

Nebraska Sign Language Interpreter Review Board Meeting

Friday, May 22, 2026

Hybrid meeting conducted via Zoom with an in-person public access location at:

Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
1313 Farnam St., Conference Room E, Omaha, NE

DRAFT 5/22/2026

NCDHH staff present:

- Kim Davis, Interim Executive Director
- Cindy Woldt, Administrative Technician
- Kendall Couture, Communications and Marketing Specialist

Interpreters present:

- Sharon Sinkler
 - Arthur Trexler
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A. Welcome

The meeting of the Nebraska Interpreter Review Board was called to order by Chairperson Meghann Cassidy at 10:07 AM.

B. Notice of Open Meetings Act

Chairperson Meghann Cassidy announced the 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 has been kept current and available at the Commission's office and on their website. The materials generally used by the board for this meeting were available in a public folder in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, {Neb. Rev. Stat. 84-1412 (8)}. A copy of the Open Meetings Act was available for the duration of the meeting.

The meeting was conducted virtually via Zoom. An in-person access location was provided at the NCDHH Omaha office in accordance with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act.

C. Roll Call

For the record, board members Vonda Apking, Meghann Cassidy, Kim Davis, Margie Propp, Vicki Steinhauer-Campbell, Shawn Shannon, and Briana Stradinger were present.

Tami Richardson-Nelson was absent at roll call and entered the meeting at 10:39 AM.

D. Review of Agenda

Chairperson Meghann Cassidy reviewed the agenda with the board members.

E. Acceptance of Agenda

Ms. Margie Propp moved to accept the agenda. Ms. Vicki Steinhauer-Campbell seconded. With no further discussion, the motion passed, with one member absent.

F. Acceptance of Minutes

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Ms. Vicki Steinhauer-Campbell moved to approve the minutes. Ms. Margie Propp seconded. With no further discussion, the motion passed, with one member absent.

G. Chairperson Updates

1. Ratification Update on Email Vote for VRI Reinstatement

Chairperson Meghann Cassidy explained that the Board did not have quorum at the previous meeting and therefore conducted a vote by email regarding a Video Remote Interpreter (VRI) license reinstatement. The matter required ratification during an official meeting.

Ms. Margie Propp moved to approve the VRI reinstatement. Ms. Vonda Apking seconded. With no further discussion, the motion passed, with one member absent.

2. Subcommittee for Rules and Regulations Procedure

The Board discussed planning for a proposed subcommittee to review Rules and Regulations. Ms. Kim Davis shared updates from discussions with the Nebraska Department of Education's Special Education Department and the Nebraska Regional Program regarding interpreter workforce initiatives and continuation of the Interpreter Issues Roundtable.

Discussion included procedures for establishing subcommittees or task forces and ensuring all actions remain compliant with state law and Commission procedures. Chairperson Cassidy emphasized the value of including outside stakeholders and public sector representatives in future discussions.

The Board agreed to place subcommittee discussions on hold until a new Executive Director is hired and an additional Interpreter Issues Roundtable can be held to identify priorities and focus areas.

3. Nebraska Supreme Court Requirement of Annual 2.0 CEUs

Chairperson Cassidy shared updates following communication with Kathleen Valle regarding continuing education requirements for court interpreters. Discussion focused on the Nebraska Supreme Court's requirement of 2.0 CEUs annually and how that compares to Nebraska's interpreter licensure requirement of 24 CEUs every two years.

Board members discussed whether interpreters could follow the Nebraska licensure standard alone or whether national annual standards must also be met to maintain consistency with national credentialing requirements. The Board agreed additional clarification is needed regarding whether state requirements alone would satisfy court interpreter expectations.

H. NCDHH Updates

Presented by Kim Davis, Interim Executive Director.

1. Agency Updates

Ms. Davis announced that the Commission Board has extended an offer to a candidate for the Executive Director position, though no additional updates were available at this time.

The Board discussed continuation of the Interpreter Issues Roundtable and agreed that future conversations regarding Rules and Regulations review and workforce initiatives would likely move forward once the new Executive Director begins employment.

Tami Richardson-Nelson entered the meeting at 10:39 AM.

I. Public Comments

No public comments were made.

J. Old Business

1. Top Priorities for Incoming Executive Director

The Board continued discussion regarding priorities and long-term workforce initiatives for the incoming Executive Director.

Ms. Margie Propp identified several priorities, including:

- Strengthening collaboration with hospitals, courts, law enforcement, and other public sectors utilizing interpreters.
- Expanding mentorship opportunities for interpreters through potential grant funding.
- Continuing the Interpreter Issues Roundtable.
- Increasing opportunities for ASL exposure and workforce development within K–12 settings.

Board members discussed challenges related to offering ASL courses within schools, including shortages of qualified instructors and certification requirements for educators. Members also discussed possible alternatives such as extracurricular ASL clubs and community partnerships.

Discussion included identifying schools currently offering ASL clubs and determining whether outside organizations may participate in outreach efforts promoting interpreting as a profession. Board members referenced programs and clubs in Gretna, Bellevue, Lincoln, and Omaha-area schools, as well as organizations such as UNO Allies for Sign Language.

The Board discussed the importance of promoting interpreting as a viable career pathway and encouraging both Deaf and hearing students to explore opportunities within the profession. Members also discussed identifying existing ASL clubs and determining whether school districts have specific requirements for establishing extracurricular language programs.

Additional discussion focused on communication access within nursing homes and rehabilitation facilities. Board members discussed concerns that interpreters may not be consistently utilized in long-term care settings and emphasized the importance of

educating Deaf and hard of hearing individuals about self-advocacy and the interpreter complaint process.

Discussion also included whether advocacy related to nursing homes and rehabilitation facilities falls within the scope of the IRB or would be better addressed by organizations such as NeAD and NCDHH outreach efforts. Ms. Davis noted that NCDHH frequently works with long-term care facilities to provide education regarding interpreter scheduling and communication access.

The Board identified revamping and clarifying the interpreter complaint process as an additional priority area for future discussion.

Further discussion addressed concerns regarding increasing reliance on Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) in school districts and whether interpreter shortages or over reliance on VRI may be contributing to reduced opportunities for in-person interpreters within Nebraska.

K. New Business

1. Next Meeting Date

The next IRB meeting is tentatively scheduled for Friday, August 28, 2026, from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM in Lincoln, Nebraska. Ms. Tami Richardson-Nelson noted the time may need to be adjusted at a later date.

2. Utah Certification / BEI Recognition Discussion

The Board discussed interpreter certification systems utilized in other states, including Utah and Missouri, and whether those certifications satisfy Nebraska licensure requirements. Discussion focused primarily on the Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) certification system.

Board members reviewed differences between certification systems, including performance testing requirements, transliteration standards, Deaf Interpreter collaboration, team interpreting expectations, and permit structures. Members also discussed historical certifications such as QUASt and how those certifications continue to be recognized under Nebraska's Rules and Regulations despite the discontinuation of QUASt testing.

Discussion included differences between Nebraska, Utah, and Missouri certification structures, as well as questions regarding equivalency standards and whether previously approved certifications remain formally recognized under current Rules and Regulations.

Members noted that the Full Commission Board had previously voted to recognize BEI certifications, though clarification is needed regarding whether that approval remains valid and sufficiently documented.

Board members agreed additional research and legal clarification are necessary before making recommendations to the full Commission Board. The Board also discussed creating a more comprehensive and accessible reference list outlining currently recognized certifications and equivalent credentialing standards.

The Board agreed to conduct additional review and hold an email vote prior to the June 12 Full Commission Board meeting. Cindy Woldt will distribute materials by June 1, with Board responses requested by June 4. Any email vote will be ratified during the next IRB meeting.

L. Announcements

No announcements were made.

M. Adjourn

Ms. Margie Propp moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Tami Richardson-Nelson seconded. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 11:38 AM.