**Nebraska Commission on Housing & Homelessness Meeting**

**Matt Talbot Kitchen & Outreach,**

**2121 N. 27th Street, Lincoln, NE 68503**

**Minutes of Wednesday, November 16, 2022; 1:00PM (CT)**

**Notice Published: Nebraska Public Meeting Calendar (October 16, 2022)**

**NCHH Website (October 16, 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: 1:02pm

1. **Roll Call**

Lynn Kohout called roll.

Ten of fourteen Commissioners were present: Lee Heflebower, Judy Pederson, Jeff Chambers, Tera Kucera, Kathy Mesner, Roger Nadrchal, Mindy Paces, Amy Thelander, Paul Hamelink and John Turner.

Absent Commissioners: Nancy Bentley, Ryan Durant, Judy Petersen, and Brent Williams.

Guests: Sharon Kluck, United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development; Autumn Calkins, High Plains Community Development Corporation; Karla Kimball, Central Nebraska Economic Development District; Ben Kunz, Hoppe Development; Carol Bodeen, Nebraska Housing Developers Association; Alicia Christensen, Together Omaha; Evan Clark, Hoppe Development; and Paula Kaslon, Midwest Housing Development Fund.

Department of Economic Development (DED) Staff: Lynn Kohout, Barb Pierce

Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Staff: Niki Tuzicka

1. **Call Meeting to Order**

Chair Heflebower declared a quorum and meeting was called to order at **1:03pm (CT).**

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**

Chair Heflebower asked for a motion to approve the August 17, 2022, meeting. minutes.

Lynn Kohout requested a correction to the spelling of the last name for Commissioner Petersen in the record of the roll call. Commissioner Pederson moved that the August 17, 2022, meeting minutes be approved with the correction. Commissioner Nadrchal seconded the motion. Roll call vote was taken with ten (10) commissioners voting yeas, no nays. Motion carried.

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

Chair Heflebower reported that the executive committee was held on November 7, 2022. Niki Tuzicka was introduced and welcomed as the new DHHS representative for the Homeless Shelter Assistance Trust Fund.

* 1. **Continuum of Care Committee**

Committee Chair Turner made a motion to add Commissioner Kucera to the Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee. Commissioner Chambers seconded the motion. Roll Call vote was taken with ten commissioners voting yeas, no nays. Motion carried.

Commissioner Turner reported the newest Federal Plan for Continuum of Care has an anticipated release date of early December. The committee will review and determine how the plan will be used to inform their decisions going forward.

The State Rental Assistance Program came to a close on September 30, 2022.

Commissioner Chambers reported that announcements were made for special application awards to three (3) projects that will address homeless and special populations. He also reported that Omaha and Lincoln have submitted their regular Continuum of Care applications and reported on the following balances: Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) has $4 million left to expend by end of this calendar year and ERAP2 has $6 million left to expend.

Commissioner Paces reported that the Omaha CoC is currently working through remaining applications. Ninety-two million has been distributed to 15,000 households. The Omaha CoC also applied to HUD for a number of projects.

Commissioner Chambers reported the State Point In Time count will be January 24, 2023.

Commissioner Turner reported on the Nebraska Homeowner Assistance Fund which will continue through September 2025. For more information, Commissioners can go to [www.nebraskahaf.com](http://www.nebraskahaf.com). The fund has had 5,379 applications and committed $18.9 million of the $50 million. $14.65 million has been allocated to date.  They have also recently added utility assistance as an eligible expense for NHAF and have received many requests.

* 1. **Education and Awareness Committee**

Commissioner Pederson reported that a Governor’s proclamation signing ceremony for the National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week of November 12-20 was held in Lincoln on November 7, 2022. The proclamation is receiving public readings across the state at various locations over the next couple weeks.

Commissioner Pederson and Housing Director Kohout will be updating the flyer for the upcoming legislative session. The next committee meeting will be discussing the NAHTF awards to be announced this year at the NIFA Innovation Conference.

* 1. **Policy and Issues Committee**

The committee did not meet this quarter; therefore, no report was provided.

1. **Report/Communication on Nebraska Olmstead Plan**

Commissioner Turner provided an update 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. They have recently been focused on providing education about the Public Input process. Final decisions will be made on goals in the near future.

1. **Reports from Agencies**
   1. **Department of Economic Development**

DED Director of Housing, Lynn Kohout, provided an update to the Commission on the State and Federally 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).

DED Housing Specialist, Barb Pierce, provided a review of the proposed 2023 Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund Qualified Allocation Plan and received feedback from the Commissioners.

* 1. **Department of Health and Human Services Agency**

Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program (NHAP) Coordinator, Niki Tuzicka provided an update to the Commission on the Homeless Shelter Assistance Trust Fund.

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 who serves on the advisory board of FHLB of Topeka.

Nebraska had 8 applications totaling $7 million for 212 housing units.

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. The All Seasons Affordability program has submitted an application to FHLB to continue the program. The Rentwise Tenant Education Program is scheduled to begin offering online training in January 2023. Agencies will have to have a certified trainer in order to administer the online class. They are beginning their preparations for the 2023 Legislative Session.

1. **Nebraska Investment Finance Authority**

Commissioner Turner provided a report. He reminded those present to go to NIFA.org to sign up to receive updates on programs. The 2023 LIHTC awards were recently announced. ARPA awards will be announced soon. He reported on the Welcome Home Program for first time and repeat buyers. Turner announced the launch of the NebraskaFindHelp.com website where property managers can find resources to share with tenants and to log referrals. This site will also list properties and programs. The NIFA Innovation Conference will be held April 17, 18, 19, 2023, in Lincoln at the Cornhusker Marriott. The NAHTF annual awards will be announced during the conference.

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

Sharon Kluck provided a report. There is still funding available. Future funding will depend on actions in Congress this December. Sharon offered housing packets to those in attendance. She also reported that a new need for water wells has surfaced. The water table has dropped due to the drought. If the property owner owns the property they can apply for assistance to replace the well under the USDA home repair program.

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

No report.

1. **Other Agency/Organizations present**

Commissioner Mesner has been serving on the Nebraska Strategic Housing Council. A meeting was held this morning and focused on implementation groups. There is a need for more people to be involved in the effort of implementation.

Commissioner Mesner recommended a report on the work of the Nebraska Strategic Housing Council be given at a future NCHH meeting. Shannon Harner, NIFA Executive Director will be invited to give a report at a future meeting.

1. **2022 NCHH Meeting Dates**
   1. February 15, 2023 (Lincoln)
   2. May 17, 2023 (Norfolk or Columbus)
   3. August 16, 2023 (TBD)
   4. November 15, 2023 (Lincoln)
2. **Other Business**

Housing Director Lynn Kohout reported that there is still an open Commissioner position that the Governor has not made an appointment for. It is unclear whether the current or the next Governor will make this appointment.

Commissioner Pederson shared that Tony Goins has put the February NCHH meeting on his schedule for attending.

Commissioner Turner discussed the recent Omaha World Herald article about $130 million in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TNAF) money found sitting in a fund tagged as unused public assistance money. The Legislature has asked DHHS to provide a plan for using the money. Commissioner Turner suggested NCHH Commissioners may want to inquire about the plan and any possibility of providing feedback for the use of the money.

1. **Adjourn 2:59pm CT**