

MINUTES OF A CONTINUED MEETING OF THE CITY
COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COEUR D'ALENE, IDAHO,
HELD AT THE EDMINSTER STUDENT UNION BUILDING DRIFTWOOD BAY ROOM,
NORTH IDAHO COLLEGE

August 5, 2026

The Mayor and Council of the City of Coeur d'Alene met in a continued session with the North Idaho College Board of Trustees at the Edminster Student Union Building Driftwood Bay Room, North Idaho College (NIC), on August 5, 2026, at 6:00 p.m., there being present the following members:

Dan Gookin, Mayor

Amy Evans	) Members of Council Present
Dan Sheckler	)
Dan English	)
Kiki Miller	)
Christie Wood	)

Kenny Gabriel	) Member of Council Absent
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Nick Swayne, North Idaho College President

Tarie Zimmerman, Chair	) Members of North Idaho College Board of Trustees
Mary Havercroft	)
Rick Durbin	)
Brad Corkill	)
Eve Knudtsen	)

CITY STAFF PRESENT: Randy Adams, City Attorney; Renata McLeod, City Clerk/Municipal Services Director; Hilary Patterson, Community Planning Director; Adam Rouse, Parks & Recreation Director; and Jo Anne Mateski, Mayor's Executive Assistant.

North Idaho College (NIC) STAFF PRESENT: Tom Greene, Chief Marketing Communications & Government Relations Officer; Gwen Cash-James, Provost; Meagan Snyder, Chief Human Resources Officer; Shawn Noel, Athletics & Recreation Director; and Sarah Garcia, Vice President for Finance and Business Affairs; Riel Anderson, NIC Foundation Alumni Relations and Director of Development; Suzy Scura, NIC Board Clerk; and Kristin Howard, Interim Executive Assistant to the President.

OTHERS PRESENT: Jeanette Laster, HREI Executive Director and Tony Stewart, KCTFHR Secretary

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Gookin called the meeting to order and introduced Council and city staff. Chair Zimmerman called the meeting to order and introduced the Board of Trustees. North Idaho College (NIC) President Nick Swayne introduced the NIC staff present in the meeting.

Mayor Gookin noted that the purpose of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for the NIC Board of Trustees and the City Council to discuss shared goals and priorities.

DISCUSSION: President Swayne stated that it's a great idea to get together for a discussion on topics where strategic interests of the City and the College intersect. He identified plans for a new arena or event center to replace the aging Christianson Gym, potential opportunities involving the HREI building, use and management of Memorial Field, and concerns regarding the dike road (Rosenberry Drive) and the adjacent beach area, future placement of the Chief Morris Antelope sculpture, and considerations for expanding both traditional and non-traditional student housing on campus. Mayor Gookin added the Firefighter program and Police Post Academy.

Events Center

President Swayne discussed a concept to replace the Christianson Gym with a 5,000-seat arena that would double as a community event center. NIC only needs it for 49 days a year for their graduation and sporting events, and the rest can be rented out for concerts, tournaments, and statewide events. A rough estimate of cost is between \$40–\$50 Million, the project would likely require raising about half the cost through sponsorships and financing the rest, supported in part by forming an Auditorium District funded by a public approved hotel tax. The College may seek a City Council Resolution expressing conceptual support for an events center project in the proposed District, contingent upon meeting fundraising goals. Councilmember Miller and City Attorney Randy Adams clarified that any income of the Auditorium District would remain in the District. President Swayne added that revenues would flow to a separate operating entity with NIC and City representation. Councilmember Wood stated strong countywide interest and need for an events facility. Mayor Gookin stated that the City would be supportive.

Community Planning Director Hilary Patterson explained that University District zoning already allows an event center use, but the City would need to review the existing Planned Unit Development (PUD), set appropriate parking requirements, and likely make some minor amendments to the PUD and possibly the zoning language. Mayor Gookin also added the impact on traffic would need to be reviewed.

Councilmember Miller clarified that she is in support of the proposed event center and that earlier concerns stemmed from a previous feasibility study showing a city-sponsored performing arts center could lose about \$350,000 annually. She expressed excitement for the current event center concept and believed an Auditorium District offers promising potential.

Trustee Corkill inquired if there are interest in sponsorships, with President Swayne noted that contributions in the range of \$10 Million may be possible.

Human Rights Education Institute (HREI) Building

Mayor Gookin explained that the HREI building is the historic former battery terminal for the old electric railroad and one of the oldest remaining downtown structures, which the City doesn't want to demolish despite its significant maintenance needs. He noted the City recently secured a \$60,000 grant for some remediation and explained there are legal constraints: a small corner sits on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land, so the City cannot simply sell it without triggering federal requirements. Instead, he floated the idea that NIC could assume use and maintenance of the building under an agreement.

President Swayne stated that NIC is interested in exploring use of the HREI building, noting it could host things like classes and activity space, but only if the value of the space justifies the maintenance burden. He stressed they do not want to displace HREI or its nonprofit partners, so any arrangement would need a clear MOU between the City and NIC.

HREI Executive Director Jeanette Laster noted that HREI is already a heavily used community hub, hosting NIC, the City, and about 36 nonprofits each year, many of which rely on low- or no-cost space for trainings, events, and resource fairs. She stressed that while HREI is open to partnership with NIC, they do not want to be displaced, nor do they want their nonprofit partners and community users displaced, because comparable free or low-cost space is essentially unavailable elsewhere. Ms. Laster also explained the challenging financial and maintenance history of the historic building: HREI previously carried full maintenance responsibilities under an older lease, which is unrealistic for a single nonprofit given the building's age and repair needs, and they now operate under a sliding-scale lease and rely on fundraising and past capital investments to keep the facility viable.

Councilmember English suggested that any future arrangement must be built around user fees or contributions that help cover maintenance and operations. Councilmember Wood stated that HREI should not be displaced, because its mission and the historic building are important to the city's character. She acknowledged that HREI is under pressure as lease payments begin soon and that maintaining the building is hard for a single organization. In her view, education belongs with the NIC, so she supports exploring a partnership where NIC uses the building, HREI remains in place, and the city is relieved of direct landlord duties. Mayor Gookin recommended that NIC evaluate the HREI building and conduct an assessment in collaboration with city staff and Ms. Laster.

Memorial Field

President Swayne explained that because the field level is so close to the lake level, the infield stays wet and unusable, forcing NIC to play games in Worley; he proposed turfing the infield and improving drainage, at an estimated cost of \$500,000–\$750,000, but said NIC cannot justify that investment without some control over scheduling and use.

Parks and Recreation Director Adam Rouse explained that Memorial Field is still actively used for city summer softball and youth baseball on a weekly basis, and that its main problems

stem less from lake level and more from construction legacy and soil conditions hinder drainage despite some drain work done last year. He suggested there may be cheaper infield remediation options than full turf. He emphasized that the City is open to partnership with NIC but cannot support arrangements that give NIC exclusive control and displace existing community users. He noted that previous draft MOUs between the City and NIC already went into substantial detail on responsibilities and that, from his perspective, the key is to refine those agreements, so the field remains a shared asset.

Mayor Gookin suggested continued exploration of partnership opportunities between the City and NIC that could provide financial benefits and help offset maintenance costs. Councilmember Wood and Councilmember Miller supported the idea to return to the table and find common ground.

Dike Road

President Swayne noted that NIC spends about \$75,000 each summer cleaning the beach, bathrooms, and area along the road, and that the road itself needs significant attention from the City. He floated a parking-based model similar to downtown, using license-plate or barcode scanner so non-Kootenai County visitors pay to park, while local residents either park free or at a reduced rate in designated areas. His goal is to create a shared revenue stream from parking that would help fund both city road maintenance and NIC's beach operations, without adding new direct taxes on local residents. He asked the City to explore what is legally possible and whether the City would need to authorize NIC to charge for parking along the dike.

Councilmember Wood agreed to explore collaborative solutions between NIC and the City. Mayor Gookin stated that the Streets Department is aware of the roadway condition, but funding limitations have delayed improvements. Potential options discussed included repairing the road, striping for parking spaces, and implementing a two-hour parking limit to better manage use.

Councilmember Miller suggested for NIC to meet with Diamond Parking to talk about possible solutions.

Chief Morris Antelope

President Swayne noted that the sculpture's current location behind a guardrail near Rosenberry Drive is hard to see and not fully satisfactory to the Tribe and suggested exploring relocation. Mayor Gookin shared that the sculpture has already been moved in the past and that prior efforts to relocate it were complicated. Councilmember Evans noted the placement was important to the Tribe, as they were very involved in the creation. Mr. Rouse confirmed the sculpture is part of the City's public art collection and said there may be capacity within the public art maintenance budget to help with relocation costs. Mayor Gookin suggested including this concern in the agenda for the next Arts Commission meeting.

Discussion:

Councilmember Miller asked if the Dormitory Housing Commission is still active. She noted that there is a housing-focused gathering on August 20th and said she wants to ensure she is sharing available attainable-housing resources and tools with the Commission. Her goal is to make sure NIC's housing group has full visibility into local housing programs and options as they study additional dorm capacity and non-traditional student housing.

Councilmember Miller stated that she would like for NIC and the City to create stronger partnerships with legislative issues. President Swayne stated that they will host a Legislative meet and greet again and invited Council to participate.

Councilmember Miller also brought up rumors about the instability between NIC and Coeur d'Alene Summer Theater. President Swayne explained that Coeur d'Alene Summer Theatre is one of three sponsored cultural programs of NIC. He emphasized there is no current intent to sever ties and that NIC is working on an updated MOU. He also noted that while NIC must recover direct costs such as facilities and sound system upgrades, the College remains committed to maintaining these arts partnerships.

Councilmember Sheckler expressed caution about the HREI building arrangement, warning that there seems like institutional mission creep when institutions share space even with a well written MOU. He noted that Boards, Councils, and College Presidents all change with time. Because HREI is so important to the community, he has reservations about arrangements that might weaken that institution. President Swayne stated that NIC and the City need to figure out a way to make it work that is beneficial to all concerned.

Mayor Gookin reiterated that the City is fortunate to partner with NIC on the Firefighter program and support for the Police Post Academy. President Swayne shared ongoing effort and challenges to secure funding for a dedicated law enforcement training facility.

ADJOURNMENT: **MOTION:** Motion by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember English, that there being no further business of the City Council, this meeting be adjourned. **Motion carried.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m.