

Nebraska Commission on Housing and Homelessness

Website Streaming - WebEx

Minutes of Thursday, April 30th, 2020 – 10:00 AM

Notice Published: Nebraska Public Meeting Calendar
NCHH Website

Open Meetings Act – A copy of the Open Meetings Act was linked on the agenda and virtually displayed at the beginning of the meeting. All votes were taken by voice votes of the commissioners.

I. Roll Call

Evan Clark called roll.

Thirteen of fifteen Commissioners were present:

Nancy Bentley; Jeff Chambers; Charles Coley; Ryan Durant; Lee Ann Heflebower; Thomas Judds; Kathy Mesner; Roger Nadrchal; Judy Pederson; Judy Petersen; Sara Sunderman; Amy Thelander; and John Turner.

Absent Commissioners: Paul Hamelink; and Brent Williams.

Guests present were: Matthew Cavanaugh, Nebraska Housing Developers Association; Sara Tichota, Nebraska Investment Finance Authority; Andrea Curtis, Pamela Otto, Matt Thomsen, John Trouba, and Shannon Wilkinson, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services; Paula Rhian, Midwest Housing Development Fund; Chris Lenz, Excel Development; Kelly Fleming, Omaha Public Power District; Krista Mettscher, USDA Rural Development; Mary Fraser Meints, Youth Emergency Services – Omaha; Randy McCoy, Metro Continuum of Care ; Reginald Robinson, US Department of Housing and Urban Development; Sharena Marrs, Family Housing Advisory Services; Evan Clark, Sheryl Hiatt, Mechele Grimes, and Lynn Kohout, Nebraska Department of Economic Development.

II. Call meeting to order:

Chair Durant declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Chair Durant indicated the Opening Meetings Act was linked within the agenda.

III. Introductions

IV. Public Comment

None

V. Approved November 25th, 2019 meeting minutes.

Motion: Commissioner Nadrchal moved that the November 25th, 2019 meeting minutes be approved.

Commissioner Pederson seconded the motion.

Voice Vote was taken; all yeas, no nays.

Motion Carried.

VI. Executive Committee

Commissioner Durant reported that the Executive Committee had approved the 2020 NAHTF Awards (NeighborWorks Northeast, Holy Name Housing Corporation, and City of Imperial). Since the NIFA Conference was rescheduled, DED will work with the awardees on gathering information to provide a press release of their recognition. Commissioner Heflebower stated that the Executive Committee has also been working with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Homeless Shelter Assistance Trust Fund (HSATF) funding statute cap and looking for additional revenue.

VII. Report from Standing Committees

1. Continuum of Care Committee (CoC)

Commissioner Turner provided an update on the 10 year plan. The working group has had four meetings to update the goals and plan. Priorities have now shifted and the group is holding off on finalizing the revisions until the CARES Act and ESG Funds are figured out. Commissioner Heflebower reported the shelter programs across the state have been meeting to coordinate efforts. Commissioner Chambers reported the Grand Island and Hall County are seeking FEMA funding to assist with non-congregant sheltering due to social distancing. Commissioner Pedersen stated that many tenants are not paying rents, but Judges are still moving forward with evictions. Agencies have been working to provide information to help provide guidance to tenants. Commissioner Heflebower stated many people do not realize that evictions that aren't COVID related are still able to move forward and that rents will still be due. Commissioner Coley questioned testing for COVID-19 and how it may impact shelter spacing. Commissioner Chambers stated that testing is better in some locations than others and it has had an impact on shelters. Shelter capacity in the Balance of State is currently down because shelters are taking active measures to incorporate social distancing. Numbers are changing in outreach and unsheltered that will need to be analyzed. Domestic violence shelters are experiencing reduced capacity for people requesting shelter. Many victims are trapped at home with their abusers. There is anticipation there will be a flood of sheltering requests after COVID.

2. Education and Awareness Committee

Commissioner Pederson explained that the committee has not met since the last meeting in June, 2019. The priority has been on providing information to the Legislature through the PDF flyer.

3. Policy and Issues Committee

Commissioner Petersen stated the Committee had not met. Commissioner Mesner provided an update from conversations with Senator Matt Williams. The Rural Workforce Housing Bill, LB 773 funding has been included in the Legislative budget bill, but there is uncertainty when or if the Legislature will be in session again soon. Senator Williams still has hopes for the \$10 million for the Bill. Matthew Cavanaugh stated that there are items from the Federal CARES Act that the Commission should discuss, specifically rent relief payments and suggestions on how the CDBG funds should be spent. Commissioner Turner and Commissioner Petersen stated they would work to hold a joint Policy and Issues and Continuum of Care Committee meeting before the next full Commission meeting.

VIII. Nebraska Housing Partnership

Commissioner Mesner reported that she and Lara Huskey had planned to organize a group meeting at the NIFA Conference to try to figure out a way to launch. There are still multiple conversations and research needed to be completed before any decisions are made.

IX. Reports from Agencies and Organizations

Department of Economic Development – Lynn Kohout

Department of Health and Human Services Agency – Andrea Curtis, Matt Thomsen

Midwest Housing Equity Group – Paula Rhian (email read by Chair Durant)

Nebraska Ch. Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials – Nancy Bentley

Nebraska Housing Developers Association – Matthew Cavanaugh

Nebraska Investment Finance Authority – John Turner, Sara Tichota

U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Rural Development – Krista Mettscher (chat message)

X. 2020 NCHH Meeting Dates

1. June 17th – North Platte (tentative as to in person or another virtual meeting)
2. September 16th – Hastings
3. November 18 – Lincoln

XI. Other Business

X. Adjourn

Chair Durant adjourned the meeting on April 30, 2020 at 11:55 a.m.