BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MEETING HELD AT:

MEMORIAL UNION BUILDING
UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DURHAM, NH

MEETING MINUTES
October 23, 2026
Draft for Approval

Attendance

Trustees present at meeting location: Kass Ardinger, Matthew Ash, Maureen Beauregard, Donald Birx, Jamie Burnett, Ludmilla Cejka, Elizabeth Chilton, Patrick Griffin, George Hansel, Shawn Jasper, Kevin Knarr, Rick Ladd, Tessa Lancaster, Brian McCabe, Peter Paul, Mike Pilot (Chair), Jennifer Higgins Pitre, Catherine Provencher, Wayne Semprini, Gregg Tewksbury, Christiana Thornton, David Westover.

Trustees participating remotely: James Gray

Trustees absent: Caitlin Davis, Brendan Finn, Joël Nkonkou.

Others participating: Governor's Representative Paul Dean; Commissioner Davis's Representative Steve Appleby

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Call to Order and Chair's Opening Remarks

Chair Pilot called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and noted the presence of a quorum sufficient to do business (Trustee Sen. Gray will participate remotely for a portion of the session because of a conflict with his legislative obligations; no one else will be present at the remote location). Chair Pilot then noted that this will be Trustee Ladd's last meeting on the Board because of his upcoming retirement from the Legislature. He also noted that the planned agenda had set aside 90 minutes for a discussion regarding the Board's structure and governance, but that the facilitator of that discussion was unexpectedly unable to attend. That discussion will instead take place at a future Board meeting.

Host Campus Presentation

UNH President Elizabeth Chilton introduced a presentation on UNH's Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans, and Space (EOS). President Chilton noted that UNH's research program is an inextricable part of its mission and contributes directly to student learning. EOS Director Ruth Varner then presented on the Institute's work. Dr. Varner is an alumna of UNH's graduate school and explained how UNH has formed a part of her personal and professional life. EOS can trace its lineage back over forty years and is the largest research institute in New Hampshire. It currently consists of five research centers: the Center for Acoustics Research and Education, the Center for Coastal and Ocean Mapping, the Earth Systems Research Center, the Ocean Process Analysis Laboratory, and the Space Science Center. Together, those are the recipients of over $80 million in research grants annually and have published

more than 8,000 articles in peer-reviewed journals. Recent research indicates that each research grant dollar received by EOS creates four dollars in economic impact through workforce development, industry support, and related activities.

Dr. Varner then introduced Dominic Puopolo, a Mechanical Engineering faculty member in EOS's Space Science Center (SSC). He noted that SSC creates opportunities for undergraduate students to directly participate in and support NASA missions, and that he himself had the opportunity to participate in fieldwork and related work as an undergraduate at UNH. He then reviewed projects he had worked on, including on sounding rockets used to measure physical phenomena in suborbital space.

Dr. Varner then presented on the work of the Earth Systems Research Center (ESRC), the center in which she works. That work includes measuring the thawing of permafrost in the Arctic as the region warms. Over eighty undergraduate students have participated in that work, including some travel to the main research site in Greenland. ESRC also works closely with New Hampshire's ski industry to provide data on snowpack conditions and help understand changes to the region's climate that could affect that industry. The Center also manages a website informing the public about lead levels in drinking water throughout the state.

Dr. Varner then introduced Larry Mayer, the Director of the Center for Coastal and Ocean Mapping (CCOM). Dr. Mayer noted that CCOM includes 110 employees and is recognized globally as a leader in ocean mapping. CCOM's operations are entirely funded from sources outside the university. CCOM has assisted in mapping the sea floor around Guadalcanal to help identify sunken ships from World War II, the plume associated with the Deepwater Horizon accident, and debris resulting from the collapse of the Key Bridge near Baltimore. The center has over 70 industrial partners, creating economic impact in the state and strong employment options for students who pass through the center. Dr. Mayer then briefly described the new Center of Excellence being built on The Edge, which will allow for expanded partnerships and new research opportunities.

Dr. Varner then presented on the work of the Center for Acoustic Research and Education (CARE), which focuses on how sound affects the environment. This work includes the recent completion of a new sensor cable near the Isle of Shoals which will allow for the collection of acoustic data of interest to the national security and fishery industries.

Finally, Dr. Varner presented on the work of the Ocean Process Analysis Laboratory (OPAL). OPAL's work includes tracking ocean acidification and the installation and monitoring of data buoys allowing for real-time tracking of wave heights, data that is of use to a range of people including fishermen and surfers. OPAL conducts its research in part from a ship which gives undergraduates opportunities for field research. Other projects include a space-based optical sensor which can track algal blooms and oil spills and is an example of interdisciplinary collaboration within EOS as expertise from both OPAL and SSC is brought to bear on a problem.

Trustees expressed thanks for the presentation and the work done by the Institute. They also noted that the field is changing quickly given changes in technology and federal funding priorities. Work is needed to ensure that the value of research is understood by the broader community and linked to the university's educational mission and public perception. Trustees agreed that efforts should be made to share the story of the impact of UNH's research throughout the state.

Comments by Employee Organizations

Julia Rodriguez spoke on behalf of a number of faculty and staff organizations. She encouraged the Board to engage more directly with faculty and staff when making decisions, particularly given increased public scrutiny. She also asked for set ongoing time on future agendas for employee organizations to address the Board. She also urged increased consultation with faculty and staff and a

focus on USNH institutions' educational missions.

Consent Agenda

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

> ***VOTED**, that the Board approves the minutes of its meetings held on June 25-26, 2026 and September 18, 2026, be approved as presented.*

Educational Excellence Committee Report

Committee Chair Griffin presented the report of the committee. He referenced the USSB's presentation on student concerns which could be contributing to challenges in student retention, which focused on issues with the physical plants on campus. The USSB will continue to report on this issue over the course of the year, and staff will determine what steps can be taken to address these issues over the coming months. Chair Griffin then described a presentation on enrollment received by the committee, which included an update on the New Hampshire Promise program. Finally, he described a presentation by UNH Provost Jen Riley and Vice Provost Matt MacManes to create a new data dashboard which will inform academic programming decisions at UNH. Plans exist to replicate that dashboard at KSC and PSU, ideally within the year.

Audit Committee Report and Related Board Action

Committee Chair Paul presented the report of the committee. He noted that the committee had reviewed the most recent audited financial statements as well as reviewing an audit report which identified no material deficiencies. The committee also received an update on the ongoing Workday implementation, which currently remains on time and on budget. However, Chair Paul also noted that the structure of the System, with three separately accredited institutions requiring separate student data access structures, presents challenges which will need to be addressed as the implementation continues. Trustees requested a more general update on System IT and WorkDay issues; one will be provided in March.

Following the report, the following motion was moved by Trustee Paul, seconded by Trustee Tewksbury, and approved by roll call with no dissenting votes:

> ***VOTED**, on recommendation of the Audit Committee, that the USNH Financial Statements for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2026, be accepted and forwarded to the Governor, the Legislative Fiscal Committee, and others as specified in state law RSA 187-A:22.*

Governance Committee Report

Committee Chair Ardinger presented the report of the committee. She noted that the committee had conducted its annual review of the backgrounds and skills of trustees, and identified gaps in the areas of law, safety and security, audit, and agriculture. The Nomination Committee will take those areas into account when determining recommendations for new trustees. The committee then discussed the possibility of adding a public comment period to Board meetings given the recent increase in requests to address the board. The committee directed staff to bring a draft proposal for committee and possible Board review in March. The committee then reviewed the Board's current meeting schedule and whether it allows for sufficient time for Board business. Considerations also include the burden that meetings impose on host campuses. For this year, an additional off-cycle meeting is likely needed in order to appoint a new KSC president. For future years, the committee is considering recommending a new one-day Board meeting with no committees in January.

Investment Committee Report

Committee Chair McCabe presented the report of the committee. He noted that the portfolio is up 7% through the period September 30, with three-year results also positive. The committee also discussed

how to set the projected return on the portfolio for purposes of next year's budgeting process. The committee recommended increasing the assumed budgeted returns from short-term investments from 3% to 3.5%. The committee also recommended to the Financial Affairs Committee that authorization be given to move up to $150 million from long-term to short-term investments to decrease risk and protect liquidity over time.

Financial Affairs Committee Report and Related Board Action

Committee Chair Knarr presented the report of the committee. He noted that all trustees had the opportunity to attend the committee meeting, meaning a detailed report was not necessary. He then thanked the campuses for the good financial results during the prior year and the collaborative work to address the financial challenges facing the System in future years.

Following the report, the Board took two actions on recommendation of the committee.

First, the following motion was moved by Trustee Burnett, seconded by Trustee Beauregard, and approved by roll call with no dissenting votes:

> ***VOTED**, on recommendation of the Financial Affairs Committee that, effective for academic year 2027-28, the maximum tuition rate, mandatory fees, and room and board rate annual increases as presented on the attached schedule be adopted as the maximum amounts authorized.*

Second, the Board took up a recommendation to authorize the movement of up to $150 million from long-term to short-term investments. Trustees expressed concerns about the need to take this step and emphasized the need to monitor use to ensure that the System's financial assets are used to best effect. If funds are withdrawn, they will be used in accordance with the guidelines adopted by the Board in June.

After discussion, the following motion was moved by Trustee Burnett, seconded by Trustee Beauregard, and approved by roll call, Trustees Ardinger, Ash, Beauregard, Birx, Burnett, Cejka, Chilton, Gray, Griffin, Hansel, Jasper, Knarr, Ladd, Lancaster, McCabe, Paul, Pilot, Pitre, Provencher, Semprini, Tewksbury, Thornton, and Westover ***in favor***; Trustee Jasper ***opposed***:

> ***VOTED**, on recommendation of the Financial Affairs Committee, that pursuant to policy BOT.IV.G.1, amended in June 2026 (see Appendix section C Risk Mitigation) that $150 million of LTTI investments are authorized to be liquidated and transferred to the Cash and Short-Term Investment Pool on a pro rata quarterly basis between January 2027 through June 2028, to support the potential liquidity needs of the system through fiscal year 2030.*

Transition of USNH Shared Services to UNH

Chair Pilot introduced this item, reminding the trustees of prior discussions regarding the need to improve and streamline shared services in order to support all three institutions. Chancellor Provencher noted that as part of that work, the UNH Survey Center is helping to develop shared service user surveys to identify actionable areas of strength and weakness.

As another part of that work, the Presidents' Council is recommending that oversight of existing shared services be transferred from the System office to UNH in order to increase efficiency and service levels. Chancellor Provencher then presented the proposed project timeline. Transitions are planned in phases through December 2027. Functions currently under the Vice Chancellor for Financial Affairs will be the first phase, with oversight moving to the UNH Executive Vice President for Financial Affairs. ET&S, Human Resources, Internal Audit, and Legal will move under appropriate UNH leaders in the following phases. Presidents Birx and Chilton reiterated their support for the plan because it will put all shared services together in one place, increasing clarity for users and administrators, and because of the increased spirit of partnership evident among the institutions makes a successful implementation more likely. Trustees asked that the status of shared services be a standing item at future board meetings and agreed on the need to ensure that the Legislature is abreast of the System's effort.

After this discussion, the following motion was moved by Trustee Burnett, seconded by Trustee Beauregard, and approved with no dissenting votes:

> ***VOTED**, upon recommendation of the Presidents' Council, that the Board supports the recommended shift of USNH system office functions to UNH as outlined in the attached materials, subject only to such further approvals as would be required by Board policy and/or statutory amendment. In taking on these responsibilities, UNH leadership will have both authority and accountability for the outlined central services.*

Revision to Timeline of Proposed Merger of Roles of UNH President and USNH Chancellor

The discussion on the previous item noted concerns among trustees and stakeholders that the System had not conducted sufficient effort to educate legislators on the reasons that the Board is seeking a statutory amendment to merge the roles of UNH President and USNH Chancellor. In light of those concerns, the following motion was moved by Trustee Burnett, seconded by Trustee Paul, and approved with no dissenting votes:

> ***VOTED**, that staff are directed to delay seeking a statutory amendment to combine the roles of UNH President and USNH Chancellor until receiving further direction from the Board.*

Designation of UNH EVPFA as USNH Treasurer

Chancellor Provencher introduced this item. While much of the proposed shift of shared service responsibilities from the System office to UNH can be undertaken without formal Board approval, state law vests the Board with sole authority to designate the System Treasurer. In order to fully implement the transfer of shared finance services, it is necessary to reassign the Treasurer designation from the USNH Vice Chancellor for Financial Affairs to the UNH Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration.

After this introduction, the following motion was moved by Trustee Burnett, seconded by Trustee Tewksbury, and approved with no dissenting votes:

> ***VOTED**, pursuant to statutory authority (RSA 187-A:15 II), that the Board hereby designates the Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration of the University of New Hampshire (UNH EVPFA) as the Treasurer of the University System, effective January 1, 2027, with any changes to the terms of the UNH EVPFA's current appointment to be delegated to the Executive Compensation and Performance Review Committee.*

Nonpublic Session

At 11:27 a.m. the following motion was moved by Trustee Burnett, seconded by Trustee Tewksbury, and approved by roll call with no dissenting votes:

> ***VOTED**, pursuant to RSA 91-A:2.1(b) that the Board of Trustees enter nonpublic session for the purposes of discussing matters affecting collective bargaining strategy.*

Return to Public Session

At 11:38 am, by motion duly made and seconded, the Board unanimously voted to return to public session.

Report of Action Taken in Nonpublic Session

USNH Secretary Chad Pimentel reported that during the nonpublic session, the following motion was moved by Trustee Burnett, seconded by Trustee Ash, 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, hereby approves and ratifies the proposed collective bargaining agreement with the UNH-GEU-UAW;*
>
> ***AND FURTHER**, hereby authorizes President Chilton to execute the July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2029,*

collective bargaining agreement on behalf of the Board of Trustees.

Chair's Closing Remarks

Chair Pilot thanked Representative Ladd for his years of service as the House Speaker's designee on the Board. Chair Pilot noted that Rep. Ladd has always focused on the impact of the System on students and the community, and acted with thoughtfulness and integrity. Rep. Ladd expressed that he had deeply enjoyed his time on the Board and urged the Board to continue examining how to sustain its mission, communicate effectively with the Legislature and other stakeholders, and to be open to new models of education and organization.

Adjournment

There being no further business or discussion, the meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.