BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Emergency Meeting

USNH System Office
5 Chenell Drive
Concord, NH

(March 18, 2020)

Meeting Minutes
(Draft for Approval)

In Attendance: Trustees (at system office): Shawn Jasper and Chancellor Todd Leach. Trustees (via teleconference): Chair Joseph Morone, Vice Chair Jamie Burnett, Secretary Kassandra Ardinger, Amy Begg, Don Birx, Todd Black, Jim Dean, Jackie Eastwood, Frank Edelblut, Cathy Green, Cailee Griffin, George Hansel, Scott Mason, Mike Pilot, Chris Pope, Mark Rubinstein, Morgan Rutman, Joe Scala, Marjorie Smith, Wally Stevens, Rhonda Hensley (for Governor Sununu), Melinda Treadwell, Alex Walker, and David Westover. Staff (via teleconference): Paul Dean, Wayne Jones, Chris Clement. Staff (at system office): Tia Miller, Cathy Provencher, Karen Benincasa, Lisa Thorne, Jim McGrail, and Ron Rodgers.

Call to Order: At 4:00 pm, Chair Morone called the continuing meeting, recessed yesterday, to order, called the roll, and noted the continued presence of a quorum sufficient for the conduct of business.

Determination of Conditions Necessary for the Conduct of a Telephonic Meeting: Chair Morone made the following findings and declaration, sufficient for the conduct of a telephonic meeting and counting all members toward the quorum requirement whether or not physically present in the meeting location:

Under the NH Right to Know Law, RSA 91-a:2, III (b), a governmental body such as this Board of Trustees is authorized to meet by conference call when “immediate action is imperative and the physical presence of a quorum is not reasonably practical within the period of time requiring action.” In consultation with USNH General Counsel, it is my determination that a meeting by conference call is justified on the basis of the following facts:

- The individual members of this Board live and work in locations remote to any single meeting place;

- The Governor’s declaration of emergency and Executive Order 2020-04, dated March 13, 2020, permits and encourages governmental bodies to conduct public meetings on an emergency basis using telephonic communications;
• Given the members’ various professional and personal schedules it is not reasonably practical to gather a quorum of the Board members in a single place for a physical meeting;

• The matter to be considered at this meeting developed only very recently;

• The interests of USNH, its students, faculty, and staff, and the State of New Hampshire will be best served by Board’s expeditious consideration of and decision on the matter presented; and

• The public notice of the meeting has been posted and members of the public are permitted to observe and listen to the proceedings at the Board Room at the System Office at 5 Chenell Drive in Concord, NH.

Discussion: At the request of Chair Morone, the presidents briefly described the current conditions at their institutions and the Chancellor reported on the work of the seven task forces as well as his communications with the USNH institutions’ principal accrediting agency, the New England Commission on Higher Education. Chair Morone then led the Board in an extensive discussion of the proposal to extend online teaching of classes through the end of the spring semester, asking each trustee in turn to offer their views, comments, and questions. At the conclusion of the discussion, on motion moved by Trustee Eastwood and seconded by Trustee Jasper, the Board unanimously voted by roll call:

   VOTED, the Board of Trustees hereby extends through the end of the spring semester the current mode of operations at UNH, PSU, and KSC, in particular the use of remote education for all courses and on-campus residence of only those student in extenuating circumstances as permitted by the institution.

Chair Morone then introduced the topic of financial contingency planning with particular focus on financial aid, rooms and meals fees, mandatory fees, minimizing the continued expenditure of cash, and the future of on-going and planned capital projects. The Financial Affairs Committee will meet on Tuesday, March 24, to consider the issues and possible responses. In light of the legislative proposals to provide assistance to the higher education sector, the Executive Committee, at its regularly scheduled meeting tomorrow, March 19, will consider the establishment of an eighth task force to monitor and prepare for the possible opportunities.

Adjournment: At 5:45 pm, on motion duly moved by Trustee Jasper, seconded by Trustee Ardinger, and unanimously approved by the Board, Chair Morone adjourned the meeting of the Board of Trustees. The next regularly scheduled Board and committee meetings will be held on April 23 and 24, 2020, at Plymouth State University.