# Nebraska Commission on Housing & Homelessness Meeting (NCHH)

**Wells Fargo Bank – 2nd Floor Board Room**

**315 Dewey Street**

**North Platte, NE 69101**

**Minutes of Wednesday, August 17, 2022-12:00PM (CT)**

**Notice Published: Nebraska Public Meeting Calendar (July 17, 2022)**

**NCHH Website (July 17, 2022)**

**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 roll call vote of Commissioners. [Nebraska Revised Statute 84-1407 to 84-1414](https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=84-1407)

START TIME: 12:02pm

1. **Roll Call**

Barb Pierce called roll.

Eleven of fourteen Commissioners were present: Lee Heflebower, Judy Pederson, Nancy Bentley, Jeff Chambers, Ryan Durant, Tera Kucera, Kathy Mesner, Roger Nadrchal, Mindy Paces, Amy Thelander, and John Turner

Absent Commissioners: Paul Hamelink, Judy Petersen, and Brent Williams

Guests: Carla Kimball, CNEDD; Shelley Waggoner, LCCDC; Durene Anderson, USDA; Carol Bodeen, Nebraska Housing Developers Assoc.; and Erin Anderson, LCCDC

DED Staff: Lynn Kohout, Barb Pierce, Nick Dropinski, Morgan Pearson, Kristi McClung, Kylee Bischoff, and Kimberly Jasa-Harris

1. **Call Meeting to Order**

Chair Heflebower declared a quorum and meeting was called to order at 12:03pm. Chair Heflebower declared a copy of the Open Meetings Act was linked to the meeting agenda and was also made available on the sign-in table.

1. **Introductions**

Chair Heflebower welcomed all Commissioners and guests. All present were asked to introduce themselves.

1. **Public Comments**

Chair Heflebower asked for public comments. None were made.

1. **Approval of Meeting Minutes**
   1. **Approval of May 17, 2022, Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Bentley moved that the May 17, 2022, meeting minutes be approved.

Commissioner Turner seconded the motion. Commissioner Chambers requested a change to VIII. B. Report from Department of Health and Human Services Agency to change “re-housing” to “Rental Assistance.” Bentley amended motion to include change to minutes, Turner seconded. Roll call vote was taken and received all yeas, no nays. Motion carried.

1. **Reports from Standing Committees**
   1. **Executive Committee**

Chair Heflebower reported on behalf of the Executive Committee which met on August 3, 2022.

Chair Heflebower thanked Thomas Judds for his service to the Commission and thanked Commissioner Pederson, the LCCDC staff and North Platte Area Chamber & Development for providing a bus tour of North Platte for Commissioners prior to the meeting.

Chair Heflebower shared that Commissioner McCoy sent in his resignation from the Commission and the opening has been posted.

* 1. **Continuum of Care – John Turner**

Commissioner Turner reported on behalf of the Continuum of Care Committee and updated Commission on state aid programs.

NIFA is managing the Nebraska Homeowner Assistance Fund (NHAF). Program goes until 2025 or until funding is gone. Currently limited to $30,000 per household and will ask Treasury to bump it up to $40,000 and to be able to request utility assistance. These requests have been made but not approved yet.

The Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) is being managed by the State Budget office and Deloitte. NIFA does the marketing outreach for ERAP. Applications have to be in by September 9, 2022. The program ends September 30, 2022. ERAP 1 funding must be spent by the end of December.  Lincoln, Omaha and Douglas received ERAP 2 funding.

The City of Lincoln allocation for ERAP is $36 million with five to six thousand households already served. The City will be making revisions for the next cycle. The CDBG mortgage program for balance of state is recommended to be ended due to a duplication of services.

The City of Omaha has $20 million left for direct client assistance. The City has asked for reallocation of funds. Additional information can be found on the Metro Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless website at https://macchconnect.org.

Balance of state will be without emergency rental assistance. The state is considering putting this assistance into a pooled fund for the future.

Commissioner Chambers told commissioners that there needs to be a plan for addressing the lack of available rental assistance in the future. He urged Commissioners to support the DHHS in seeking possibility of using the trust funds for rental assistance. The commission needs to express the real need and emerging need to the State through the data being gathered. The Continuum of Care Committee would be happy to report the lack of rental assistance in the balance of state going forward.

Chair Heflebower recommended getting the P&I committee involved.

Commissioner Chambers mentioned that the Nebraska Supreme Court is required to report the number of evictions occurring across the state and that there is concern the Court is not breaking down the reasons for evictions by cause which is critical for developing practical program assistance. There is an effort in the legislature to encourage the Supreme Court to do a better job.

Chambers suggested that Ryan Sullivan of UNL Law could be asked to attend the November meeting. He is the expert on this. Senator Cavanaugh is also working on this.

Commissioner Mesner shared that it is easier to get potential applicants to reach out to a church to ask for money than it is to get them to enter an agency providing this assistance. There is less documentation asked for from churches. It is also an issue that Landlords are not doing their part in the application process.

* 1. **Education and Awareness - Judy Pederson**

The committee last met in May. They are working on the proclamation and will submit to the Governor’s office. It will be early November before we know if Governor will be reading it.

Will send out general proclamation to be shared with local mayor or leaders to see if they will read that during Homelessness Week in November.

Lynn and Judy are updating the flyer with new numbers to be used for next legislative session.

* 1. **Policy and Issues – No Report**

Commissioner Heflebower shared that committee did not meet this quarter.

Commissioner Petersen was not present and reported at the executive meeting of August 3rd that no P & I committee was held this quarter.

1. **Report/Communication on Nebraska Olmstead Plan – John Turner**

Commissioner Turner shared information on the Nebraska Olmstead Plan which has a goal of making sure Nebraskans with disabilities are living in the lowest level of care possible and that efforts are made to increase the number of units accessible to Nebraskans with disabilities.

Commissioner Turner stressed the need for accessible housing in Nebraska.

The Plan is looking into ways to support rehabilitation of rentals in order to increase accessible housing.

Many homes need modifications to allow better accessibility. ATP provides this service but has limited funding. Suggestion was made to look at ways to provide additional funding for such. *Find Help* is a new service coming soon to replace [www.housing.ne.gov](http://www.housing.ne.gov) for listing available rentals including accessible units.

1. **Reports from Agencies**
   1. **Department of Economic Development - Lynn Kohout**

DED Director of Housing, Lynn Kohout, provided an update to the Commission on the State and Federal funded housing programs administered by the Department of Economic Development including the Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund (NAHTF), Rural Workforce Housing Fund (RWHF), Middle Income Housing Fund (MIHF), HOME Investment Partnerships Fund (HOME), National Housing Trust Fund (HTF) and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).

Kohout asked Commissioners to be prepared to give feedback regarding the 2023 Qualified Allocation Plan at the November meeting.

* 1. **Department of Health and Human Services Agency (Not in Attendance)**

Chair Heflebower reported to Commissioners that Andrea Curtis is no longer with DHHS and they are currently looking to fill the position. She then shared the NHAP PowerPoint presentation on the Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program (NHAP) for Commissioners to view.

1. **Reports from Partner Organizations**
2. Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP)

No report.

1. Community Action Agencies of Nebraska

No report.

1. Federal Home Loan Bank of Topeka

Carol Bodeen provided a report on behalf of Amber Marker.

FHLB applications are due this Friday. Maximum award is $1 million. This is up from $750,000 maximum last year. Awards will be announced December 30, 2022.

1. Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS

No report.

1. Nebraska Chapter of Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials

No report.

1. Nebraska Housing Developers Association

Carol Bodeen provided a report.

Annual Fundraiser is planned for Sept 12, 2022, at Top Golf in Omaha. Sponsorships are available. All Seasons Affordability Program is an HVAC program which is now open and taking applications. There is a lot of need. NHDA is also seeking applications for their down payment assistance program. The RentWise Tenant Education program is going to be offered online by the end of the year. NHDA is currently gauging the interest for holding a *RentWise* *Train the Trainer* class*.*

1. Nebraska Investment Finance Authority

Commissioner Turner provided report.

Turner shared that the *Welcome Home* program is a new loan program available to even those that are not first-time homebuyers. He also reported that the LIHTC/ARPA gap financing program received $30 million in requests. There is $20 million available.

Turner also reported that the Housing Study Grant application is undergoing some changes and the date has been set for the NIFA Conference. It will be April 16-18, 2023. Save the date information will be available soon. Turner also mentioned the *Teaching Nebraska Trades* program and its focus on construction trades in the High Schools and the retention of trades instructors at the community college level.

1. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development

Dureen Anderson provided an update.

She shared latest income eligibility and information on loan programs and encourages Commissioners to reach out to her office for more information.

1. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

No report.

1. Other Agency/Organizations present

No report.

1. **2022 NCHH Meeting Dates**
   1. November 16, 2022 (Lincoln) – Meeting location to be announced.
2. **Other Business**
   1. Commission Member Terms

**Recent Governor Appointees:**

Jeff Chambers

*Term:    7/1/2022 – 6/30/2025*

Ryan Durant

*Term:    7/1/2022 – 6/30/2025*

Paul Hamelink

*Term:    7/1/2022 – 6/30/2025*

Judy Pederson

*Term:    7/1/2022 – 6/30/2025*

Tera Kucera – Replacing Thomas Judds

*Term:    7/1/2022 – 6/30/2025*

Resigning Member – Randy McCoy

Randy McCoy has resigned from the commission. The Governor’s office is seeking applications to fill this position. DED has pushed out the notice of this vacancy through various social media channels and has notified the public that applications are being taken. **June 2023 will be the end of the term for anyone appointed. They could then apply to be re-appointed.**

1. Adjourn

Chairwoman Heflebower adjourned the meeting of August 17, 2022 @ 1:54pm (CT).