

Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Full Commission Board Meeting
Held at – 313 Farnam Street, Washington Room, Omaha, NE
June 13, 2025, Meeting Minutes

A. Welcome

Chairperson Frances Beaurivage called the meeting to order for the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) Full Commission Board on June 13, 2025, at 8:30 a.m. at 313 Farnam Street, Washington Room, Omaha, NE.

Ms. Beaurivage conducted the meeting as Chairperson and Ms. Brooke Fitzpatrick served as Secretary until the election of new officers later in the meeting.

B. Notice of Open Meeting

Chairperson Beaurivage announced that notice of the meeting was duly given, posted, published, and tendered in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, and all board members received notice simultaneously by email. The agenda was kept current in the NCDHH office and on the Commission's website. The materials generally used by the board for the meeting today are on a table in a public folder available to the general public for the purpose of this meeting in accordance with the Open Meetings Act {Neb. Rev. Stat. §84-1412 (8)}. A copy of the Open Meetings Act is available for the duration of the meeting.

C. Roll Call

Board members present:

- Ms. Frances Beaurivage*
- Ms. Brooke Fitzpatrick*
- Ms. Candice Arteaga
- Mr. John Culver
- Dr. Kay Crabtree
- Mr. Richard McCowin
- Ms. Julie Mruz

- Ms. Diane Schutt
- Mr. Roy Christensen

**Ms. Beaurivage and Ms. Fitzpatrick served as Chairperson and Secretary, respectively, for the first portion of the meeting. Their board terms concluded upon the election of new officers later in the meeting.

NCDHH staff present:

- Mr. Kyle Miers, Executive Director
- Ms. Kim Davis, Community Services Manager
- Ms. Sakura Yodogawa-Campbell, Behavioral Health Liaison
- Ms. Jackie Novak, Business Manager
- Ms. Kendall Couture, Marketing & Communications Specialist

Sign Language Interpreters: Ms. Sharon Sinkler and Mr. Ben Sparks

Inclusive Communication Access Nebraska provided Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services by Zoom.

D. Review of Agenda

Mr. Kyle Miers, Executive Director, reviewed the agenda with the board members.

E. Acceptance of Agenda

Ms. Arteaga moved to accept the agenda as presented. Mr. Christensen seconded the motion. Mr. McCowin requested that board member introductions occur prior to elections. The board agreed, and the motion passed unanimously.

F. Acceptance of Minutes

Ms. Schutt moved to accept the minutes of the March 14, 2025, Full Commission Board Meeting. Ms. Arteaga seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Culver and Mr. McCowin abstained as they were not present at the March meeting.

G. Chairperson of the Board's Report

1. Innivee Strategies Wrap-Up

Mr. Shane Feldman, CEO of Innivee Strategies, presented an overview of the executive director search and transition process. Highlights included:

- Community and stakeholder engagement in developing the leadership profile
- Transparent candidate evaluation and community feedback
- Five-phase transition plan supporting onboarding and long-term success
- Coaching, role clarification, and development of short- and long-term goals
- Finalization of a comprehensive executive evaluation framework

Mr. Feldman emphasized the importance of strategic planning and recommended continued board development, future evaluation refinements, and support for Mr. Miers' adjustment as an international hire. He concluded this was his final contracted engagement with NCDHH but welcomed future support if needed.

2. Executive Director Evaluation Report / Closed Session

Mr. McCowin moved the board enter closed session at 9:14 a.m. to discuss the three-month evaluation of Executive Director Kyle Miers. Ms. Arteaga seconded the motion. The board entered closed session with Mr. Feldman invited to remain.

Mr. Christensen moved to return to open session. The board reconvened in open session at 10:40 a.m.

Ms. Schutt moved to formally accept the three-month executive evaluation of Mr. Kyle Miers as presented in closed session. Mr. McCowin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

H. Election of Officers

Chairperson Frances Beaurivage opened the floor for officer nominations. The board proceeded to elect a new Executive Committee.

1. Secretary

Mr. Richard McCowin nominated Ms. Diane Schutt for Secretary. Ms. Schutt accepted the nomination. With no further nominations, the motion passed unanimously, with Ms. Schutt abstaining.

Note: Ms. Schutt noted her term may end in the near future pending gubernatorial appointments. If so, a new Secretary will be elected at that time.

2. Vice Chairperson

Ms. Candice Arteaga nominated Mr. Richard McCowin for Vice Chair. Mr. McCowin accepted the nomination. Ms. Schutt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with Mr. McCowin abstaining.

3. Chairperson

Ms. Julie Mruz nominated Mr. John Culver for Chairperson. Mr. Roy Christensen seconded the motion. Mr. Culver accepted the nomination. The motion passed unanimously, with Mr. Culver abstaining.

Following the vote, outgoing Chair Frances Beaurivage formally passed responsibilities to the newly elected Chairperson, Mr. John Culver. Outgoing board members Frances Beaurivage and Brooke Fitzpatrick expressed their support and appreciation for the new leadership team.

I. Executive Director Report

Executive Director Kyle Miers provided an overview of agency activities and strategic priorities since his start in February 2025. The report highlighted cross-departmental collaboration, outreach expansion, and organizational restructuring. Departmental reports were presented by:

- Ms. Kim Davis- Community Services Manager
- Ms. Sakura Yodogawa-Campbell- Behavioral Health Liaison (report presented by Mr. Kyle Miers)
- Ms. Ashley Altman- Education, Youth & Family Liaison
- Ms. Kendall Couture- Marketing & Communications Specialist
- Ms. Jackie Novak- Business Manager

Department updates included operational restructuring, increased community engagement efforts, communications planning, and program developments.

Mr. Miers requested board approval of two new applicants to the Mental Health Advisory Committee: Alyssa Kipp and Diedre Shaw.

- Mr. McCowin moved to approve the appointment of Ms. Kipp and Ms. Shaw to the Mental Health Advisory Committee. Ms. Arteaga seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried with the motion passing unanimously.
 - Mr. Culver moved the Executive Director Report, Budget Report, and Department Reports be accepted by the Board. Mr. McCowin seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.
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J. Committee Reports

No committee reports were presented at this meeting.

K. Old Business

The board discussed the potential of hosting a Commission meeting in North Platte in 2025. After consideration, there was consensus among board members not to hold a meeting in North Platte this year due to budget constraints.

The next Full Commission Board meeting will be held on September 12, 2025, in Omaha. The exact location is to be determined by the Executive Director.

L. New Business

1. Mr. Miers presented the finalized 2025–2030 NCDHH Strategic Plan, outlining agency priorities and goals for the next five years. Following the presentation, the board considered the plan for approval.
 - Mr. McCowin moved to accept the 2025–2030 NCDHH Strategic Plan as presented. Ms. Arteaga seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.
2. Mr. Miers also discussed the recommendation to formally discontinue the agency's Assistive Devices Loan Program. The board engaged in a discussion about sunseting the program and how to handle remaining loaned equipment.
 - Ms. Arteaga moved to discontinue the Equipment Loan Program and to write off any equipment currently loaned to consumers. Mr. Christensen seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

3. Mr. Miers then presented a proposal regarding the use of personal vehicles for work-related travel. He requested board approval to allow mileage reimbursement for Commission-related meetings conducted using his personal vehicle when a state vehicle is not reasonably accessible.

- Mr. Culver moved to approve mileage reimbursement for the Executive Director's use of a personal vehicle for work-related travel, consistent with state policy and budget allowances. Ms. Mruz seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.
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M. Public Comment

Public comment was opened.

- Frances Beaurivage, speaking as a member of the public after concluding her term as Chairperson, expressed her gratitude to the incoming board members for their service. She encouraged the board to support Executive Director Kyle Miers in advancing the agency's mission and shared her confidence in their collective success moving forward.
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N. Adjournment

Ms. Arteaga moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Mruz seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 12:59 p.m.

Next Meeting Dates:

- September 12, 2025
- December 12, 2025