

Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Full Commission Board Meeting
Held at – 4600 Valley Road, Room 4A, Lincoln, NE
January 23, 2026, Meeting Minutes (2:00 p.m.)

Approved 3/13/2026

A. Welcome

Chairperson John Culver called the meeting of the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) Full Commission Board to order on Friday, January 23, 2026, at 2:01 p.m. The meeting was held in a hybrid format, with members attending both in person and via Zoom.

B. Notice of Open Meeting

Mr. Culver announced that notice of the meeting was duly given, posted, published, and tendered in compliance with the Open Meetings Act. All board members received notice simultaneously by email. The agenda was kept current at the NCDHH office and on the Commission's website. Materials used by the board were made available in a public folder for this meeting in accordance with the Open Meetings Act {Neb. Rev. Stat. §84-1412 (8)}. A copy of the Act was available for the duration of the meeting.

C. Roll Call

Board members present:

- Ms. Candice Arteaga
- Mr. Roy Christensen
- Dr. Kay Crabtree (Acting Secretary)
- Mr. John Culver, Chairperson
- Mr. Richard McCowin
- Ms. Julie Mruz

Board members absent:

- Ms. Diane Schutt, Secretary

NCDHH staff present:

- Ms. Kim Davis, Community Services Manager / Interim Executive Director
- Ms. Jackie Novak, Business Manager
- Ms. Kendall Couture, Marketing & Communications Specialist
- Jeremy Daffern, Outreach Liaison (via Zoom)
- Vali Hitz, Events & Programs Coordinator (via Zoom)

Other attendees:

- Ms. Elise Wiedenfeld, HR Business Partner, Department of Administrative Services (DAS) (via Zoom)
- Mr. Shane Feldman, Innivee Strategies (via Zoom)
- Ms. Melissa Elmira Yingst, Innivee Strategies (via Zoom)
- Frances Beaurivage
- Jonathan Arteaga

Sign Language Interpreters: Ms. Sharon Sinkler and Ms. Meghann Cassidy

Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services provided by Don Rombach

D. Review of Agenda

The agenda was reviewed by the board. It was noted that the agenda could not be altered within 24 hours of the meeting except for emergency items.

E. Acceptance of Agenda

Mr. Christensen moved to accept the agenda as presented. Ms. Arteaga seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Arteaga – Yes

Christensen – Yes

Crabtree – Yes

Culver – Yes
McCowin – Yes
Mruz – Yes
Schutt – Absent

Motion passed.

F. Acceptance of Minutes

The board discussed approval of prior meeting minutes.

After clarification regarding quorum at previous meetings, the board determined that only the September 12, 2025 and December 12, 2025 minutes required approval.

Ms. Arteaga moved to approve the minutes of the September 12, 2025 and December 12, 2025 Full Commission Board Meetings. Mr. McCowin seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Arteaga – Yes
Christensen – Yes
Crabtree – Yes
Culver – Yes
McCowin – Yes
Mruz – Yes
Schutt – Absent

Motion passed.

G. Chairperson of the Board's Report

Forgiveness of Moving Expenses – Former Executive Director Kyle Miers

The board discussed whether to forgive repayment of moving expenses incurred by former Executive Director Kyle Miers. Discussion included review of state policy, the contents of Mr. Miers' resignation letter, and clarification from the Department of Administrative Services regarding repayment procedures.

Ms. Arteaga moved to deny the request to forgive the moving expense repayment. Mr. Christensen seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Arteaga – Yes

Christensen – Yes

Crabtree – Yes

Culver – Yes

McCowin – Yes

Mruz – Yes

Schutt – Absent

Motion passed. The request to forgive the moving expenses was denied.

Interim Executive Director Salary Adjustment

The board discussed compensation for Ms. Kim Davis in her role as Interim Executive Director. Guidance was provided by DAS Human Resources regarding allowable salary increases under the NAPE labor contract.

Closed Session:

Mr. Christensen moved to enter closed session to discuss personnel matters. Ms. Arteaga seconded the motion. The board entered closed session at 2:37 p.m. to discuss personnel matters.

Following discussion, Mr. Christensen moved to return to open session. Dr. Crabtree seconded the motion.

The board returned to open session at 2:54 p.m., noting that personnel matters were discussed.

Mr. Christensen moved to approve a 30% salary increase for Ms. Kim Davis to reflect her appointment as Interim Executive Director, effective December 12, 2025. Mr. McCowin seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Arteaga – Yes

Christensen – Yes

Crabtree – Yes

Culver – Yes

McCowin – Yes

Mruz – Yes

Schutt – Absent

Motion passed.

Executive Director Search Process

The board discussed its intent to assign an agency to assist with the search for a new Executive Director. Mr. Shane Feldman of Innivee Strategies joined the meeting via Zoom to provide information regarding a potential scope of work and estimated costs. NCDHH Budget Manager, Jackie Novak also provided comment during the discussion.

Discussion included budget considerations, alternative search options through State of Nebraska Human Resources, and timing relative to the state budget cycle.

Ms. Arteaga moved to table further discussion and decision-making regarding the Executive Director search process until the March 2026 board meeting. Ms. Mruz seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Arteaga – Yes

Christensen – Yes

Crabtree – Yes

Culver – Yes

McCowin – Yes

Mruz – Yes

Schutt – Absent

Motion passed.

H. NCDHH Report

No consolidated NCDHH report was presented at this meeting.

I. Committee Reports

No committee reports were presented.

J. Old Business

No old business was discussed.

K. New Business

Interpreter Review Board – Closed Session

Mr. McCowin moved to enter closed session. Ms. Arteaga seconded the motion. The board entered closed session at 3:26 p.m. to discuss an Interpreter Review Board matter.

Ms. Arteaga moved to return to open session. Mr. Christensen seconded the motion. The board returned to open session at 3:48 p.m., noting that personnel matters were discussed and no decisions were made in closed session.

Following return to open session, Mr. McCowin moved to revoke Interpreter License No. 1758. Mr. Christensen seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Arteaga – Yes

Christensen – Yes

Crabtree – Yes

Culver – Yes

McCowin – Yes

Mruz – Yes

Schutt – Absent

Motion passed.

L. Public Comment

Public comment was opened.

No public comments were offered.

Public comment was closed.

M. Adjourn

The board discussed logistics for the March 13, 2026 Full Commission Board Meeting, including location and meeting time.

Ms. Mruz moved to hold the March 13, 2026 Full Commission Board Meeting in Lincoln, with a 1:00 p.m. start time, continuing until business is concluded. The motion was seconded by Mr. Christensen.

Roll call vote:

Arteaga – Yes

Christensen – Yes

Crabtree – Yes

Culver – Yes

McCowin – Yes

Mruz – Yes

Schutt – Absent

Motion passed.

Mr. Christensen moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Mruz seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Arteaga – Yes

Christensen – Yes

Crabtree – Yes

Culver – Yes

McCowin – Yes

Mruz – Yes

Schutt – Absent

Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 3:53 p.m.

Meeting Dates for 2026:

- March 13, 2026
 - Location: Lincoln
 - Time: 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm
- June 12, 2026
- September 11, 2026
- December 11, 2026