



North Idaho College

Dormitory Housing Commission Meeting Minutes

January 14, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.

Meyer Health and Sciences Building, Conference Room #169

Call to Order and Verification of Quorum

Commissioner Armon called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m. and verified that a quorum was present.

Attendance:

Commissioner Present in person: Commissioner Armon
Commissioner Present in person: Commissioner Thomas
DHC Secretary Present in person: Sarah Garcia

NEW BUSINESS:

Action Item: Report/Discussion Additional Student Housing

DHC Secretary Garcia shared that we had previously discussed creating additional options for student housing on campus. The residence hall has been full for a couple of years now. We know that housing is expensive in town and we feel there is a demand for additional housing for the students.

When the original building was built, it was built with the idea for adding a second wing. We have the drawings for that but we are unsure if another wing for a traditional style dorm is what we need in this community college. The only way to really know is to do a feasibility study.

DHC Secretary Garcia shared information about the college owning Military Drive properties and the plan to create some housing there. It could be family housing, for someone other than the 18-year-old version of a student, without DHC money, that would allow someone that is from out of the area to live there for a year or two as temporary housing for that purpose.

The ask is that we don't currently have funds in the budget to do this and we would want your permission and direction. Are you comfortable with us spending some money and putting out a feasibility study to figure out what kind of housing we need, how much of it there is, what would occupancy rates be like, what would it cost to build it and how much could we charge for it to try to figure out the financing?

Commissioner Armon asked what our timeframe is?

DHC Secretary Garcia shared that she feels it would make sense to launch the study this spring.

Dean Harris shared that we have been full with waiting lists and once we get to about 20, people feel like there's no use in calling North Idaho College. There are too many people on there. Now that we are requiring all of our student athletes to live in the residence hall, we are guaranteed around 140 to 150 out of 200. With the housing costs, we constantly get requests for more so I do not see issues being able to fill that.

DHC Secretary Garcia shared that she and Dean Harris had talked about what if the first floor had doors that exited to the outside of the building rather than into the interior hallway. There may be a call for that.

Commissioner Armon asked if we could have a security problem?

Dean Harris shared not when done the right way and has researched other options at other institutions. You would have to have different rules in different areas but you still have electronic access.

DHC Secretary Garcia shared that part of a feasibility study is about what's out there, what are people doing and what works. We also have our Workforce Training students that we currently don't allow them in the dorm. Is there a possibility through one of these mechanisms that if someone was coming for an apprenticeship that's an 8-to-12-week training program and they need a place to stay, maybe it's not super convenient but it's contained within the ecosystem concept or even the POST, the police officer standard training, if there was an opportunity for them to live on campus, could we get people potentially from Lewiston or Shoshone and could that bolster the program?

Dean Harris shared that he and DHC Business Manager McGroarty talked about if we were building a new wing, we would have the opportunity to make it secure from the rest so we could host multiple camps during the summer. About three years ago we started talking about housing for summer students. We are somewhere around 30. With the possibility of those being sectioned off, instead of just one camp, you could have a whole wing. With a simple access control, you could change that. It's an idea that would help revenue.

Commissioner Armon asked what our bonding capacity is?

DHC Secretary Garcia shared that she had a conversation with Eric Heringer yesterday. The capacity is going to depend on revenue. Part of the feasibility study is if we can charge enough to cover the cost to pay the bond. Right now we are a Baa1. We got downgraded because of the troubles. He said it's probably about 10 or 15 basis point difference in the borrowing rates at this point. We would need projected revenues and operational costs for five to ten years in order to get it out on the market.

On that discussion topic, we were contacted by people through the State Board of Education about the DHC. They were asking if it would be possible to shut the DHCs down. How much do they cost? We are the only institution that currently has outstanding debt under the DHC model. There is a possibility that they may say no more issuance of debt under this mechanism. Eric Heringer shared he was also called and felt it would be a pretty bad idea to dissolve the DHCs when one of them still has outstanding debt. He said that the mechanism that's being used now is appropriation COPs. It is a very similar type of deal but you use appropriated funds to do it. It would take some of the sting out of the requirements. Some of the BOC covenants we have on our current debt are pretty significant as far as the revenue ratios we have to have and the reserves, the coverage ratios. We can't reduce the bond fee we charge until two years has passed with this much coverage. It does create some challenges from a management standpoint.

DHC Secretary Garcia shared that she asked Mr. Heringer if something like that happened, could we refinance the student recreation center bonds as COPs. We originally issued bonds for \$7.8 million. We've only paid \$600,000 of that in principal because the first five years were interest only. It depends on the level of equity. You are leasing the stuff through financing so you have to be able to show you don't have a compulsion to re-up the lease annually and if you have too much equity in the facility, then there's a compulsion.

Commissioner Armon asked if that would be a debt of the college?

DHC Secretary Garcia confirmed that yes, it would be a debt of the college. This is a new law that came into effect as a result of the college buying the mill site. Is this a lease or not a lease? Since 2014 this has changed so you can do an annual appropriation lease but you have to prove that you don't have compulsion to continue to fulfill the obligation.

Commissioner Armon asked to confirm that it is not a long-term guarantee?

DHC Secretary Garcia shared that no, but Eric shared that he has done 10 projects under the appropriation lease style and wanted to share this information as another financing option.

Commissioner Armon asked what is our DHC Fund Balance right now?

DHC Business Manager McGroarty shared 5.3.

Commissioner Armon shared that realistically, we could pay down a huge amount of the debt.

Commissioner Thomas agreed.

DHC Secretary Garcia shared that we could potentially refinance the difference through a bank or something and then it's not public financing that we would have to take it to the general public.

Commissioner Armon asked what is our request as far as an amount?

DHC Secretary Garcia asked if the DHC would be willing to agree up to \$75,000? DHC Secretary Garcia does not think it is going to cost that much. We did one for the library that was \$65,000. We'll do an RFP for it and try to see what qualifications we can find. I do not want to spend that much but I don't know what is a realistic number.

Commissioner Armon mentioned the last one we did was around \$50,000 so \$75,000 sounds reasonable.

Commissioner Thomas agreed.

DHC Secretary Garcia asked if the DHC Commissioners would give us a little flexibility outside that if it came in or would you like me to check in?

Commissioner Armon stated why don't you check in. Let's do up to the 75.

DHC Secretary Garcia confirmed up to 75 and if it comes in higher, then I'll connect back in with you?

Commissioner Armon stated yes.

Commissioner Thomas stated yes.

DHC Secretary Garcia shared that the other thing she would like to highlight is from a campus standpoint. We are talking about a lot of future visions for the college campus in general and one of the ideas that's been floated in the past and is coming back to the surface is the idea of some kind of event center on campus. There is interest in the community to fund the event center. The ideas that are floating around are about a 5,000-seat event center. In order to have

an event center, they need a parking deck. Parking decks are something that could fall under a DHC. DHC Secretary Garcia talked to Eric about that yesterday and he shared that parking decks are tough because you can pull the numbers and they look great but then the reality doesn't come in and it really puts you in a difficult situation. I wanted to make you aware of it until we had something more substantial going from an actual plan and agreement and share that the DHC was talked about as a possible mechanism for that.

Commissioner Armon shared that he thinks it makes sense personally as a joint project because it's not being solely used by students helping to justify it.

DHC Secretary Garcia shared that there's something with the tax-exempt bonds where a certain percent can be public versus private use and whether they're still tax exempt or not. The housing that we've talked about that those can even be public-private partnerships where the public piece is us or the DHC and then work with developers. Those are some things that are on the horizon but before we even go down that road, it's important to figure out the feasibility of it, what it would look like and get some numbers going.

Commissioner Armon asked if we anticipate the DHC being discussed in this current legislative session?

DHC Secretary Garcia shared that they asked about it this fall and when she talked to Eric yesterday, it was the very first thing he brought up.

Commissioner Armon asked what the call provisions are?

DHC Secretary Garcia shared that we have passed the five years so it is callable but the challenge is if we can't reissue debt and between the rating downgrade and the interest rates being so high, it just hasn't been worth it to consider that.

Commissioner Thomas made a motion to move forward with a feasibility study; Commissioner Armon seconded the motion; Motion passed unanimously.

GOOD OF THE ORDER/PUBLIC COMMENT:

There were no comments.

Action Item: Adjournment

Commissioner Armon made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Thomas seconded the motion; Motion passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.