

Nebraska Commission on Housing and Homelessness (NCHH)

**La Vista Conference Center
12520 Westport Parkway
Omaha, NE 68128**

Minutes of Monday, March 20, 2017 1 p.m.

Notice Published: Nebraska Public Meeting Calendar
NEDED Website

Open Meetings Act – A copy of the Open Meetings Act was located on the table as you enter the room.
All votes were taken by roll call of the members.

I. Roll Call

Pamela Otto called roll.

Eight of fifteen Commissioners were present:

Charles Coley; Ryan Durant; Paul Hamelink; Lee Ann Heflebower; Thomas Judds; Carna Pfeil; Sara Tichota; and Brent Williams.

Absent Commissioners: Ardith Hoins; James Kozal; Steve Kunzman; Kathy Mesner; Roger Nadrchal; Judy Pederson; and John Turner.

Guests present were: Tobias Orr, Assistive Technology Partnership; Nikki Swope, Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program; Lara Huskey, Midwest Housing Development Fund; Paula Rhian, Horizon Bank; Michelle Callahan, Housing Development Corporation; Linda Addison, Housing Development Corporation; Mike Borchert, FHL Bank; Ann Burge, Midwest Housing Equity Group; Amber Marker, Nebraska Housing Developers Association; and Leslie Coleman, Bob Jones, Rachel Meredith, Kristi McClung, and Pam Otto, DED.

II. Call meeting to order:

Vice Chair Durant declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 1:09 p.m.

Vice Chair Durant indicated the Opening Meetings Act was located at the back of the room by the sign in sheet.

III. Introductions

IV. Public Comment

Commissioner Coley stated that the Legislative Audit was released and if the Commission can assist in the audit in anyway, please let them know. Commissioner Coley also stated that Department of Economic Development (DED) has been a great partner with the Commission.

V. Approved November 30, 2016 meeting minutes.

Motion: Commissioner Coley moved that the November 30, 2016 meeting minutes be approved. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

YES – Charles Coley; Ryan Durant; Paul Hamelink; Lee Ann Heflebower; Thomas Judds; Carna Pfeil; and Brent Williams.

NO – None

ABSTAINED: Tichota

Motion carried with a 7-0-1 vote.

VI. Executive Committee

Commissioner Durant stated that the Executive Committee did not meet this quarter.

VII. Report from Standing Committees

1. Continuum of Care Committee

Commissioner Coley stated that the Continuum of Care is focusing on advocacy at this time. Commissioner Coley stated that while the budget came out with a 13% decrease in funding, Homeless Assistance is not being decreased. The budget did eliminate the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, which consists of 19 entities. There has been a 47% decrease in Veteran Homelessness.

Commissioner Heflebower informed the Commission of the next planned meeting for the 10 year plan update, which will be held on May 3rd in Lincoln at Region V. Commissioner Heflebower stated that a Housing Coordinator has been hired for the Lincoln Continuum of Care. Commissioner Heflebower stated that the annual Point in Time Count was successful. Commissioner Coley stated that the three Continuum of Care regions shared data to see the year to year progress being made. Commissioner Coley stated that the 2016 report showed a 21% increase in homeless, due to the fact that there has been better street outreach, which has created a better reflection of the data, along with the increase of people in shelters in the Omaha area.

2. Education and Awareness Committee

Commissioner Pederson was not in attendance, but Pamela Otto informed the Commission that the Education and Awareness Committee did not meet this quarter.

3. Policy and Issues Committee

Commissioner Brent Williams informed the Commission that Commissioner Sara Tichota has stepped down as Chair of the Policy and Issues Committee and Commissioner Brent Williams has agreed to Chair the committee for an interim time, to find a new committee Chair.

A Motion to install Mary Fraser Meints, Youth Emergency Services, as the newest member of the Policies and Issues Committee, was made by Commissioner Brent Williams and seconded by Commissioner Charles Coley.

Roll call vote:

YES – Charles Coley; Ryan Durant; Paul Hamelink; Lee Ann Heflebower; Thomas Judds; Carna Pfeil; Sara Tichota; and Brent Williams.

NO – None

Motion carried with a 8-0 vote.

Commissioner Williams stated the committee has been following the Legislative Bills and got an update before the Commission meeting. The Legislative Session is half way through the session and if a bill does not pass through this session, the bill will come back to the Legislature next session. The bills that are categorized as priorities have a higher likelihood of being passes this session.

LB 230 is a bill put forth by a Senator to create a Standing Committee of the Legislature for Economic Development. However, as this has progressed through the process, it has been determined that a committee would not work, so the bill has changed to a Task Force of Senators regarding Economic Development throughout the State of Nebraska. This Task Force would meet quarterly and invite the Director of the Department of Economic Development and Commissioner of Labor to attend the meeting and present to the Task Force. The Policy and Issues Committee

discussed the importance of the Commission being invited to discuss items with the Task Force as well.

LB387 is a bill drafted to make the Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund more functional administratively. Instead of requiring DED to have the 30% per district, this bill would allow DED to fund districts at the 30% without having to decrease funding if one Congressional District does not meet the 30% requirement. Commissioner Williams stated that it is highly unlikely this bill will pass as a bill itself, but may be amended onto another bill.

LB 518 is the Rural Workforce Housing Program that will use the excess money from the Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The bill was amended to \$10.3 million, with some changes to the per unit subsidies and allow up to \$1 million in a region. This bill also includes a fiscal note for DED to hire two new staff members for this program. The bill excludes Urban Counties and the verbiage for any funds not spent in this program needs clarification, to ensure that the money will return to DED to the Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The Nebraska Chapter of Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials advocated for the removal of the prohibition on using the funds in conjuncture with other Nebraska Affordable Housing Program Funds. Commissioner Williams stated that the excess funds are gone and the Policy and Issues Committee feels that keeping the money in a housing program is better than losing the funds and would like the Commission to write a letter of support for LB 518.

A Motion for the Nebraska Commission on Housing and Homelessness to write letter of support for LB 518, was made by Commissioner Charles Coley and seconded by Commissioner Sara Tichota.

Roll call vote:

YES – Charles Coley; Ryan Durant; Paul Hamelink; Lee Ann Heflebower; Carna Pfeil; Sara Tichota; and Brent Williams.

NO – Judds

Motion carried with a 7-1 vote.

Some other bills of note are: LB 291, which would give 2 additional points for Native American Reservation Land for Low Income Housing Tax Credit projects; LB 534, allows for the Department of Health and Human Services to hire a Housing Coordinator, do not feel this bill will pass. There are six behavioral health regions for the state with a coordinator in each region and a state-wide coordinator to bring all the regions together is needed. LB 534 may cost too much and a study may be suggested.

The Legislative Performance Audit of DED has been completed and is now published for the public. Commissioner Coley stated the Legislative Performance Audit was written well and was very informative. The audit discussed the excess money in the Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund and the requirement for DED to provide a plan on how the excess money will be spent and a plan to manage the Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund balance in the future. The audit did state the current LB 518 bill put forth to the Legislature as an option to spend the money. Lara Huskey stated that the Legislative Performance Audit would not highlight any positives of DED, but wanted to note that while the audit does not give positives, it is positive that the scoring process was not an area of concern for the auditors. DED has to respond to the audit by May 2017.

A Motion for a resolution that the Nebraska Department of Economic Development provide to the Nebraska Commission on Housing and Homelessness Policies and Issues Committee a draft plan for managing the Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund Balance to prevent future overages; take input from the Nebraska Commission on Housing and Homelessness; and consider the Nebraska Commission on Housing and Homelessness recommendations in finalizing the plan to be submitted to the Legislative Audit Committee

in May 2017, was made by Commissioner Brent Williams and seconded by Commissioner Ryan Durant.

Roll call vote:

YES – Charles Coley; Ryan Durant; Paul Hamelink; Lee Ann Heflebower; Thomas Judds; Carna Pfeil; Sara Tichota; and Brent Williams.

NO – None

Motion carried with a 8-0 vote.

VIII. Reports from Agencies and Organizations

Assistive Technology Partnership – Tobias Orr

Department of Economic Development – Leslie Coleman

DHHS, Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program – Nikki Swope

FHL Bank Topeka – Mike Borchert

Midwest Housing Development Fund – Lara Huskey

Midwest Housing Equity Group – Ann Burge

Nebraska Housing Developers Association – Sara Tichota

IX. New Business

None

X. Adjourn

Vice Chair Durant adjourned the meeting on March 20, 2017 at 2:33 p.m.