding is necessary.

Following discussion, the following motion was moved by Trustee Knarr, seconded by Trustee Thornton, and approved by roll call with no dissenting votes:

> ***VOTED,*** *on recommendation of the Presidents' Council, that the Executive Committee approve the FY28- 29 Biennial State Operating Budget Request at no less than the target budget levels provided by the Governor of $92,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2028 and 2029; and*
>
> ***FURTHER,*** *that the Board Chair, after consultation with the Chancellor, be authorized to increase the amount of the budget request if, in the Chair's judgment, an increased request would be in the best interest of the System.*

Chancellor Provencher noted that the form of the request and any increased request would be informed by the trustees' input during the preceding discussion.

Update on Meetings with Elected Officials

Chancellor Provencher and Chair Pilot presented this item. They stated that leadership has recently had meetings with multiple executive councilors and legislators, largely focused on the Board's recent decision to ask the legislature to combine the Chancellor and UNH President positions. It has been more difficult to make contact with others in legislative leadership, but efforts continue. The meetings emphasized the potential efficiencies and accountability benefits of the proposed combination. Trustees discussed options for a broader information campaign designed to explain the rationale behind the proposal.

Legislator Request for Performance Audit of System

Chancellor Provencher informed the Committee that four state Senators have requested that the State conduct a performance audit of the System. The precise timeline and details of any potential audit remain unclear at this time, although these audits typically take 18-24 months. System leadership is seeking to meet with the Senators to determine their concerns and whether they could be addressed in some other way so that the short-term conversation can remain focused on the System's proposed legislative change.

KSC Presidential Search Update

A search committee has been seated, chaired by Trustee Gregg Tewksbury. The committee representatives include a number of non-KSC community and business leaders from the Monadnock region with the goal of insuring that the successful candidate will already have familiarity with those leaders as they assume the position. A series of listening sessions has been scheduled with the hope of having finalist interviews in January. The System has also selected a search firm to assist in the process.

U.S. Education Department Call to Action

Chancellor Provencher briefly outlined a letter sent by the U.S.D.O.E. to all college and university leaders and board members. The System plans to respond as requested and will post the response publicly.

Proposed Change in Board Committees

Chair Pilot explained that a number of years ago, the Board moved capital planning oversight from the Financial Affairs Committee to a new combined Investment and Capital Planning Committee. The chair of FAC and ICPC recommend that capital planning oversight revert to FAC. The proposal requires a change to Board Bylaw, which requires approval by the full Board, and so will return for action at a future Board meeting.

Nonpublic Session

At 5:21 pm, the following motion was moved by Trustee Knarr, seconded by Trustee Ardinger, and approved by roll call with no dissenting votes:

> ***VOTED***, that the Executive Committee enter nonpublic session for the purposes of discussing: (1) strategy or negotiations with respect to collective bargaining; (2) consultation with legal counsel; and (3) consideration of a pending claim filed against a public body as authorized by RSA 91-A:2.I.(a) and (b) and RSA 91-A:3.II(e).

Return to Public Session

At 5:35 pm, on motion properly made and seconded, the Committee voted unanimously to return to public session.

Report of Action Taken in Nonpublic Session

USNH Secretary Chad Pimentel reported that during nonpublic session, the following motion was moved by Trustee Paul, seconded by Trustee Ardinger, and approved by roll call with no dissenting votes:

> ***VOTED***, on recommendation of President Chilton, President of the University of New Hampshire, that the Board of Trustees Executive Committee, hereby approves and ratifies the proposed collective bargaining agreement with the NEA Law Faculty Union; and
>
> ***FURTHER***, hereby authorizes President Chilton to execute the July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2028, collective bargaining agreement on behalf of the Board of Trustees Executive Committee.

Other Business

Trustee Westover reported on move-in day at Keene State and praised Keene State staff on the effectiveness of the day. Chancellor Provencher noted that the Board would consider details of proposed legislation at its retreat in September. Chair Pilot noted that Trustee Knarr has been working with leadership on sharpening the budget mitigation proposals discussed at the June meeting. Trustee Knarr briefly updated the Committee on that work, which is guided by the principle that the System's goal is to maintain three, independent, financially viable institutions. Trustee Knarr thanked staff for their hard work on the matter and noted that there are opportunities to improve how shared services are designed and operated and to improve accountability and transparency. He concluded by noting that there will be a fuller report and discussion at the Board retreat in September.

Adjournment

There being no further business or discussion, the meeting adjourned at 5:58 p.m.