

Nebraska Commission on Housing and Homelessness (NCHH)
Website Streaming - WebEx
Minutes of Wednesday, September 16, 2020 – 2:00 PM (CT)

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.

Twelve of fifteen Commissioners were present: Nancy Bentley; Jeff Chambers; Ryan Durant; Lee Ann Heflebower; Kathy Mesner; Roger Nadrchal; Judy Pederson; Judy Petersen; Sara Sunderman; Amy Thelander; John Turner; and Brent Williams.

Absent Commissioners: Charles Coley; Paul Hamelink; and Thomas Judds.

Guests present included: Andrea Curtis, Pamela Otto, Shannon Wilkinson, Matt Thomsen, and Dannette Smith, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services; Tobias Orr, Nebraska Department of Education; Lara Huskey and Paula Rhian, Midwest Housing Development Fund; Heather Roy, Hall County Housing Authority; Marti Lee, NeighborWorks Lincoln; Kelly Fleming, Omaha Public Power District; Earl Redrick, US Housing and Urban Development; Steve Peregrine, Nebraska Housing Resource, Inc; Krista Mettscher, US Department of Agriculture; Amanda Starkey, Policy Research Associates, Inc.; and Evan Clark, Nick Dropinski, Mechele Grimes, Lynn Kohout, and Sheryl Hiatt, Nebraska Department of Economic Development.

II. Call Meeting to Order:

Chairman Durant declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 2:36 p.m. Chairman Durant indicated the Opening Meetings Act was linked within the agenda.

III. Introductions:

IV. Public Comment:

No public comments were made.

V. Approval of June 17, 2020 Meeting Minutes:

Commissioner Pederson moved that the June 17, 2020 meeting minutes be approved. Commissioner Bentley seconded the motion. Voice vote was taken; all yeas, no nays. Motion carried.

VI. Executive Committee

Chairman Durant reported that the Executive Committee had met a couple weeks ago. Chairman Durant stated that most of the information discussed will be covered in the Standing Committee reports.

VII. Report from Standing Committees

A. Continuum of Care Committee

Commissioner Heflebower provided an update on the 2016 Equal Access Rule potentially being “rolled-back.” Heflebower stated there are a number of housing and homelessness advocates and commissions submitting comments in opposition of the roll-back. The 10-year plan has produced specific activities to end homelessness for all parties.

Motion: Commissioner Heflebower moved to recommend Commission submit the letter of comments to Federal General Counsel opposing the roll-back of Equal Access Rule and suggest it upheld it in its entirety.

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Mesner.

Voice Vote was taken; all yeas, no nays.

Motion carried.

Commissioner Turner stated a call will be held on Friday, September 18, 2020, with US Interagency Council on Homelessness, to discuss updates with State interagencies with homelessness. Commissioner Chambers suggested the next meeting would be a good opportunity to discuss an overview of COVID related funding throughout the State. Commissioner Chambers stated that the continuums throughout state are working through how the CDC eviction moratorium will impact rent and utility assistance and working with those impacted.

B. Education and Awareness Committee

Commissioner Pederson reported the Education and Awareness Committee did not have anything at the time of the meeting. The committee will continue to work to update the Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund flyer as an educational resource for state senators.

C. Policy and Issues Committee

Commissioner Petersen reported the Policy and Issues Committee previously met to discuss the Nebraska Housing Partnership and additional legislative items. The Nebraska Housing Partnership ad hoc committee was established to help continue the work of the Blueprint report. The committee is working to find an organization to assist with the funds for the committee. The Nebraska Housing Resource, Inc. board has approved to operate as this organization.

Motion: The Policy and Issues Committee moved for the Commission to approve the Nebraska Housing Resource, Inc. (NHR) to serve as the lead entity for the Nebraska Housing Partnership.

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Mesner.

Voice Vote was taken; all yeas, no nays.

Motion carried.

Motion: The Policy and Issues Committee recommended the Commission send a Blueprint Nebraska Housing Council full committee report with a cover letter to the sponsor of LR 434.

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Mesner.

Voice Vote was taken; all yeas, no nays.

Motion carried.

VIII. Nebraska Housing Partnership

Commissioner Mesner requested clarifying procedurally how Nebraska Housing Partnership were to operate as either an ad hoc committee or to remain under the Policy and Issues Committee. Commission agreed for Partnership to remain as ad hoc committee.

IX. Reports from Agencies

A. Department of Economic Development

Lynn Kohout provided a report to the commission on the Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund and other programs administered by the agency including the HOME Investment Partnerships program, National Housing Trust Fund program, and Community Development Block Grant. Sheryl Hiatt provided an update on the Rural Workforce Housing Fund and the Middle-Income Workforce Housing Fund. The Department requested recommendations and input for the draft 2021 Qualified Allocation Plan.

B. Department of Health and Human Services Agency

Andrea Curtis stated that the Homeless Shelter Assistance Trust Fund provides \$280,000 of funding to agencies in Nebraska to provide SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) services. Amanda Starkey, of Policy Research Associates, gave an overview of SOAR and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Andrea Curtis provided a report on the Homeless Shelter Assistance Trust Fund.

X. Reports from Partner Organizations

A. Assistive Technology Partnership

Tobias Orr provided an update.

- B. Community Action Agencies of Nebraska
No report.
- C. Federal Home Loan Bank of Topeka
Commissioner Williams provided an update.
- D. Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS
No report.
- E. Nebraska Chapter of Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials
Commissioner Bentley provided an update via WebEx Chat.
- F. Nebraska Housing Developers Association
No report.
- G. Nebraska Investment Finance Authority
Commissioner Turner provided an update.
- H. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development
Krista Mettscher provided an update.
- I. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Earl Redrick provided an update.
- XI. 2020 NCHH Meeting Dates
Upcoming tentative NCHH meeting date - Wednesday, November 18th. It is yet to be determined if the meeting will be in person or via WebEx. During this pandemic the Department's focus is to keep our team members and commission members safe and healthy.
- XII. Other Business
 - A. Commission Member Terms
Chairman Durant reported Commissioner Heflebower, Mesner, Nadrchal, Sunderman, and Thelander terms will expire in June of 2021.
- X. Adjourn
Chairman Durant adjourned the meeting on September 16, 2020 at 4:38 p.m.