



# Western Washington University Associated Students AS Finance Council Meeting Minutes

February 1, 2024

4:00 p.m.

Teams Online

**Members: Present:** Trent Austin (AS Business Director, Chair); Keara Ryan (AS President, Vice Chair), Bella Bedard (AS Activities Rep), Sarah Cheikho (AS Club Rep), Kasey Lee (Central Services Rep), Ava O'Neill (AS Club Rep), Gabe Wong (AS Student Senate President)

**Advisor:** Cynthia Sandstrom (AS Business Manager)

**Secretary:** Sam Hughes (Business Services Program Support); Cindy Monger (VU Fiscal Specialist)

**Guests:**

## MOTIONS

**FC-24-W-05** Approve the minutes of January 18, 2024. **Passed**

**Trent Austin, chair, called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.**

### I. Call to Order

### II. Approval of the Minutes

*MOTION FC-24-W-05 by Bedard*

Approve the minutes of January 18, 2024.

Second: Lee

Vote: 6-0-0

Action: Passed

### III. Revisions to the Agenda-

**Voting-** *[the council decided to talk about this right away]* Sandstrom asked the council how they feel about having stakeholders present during voting. Sandstrom said she is new to Finance Council but what she learned that last year stakeholders would leave during deliberation and voting. Sandstrom said this could keep some confidentiality about how people voted. Monger said the council would do that sometimes when it came to voting on budgets. Wong said that letting stakeholders leave before voting was done was more for the sake of the presenter rather than for the council to let them know there were no other questions and that they can leave if they'd like. Ryan said she sees the pros and cons of having stakeholders not present during voting, and a pro is that it may help those who feel nervous about voting in front of someone who would be a beneficiary or recipient of funding, but at the same time Ryan feels weird about deliberating without them there. Bedard agreed and said she feels like having the presenter there for as much of the deliberation as possible and having a time for questions works. Wong said the approach she would prefer is to let people know they have the option to leave, but not to ask them to leave since it is a public meeting. Sandstrom asked how everyone feels about giving presenters the option to leave if they want after the discussion and questions. The council had no objections.

**Public Forum** *(comments from students and the community)-*

### IV. Information Items \*

Monger presented the changes to the AS Reserves Policy and AS Reserves Procedure. On the AS Reserves Policy, Monger said the policies were moved into the new format for policies and those changes are not shown because it would impact the whole document. The rest of the changes are indicated by track changes including title changes and amounts. Monger said that the operating reserve is 10% of the approved budget and it is set aside for unforeseen and catastrophic reductions in revenue, such as drops in enrollment. Finance Council isn't on the approval anymore for the operating reserve because the thought was that if there is a need for this reserve, it would be a big expense and pretty urgent. The last time it was used was 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ryan asked if the operating reserve total is back up to 7% of the total budget as recommended by the Board of Trustees policy passed in Fall 2023. Monger said the AS Reserves are at \$1M and each reserve is fully funded. Sandstrom said the reserves contain more than recommended, so the AS should be safe. Wong said their understanding was that with the Board of Trustees it was an institution-wide thing, and that the AS has more reserves than a lot of other areas. Being that operating reserves is the first area that gets filled in the "trickle down" of money, the AS should be good. Monger said another clue to how the AS is doing is the money that is in the pilots, which is the last reserve in the "trickle down" of money. Right now, the pilots have about \$400,000 in that fund. Sandstrom asked if the council knows what they mean when they say "trickle down". Sandstrom said the reserves is composed of any money left over from the operational funds at the end of the fiscal year. This policy says where and in what order those left over funds go, hence the "trickle down" into each area of the reserves. The reserves have 11 areas or "pots" that money get placed into in order of priority. Today, what the council is doing is revisiting the policy to make edits.

Monger said another edit under Computer Repair and Replacement was changing funding to be \$40,000 instead of \$35,000 due to rising costs of technology. Wong said that the VU and the AS are considered the gold standard in terms of maintaining equipment, and part of that is due to having a specific fund to make sure everything is up to date and secure, which is important for a lot of different reasons. Monger said under the Equipment section, a note was added that the Outdoor Center can make requests for new equipment as they have a separate fund for repair and replacement. This was added for clarity. Monger said equipment is defined below, and it is any item not considered basic building infrastructure or covered by other designated areas. Sandstrom asked for an example of what equipment would be. An example is if Wavelength's videography equipment broke and needed replacement.

For the AS Vehicle Repair Section, Monger said that there are two AS and two Outdoor Center (OC) vehicles with two separate budgets are used for repair. The OC Vehicle repair has never had any money in it. Since the OC is part of the AS, the proposal is to combine the two budgets, call it AS Vehicle Repair, and have it be funded out of any remaining balance left in the two budgets where money is put for mileage that is charged every time someone goes on a trip. At the end of the year if there is anything remaining, then that money is moved into AS Vehicle Repair. This is an example of a reserve not part of the trickle down mentioned prior.

Ryan asked why the OC Vehicle Repair budget never had money in it. Monger said the OC vehicles tend to go places that cause more wear and tear needing repair in the

operating year, so at the end of the year there is never money left over to transfer to reserves. Monger said another reason is that AS vehicles have been around for decades and the OC vehicles are only about a decade old, so there hasn't been as much time for money in that reserve to build up. Ryan asked what the vehicle repair difference between the AS and the OC is, and if the OC needs more vehicle repair. Monger said the fund may be used more during the year, but there hasn't been any money in the OC repair reserves budget and they haven't used it. This fund is used for more major things like a new radiator, not for minor things like a new tire. Sandstrom said that the vehicles are insured and are bought by the state, so the Facilities Maintenance department does the maintenance on the vehicles. But if something serious like an engine failure happened, they would use the Vehicle Repair Fund to buy a new one. Bedard asked if the AS Vehicle Repair fund is to be used for repairs that are only beyond normal wear, and if so, is there is funding for repairing damage from normal wear. Monger said that this is funded by the mileage charged for each year and is an operating budget (FXXVEH and FXXOVH). Monger said under the AS/OC Vehicle Replacement, the source was changed to funded at \$120,000 to make the amount more realistic to the cost of replacing two vehicles that are safe, durable, and sturdy. Sandstrom said a current goal is to replace the OC Vehicle that is on its last leg and then next year look at replacing the two AS vehicles. After replacing several vehicles, the amount needed for vehicle replacement can be reassessed and may be able to return to funding for just one vehicle per year.

Monger said the previously discussed budgets are designated reserves. The Discretionary Reserves that follow are open for funding requests. section A was changed to say pilots instead of grants. This is due to the university asking the AS to not call them grants because the university deals with actual state and federal grants that have specific tracking systems and goals, and changing the name would prevent confusion. The council can discuss this possible name change at the end of the documents.

For the AS Employee Development Fund, the source was changed to be funded yearly at \$25,000 instead of \$20,000 in order to fund all of the requests that have been coming in for employees to attend conferences and get training. Wong asked what specific things the AS Employee Development Fund is used for. Sandstrom said that student employees don't have funding for professional development in their budgets for the AS, so this would pay for that. Monger said for example, if there is a conference in Portland about radio that could enhance that employee's work with KUGS, this would pay for that. Another example is if training or certification is needed for OC Trip Leaders to be able to do their trip safely.

Under Viking Union Organization, temporary employees were added to purpose, and the source was changed to be funded at 10% instead of 5% of the approved FXXVU budget. This is because there is not very much of the fund left this year. Wong asked why the Viking Union Reserve has been used so much this year. Monger said this was due to funding being directed to the Outdoor Center Programs Coordinator. Crandall has been moved into the regular admin budget due to the Viking Outdoor Recreation Manager leaving their position. Crandall was funded out of this reserve for two years because it was a unique opportunity to hire someone who had experience. Sandstrom said that these opportunities usually come from an intense need, for example the OC is incredibly busy and the Viking Outdoor Recreation Manager was drowning in work. Monger also explained that there are sometimes unforeseen expenses such as HR changing the rate

of a position to make it closer to the market rate. These changes do not always follow fiscal years and must be funded.

Under large events, the source was changed to say the minimum request is \$10,000. Monger said that Casey Hayden (Assistant Director, Activities and Media) came up with the idea to create a new part of the budget that would allow for some supplemental costs for AS programs & services. In the budget process, Budget Authorities are told to not ask for anything except for what they need to run the office. Monger said there used to be an AS Supplemental Fund in the operating budget that was used for one-time unique event opportunities that couldn't be predicted. The idea now is to create something similar and make a distinction between a supplemental fund which would fund smaller items, and the Large Event Reserve, which now requires at least 200 student attendees and a minimum request of \$10,000. Anything under \$10,000 would be requested through the AS Supplemental Fund, which has been added in section F. Wong asked if the Supplemental Fund would only be covering things explicitly not budgeted for in the operating budget. Monger said it could cover unexpected things that exceed the budget, but otherwise yes, things not covered in operating. Wong also asked if the minimum request of \$10,000 for the Large Event Fund would incentivize groups to ask for more money for their event than needed. Monger said that the incentive to use the supplemental fund is that groups wouldn't have to do a very big request and go through weeks of deliberation at Finance Council. Monger said that it has been a very long time since requests have been made for the Large Event Reserve that were less than \$10,000. The intention of the Supplemental Fund would be a place for people to get funding for event opportunities that are unexpected or for other unexpected costs.

Changes to the Distributing AS Reserves Procedure included updating titles and making changes to reflect the updates made to the AS Reserves Policy.

Wong asked why the term pilot was used to replace grants, and why there is a push to change the language of grants, and if that change is university-wide or just for the AS. Wong said there are other places where the term grant is used like Sustainability, Equity, and Justice Fund and Activities Council. Wong doesn't like the word pilots in particular. Sandstrom agreed. Monger said the change was an ESS request from the VP. Monger said there was discussion about using the term pilot programs, but that depends on how program is defined. Monger and Sandstrom said they are open to suggestions for alternative wording to pilots.

#### **V. Action Items**

#### **VI. Other Business**

**VII. Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Updates-** Wong said that next Thursday there is a talk by one of the history professors about Gaza, which could be interesting for people to attend. Monger said Black History Month started today, and that there are many events relating to that. Monger sent a link via chat: <https://www.wvu.edu/black-history-month>,

#### **VIII. Adjourn**

***The Meeting was adjourned at 5:01 p.m.***