

Nebraska Commission on Housing and Homelessness (NCHH)
NSOB – Lower Level B Conference Room
301 Centennial Mall South
Lincoln, NE 68509

Minutes of Wednesday, June 16, 2021 – 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 a copy was available on the sign in table. All votes were taken by voice votes of the commissioners.

I. Roll Call:

Evan Clark called roll.

Eleven of fifteen Commissioners were present: Nancy Bentley; Jeff Chambers; Ryan Durant; Lee Ann Heflebower; Thomas Judds; Kathy Mesner; Randy McCoy; Judy Petersen; Amy Thelander; John Turner; and Brent Williams.

Absent Commissioners: Paul Hamelink; Roger Nadrchal; Judy Pederson; and Sara Sunderman.

Guests present included: Andrea Curtis, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services; Lara Huskey and Paula Rhian, Midwest Housing Development Fund; Larissa Flowers, US Department of Agriculture; and Evan Clark and Lynn Kohout, Nebraska Department of Economic Development.

II. Call Meeting to Order:

Chairman Durant declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m. Chairman Durant indicated the Opening Meetings Act was linked within the agenda and a copy provided at the sign in table.

III. Introductions:

IV. Public Comment:

No public comments were made.

V. Approval of March 24, 2021 Meeting Minutes:

Commissioner Bentley moved that the March 24, 2021 meeting minutes be approved. Commissioner Judds seconded the motion.

Voice vote was taken; all yeas, no nays.
Motion carried.

VI. Executive Committee

Chairman Durant reported that the Committee met a couple weeks ago and discussed items related to homeowners and rental housing and the difficulties many are encountering. It is not related only to urban, but also rural. There is a large amount of money being made available in the State and it will be helpful to have a conversation about how those funds may be used to help tackle the housing challenges. Chairman Durant stated that now is the time to start working on seeing action and having houses built rather than just having the conversations.

VII. Report from Standing Committees

A. Continuum of Care Committee

Commissioner Heflebower discussed the 10-year plan and the oversight requirement for updating the plan. It was last updated 8 years ago and was done so by a contractor that was procured by the Dept. of Economic Development. Commissioner Heflebower stated that if anyone knows of funding available to assist the commission with updating the plan, it would be helpful. Commissioner Turner stated that there has been a lot of progress made over the years, but there is still work and updates needed. The commissioners discussed the American Rescue Plan Act and the rental assistance funding. COVID-19 has helped highlight the need for prevention of homelessness and the need for developing positive relationships with landlords and tenants. There should also be a focus of developing an infrastructure for assistance when funds are no longer available.

B. Education and Awareness Committee

Chairman Durant reported that the NAHTF Flyer has been recently updated and there is work on having NDED Director Goins attend an NCHH meeting. There will also be proclamations for ending hunger and homelessness. The Education and Awareness Committee is beginning to work on developing a flyer for the Homeless Shelter Assistance Trust Fund.

C. Policy and Issues Committee

Commissioner Petersen stated the committee met and discussed past legislation and proposed legislative studies. LR 131 is proposed to study the variety of housing programs in the state and if there are specific barriers or potential ways to consolidate programs or organizations. LB 436 is set to sunset in 2022, but there is an option for it to be revised this upcoming session. The committee also discussed that redistricting will be occurring soon and how it will have an impact on Congressional Districts and legislative elections. The Commission discussed the American Rescue Plan Act and the funding being made available to the State of Nebraska. There are many concerns with the rising cost of materials, labor shortages, and other issues with building houses.

Commission members discussed the importance of the funding being made available to assist with the development of houses in the state.

Motion: Chairman Durant moved that the Policy and Issues Committee makes a motion to recommend that the Nebraska Commission on Housing and Homelessness add Courtney Lyons, from Nebraska Housing Developers Association to serve as a member of the Policy and Issues Committee.
Motion was seconded by Commissioner Williams.

Voice vote was taken; all yeas, no nays.
Motion carried.

Motion: Commissioner Petersen moved that the Policy and Issues Committee makes a motion for NCHH Committee to write a letter addressed to Governor's office and cc the Appropriations committee and NDED Director Goins to request the state invest the Treasury funding allocation from the American Rescue Plan Act specifically in Housing as a priority in Nebraska
Motion was seconded by Commissioner Bentley.

Voice Vote was taken; all yeas, no nays, one abstain.
Motion carried.

VIII. Nebraska Housing Partnership

Commissioner Mesner provided an update on the Partnership. It is currently in limbo with some bills not passing during the last session. The Blueprint has transferred information to the Platte Institute, the State Chamber, and a third organization, so there is uncertainty of what will come. Commissioner Mesner stated that the Partnership can begin to work on other items and may need to simply regroup at this time.

IX. Reports from Agencies

A. Department of Economic Development

Lynn Kohout provided an update to the commission on the Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund, and other programs administered by the agency including the Rural Workforce Housing Fund, Middle Income Housing Fund, HOME Investment Partnerships program, National Housing Trust Fund program, and Community Development Block Grant. Lynn also stated that the Commission will begin to discuss the 2022 NAHTF Qualified Allocation Plan at the September NCHH meeting, so now is a time to think about suggestions.

B. Department of Health and Human Services Agency

Andrea Curtis provided an update on the Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program, including revenue and expenditures, allocations, and updates for

the Homeless Shelter Assistance Trust Fund and Emergency Solutions Grant CARES Act.

X. Reports from Partner Organizations

- A. Assistive Technology Partnership
No report.
- 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.
- 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
Larissa Flowers provided an update.
- I. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
No report.

XI. 2021 NCHH Meeting Dates

- 2. September 15, 2021 @ 10:00 AM CT
- 3. November 17, 2021 @ 10:00 AM CT.

XII. Other Business

- A. Commission Member Terms
Chairman Durant reported Commissioner Heflebower, Mesner, Nadrchal, Sunderman, Thelander, and Williams terms will expire in June of 2021.
- B. NCHH – NAHTF Award
Chairman Durant stated that the award submission will be extended to the end of July or middle of August and presented at the September meeting.

X. Adjourn

Chairman Durant adjourned the meeting on June 16th, 2021 at 3:51 p.m.