

## MINUTES

Nebraska Environmental Trust Board  
Third Quarter Meeting  
Thursday, August 7, 2025  
1:30 p.m.

### 1. Call to Order

Chair Christen called the meeting of the Nebraska Environmental Trust Board (NET) to order at 1:30 p.m. in Suite 310, 2077 N Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Advanced notice of the meeting was published in the Lincoln Journal Star on July 21, 2025. The agenda and documents to be considered at the meeting were provided. The Open Meetings Act was posted near the meeting room entrance and on the Nebraska Environmental Trust website.

Roll call was conducted, and a quorum was present.

#### **Members Present (11):**

**District I:** Jeff Kanger, Lincoln

**District II:** Mark Quandahl, Omaha; Roger Helgoth, Omaha; Garfield Coleman, Omaha

**District III:** Chair Rod Christen, Steinauer; Eric Hansen, North Platte; Josh Andersen, Edgar

**State Agency Representatives:** Tim McCoy, Director, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission; Ashley Newmyer, Interim Director, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services; Jesse Bradley, Director, Nebraska Department of Water, Energy & Environment; Matt Manning, Chief Water Officer, Nebraska Department of Water, Energy & Environment

#### **Members Absent (3):**

**District 1:** James Hellbusch, Columbus, Ted Vasko, Papillion

**State Agency Representative:** Vice-Chair Sherry Vinton, Director, Nebraska Department of Agriculture

**Staff Present:** Holly Adams, Interim Executive Director; Grants Administrator; Madison Moe, Grants Assistant; and Sandra Weaver, Administrative Specialist

Mr. Vasko arrived at the meeting at 1:32 p.m.

Ms. Vinton arrived at the meeting at 1:34 p.m.

On behalf of the Board, Chair Christen welcomed new Board members Ashley Newmyer, Matt Manning, and Garfield Coleman. Jesse Bradley was recognized in his new role as the Director of the Nebraska Department of Water, Energy & Environment.

### 2. Consent Agenda

#### Background on Consent Agenda Items

The consent agenda included the minutes from the Board meeting on May 1, 2025, financial reports, approval to set financials aside for audit, the Grant Disbursement Report, the Nebraska Lottery Proceeds Allocation Report, and the Grants Administration Report.

**Motion by** Kanger, seconded by Andersen, "I move to approve the consent agenda."

**Voting Aye:** Vasko, Kanger, Quandahl, Helgoth, Coleman, Hansen, Andersen, McCoy, Newmeyer, Bradley, Manning, Vinton, Christen

**Absent:** Hellbusch

**13 Voted Aye. Motion carried.**

### 3. Public Comment

None.

### 4. Set NET Board Meeting Calendar for 2026 and Grant Application Deadline

**Motion by** Quandahl, seconded by Helgoth, "I move to approve the 2026 NET Grant application and meeting calendar as follows:

Thursday, January 8, 2026, Public Hearing and Grant Awards for 2026  
Thursday, February 5, 2026, 1st Quarter Board meeting  
Thursday, May 7, 2026, 2nd Quarter Board meeting  
Thursday, August 6, 2026, 3rd Quarter Board meeting  
Thursday, November 5, 2026, 4th Quarter Board meeting,  
and Grant Application deadline September 8, 2026."

**Discussion:** None

**Voting Aye:** Kanger, Quandahl, Helgoth, Coleman, Hansen, Andersen, McCoy, Newmeyer, Bradley, Manning, Vinton, Vasko, Christen

**Absent:** Hellbusch

**13 Voted Aye. Motion carried.**

### 5. Grant Application Cycle 2025/2026 – Authorization for Technical Advisory Committee

**Motion by** McCoy, seconded by Quandahl, "I move to establish a Technical Advisory Committee to assist NET staff with evaluation of grant proposals and authorize NET staff to seek reviews as appropriate for the 2026 grant applications."

**Discussion:** Interim Executive Director Adams clarified the use of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) in response to members' questions.

- The TAC serves as a resource for the Grants Committee when expertise is needed to determine the technical feasibility of a project.
- When the TAC is used, at least two or three reviewers evaluate the same project.
- Currently, professionals from state agencies are utilized as technical reviewers. The director of the agency is informed before a TAC reviewer is used.

**Voting Aye:** Quandahl, Helgoth, Coleman, Hansen, Andersen, McCoy, Newmeyer, Bradley, Manning, Vinton, Vasko, Kanger, Christen

**Absent:** Hellbusch

**13 Voted Aye. Motion carried.**

### 6. Election of Officers

#### Background on Election of Officers

Neb. Rev. Stat. § 81-15-172 requires the Board to elect a chairperson from among its citizen members annually. NET Bylaws, Article II, states the vice-chairperson will be selected from the agency directors and sets forth procedures for the election of officers. The office of chairperson rotates yearly by Congressional district.

**Motion by** Christen, seconded by Vinton, "I move to nominate Mark Quandahl as Chairman from Congressional District 2."

**Discussion:** None.

**Voting Aye:** Helgoth, Coleman, Hansen, Andersen, McCoy, Newmeyer, Bradley, Manning, Vinton, Vasko, Kanger, Quandahl, Christen

**Absent:** Hellbusch

**13 Voted Aye. Motion carried.**

**Motion by** Quandahl, seconded by Andersen, "I move to nominate Agency Director Tim McCoy from Nebraska Game and Parks for Vice-Chairman."

**Discussion:** None.

**Voting Aye:** Coleman, Hansen, Andersen, McCoy, Newmeyer, Bradley, Manning, Vinton, Vasko, Kanger, Quandahl, Helgoth, Christen

**Absent:** Hellbusch.

**13 Voted Aye. Motion carried.**

The new officers will begin their terms in office at the close of the meeting, as per Article II, Section 3 of NET's Bylaws.

## 7. Grant Modification Requests

Interim Executive Director Adams reported that Green Recycling Enterprises was requesting a change in the scope of its awarded project, which involved moving \$120,000 from the operating expense category to the personnel expense category. Project inconsistencies from the narrative and budget submitted in the application were summarized. Chair Christen reminded members that the project sponsor was available to answer questions.

### a. 25-101 – Green Recycling Enterprises

**Motion by** Quandahl, seconded by Helgoth, "I move that project 25-101, Green Recycling Enterprises, be terminated effective immediately with no reimbursements to be provided."

**Discussion:** None

**Voting Aye:** Hansen, Andersen, McCoy, Newmeyer, Bradley, Manning, Vinton, Vasko, Kanger, Quandahl, Helgoth, Coleman, Christen

**Absent:** Hellbusch.

**13 Voted Aye. Motion carried.**

## 8. Interim Director's Report

Interim Executive Director Adams announced that reviews for the five-year environmental funding categories will be scheduled soon to gather public input from each of Nebraska's congressional districts. Board members representing each district were invited to attend the sessions held in their respective areas, and agency director members were also encouraged to attend. The use of a facilitator to guide the public sessions was discussed. Once all participant feedback and recommendations have been collected and analyzed, the Board will officially establish and approve the environmental funding categories for the years 2026 to 2030.

Grants Assistant Moe provided an overview of current audit practices. Spot checks are being utilized to compare the proposed activities outlined in the original grant applications with those reflected in current reports. When discrepancies are identified, staff are available to assist grantees in realigning their projects. In certain cases, these findings may lead to a desk audit. A new audit cadence, effective August 1, 2025, has been implemented to establish a more formal and consistent procedure for all grant projects.

Interim Executive Director Adams reported that the grant application period is open. The deadline for submittals is September 2, 2025.

Ms. Adams announced that Administrative Specialist Sandra Weaver will retire on August 15th.

Chair Christen received an appreciation gift for his dedicated service and commitment to the Nebraska Environmental Trust Board as Chair.

## 9. Executive Committee Report

Chair Christen reported that the Executive Committee, with guidance from the Nebraska Attorney General's Office, conducted a thorough process to identify a finalist for the position of executive director. A consultant screened fifty-four applications that met the minimum requirements, and the Committee reviewed the shortlisted candidates, ultimately selecting six for interviews. Follow-up interviews were conducted with two candidates. On August 4, 2025, the Executive Committee met and selected Ms. Holly Adams as the finalist to recommend to the Board for consideration. Mr. Quandahl added that Mr. Ted Ford Webb was engaged as a recruiter to screen applicants, pose challenging questions, and create a shortlist of the best candidates. By the end of the in-depth interview process, it was clear to the Executive Committee that Holly Adams was the top choice for the executive director position.

## 10. Executive Director Finalist Vision Statement and Q/A Session with Board

Chair Christen asked finalist Holly Adams to present her vision statement to the Board and address any questions from members.

Ms. Adams stated, "As the executive director, my vision is to lead with transparency and a renewed commitment to public engagement, while ensuring compliance with the Trust's updated bylaws, laws, policies, and procedures. By actively listening, collaborating, and responding to the needs of our grantees, we will restore trust and strengthen our impact." Adams emphasized her dedication to the Trust's mission of conserving, enhancing, and restoring Nebraska's natural environment. She expressed gratitude to the Board for the opportunity and shared her enthusiasm for the future.

Discussion continued regarding the use of a facilitator to gather public input for the funding categories. It was noted that board policy permits the Executive Director to execute service agreements for all contracts valued under \$25,000 annually.

Ms. Adams summarized her timeline for filling the Grants Administrator position vacancy.

**Motion by** Quandahl, seconded by Andersen, "I move to go into closed session for discussion regarding the negotiation of salary and performance expectations with the selected candidate, clearly necessary for the protection of the public interest."

**Voting Aye:** Andersen, McCoy, Newmeyer, Bradley, Manning, Vinton, Vasko, Kanger, Quandahl, Helgoth, Coleman, Hansen, Christen

**13 Voted Aye. Motion carried.**

Before going into closed session, Chair Christen restated the limitations for the subject matter.

Closed session commenced at 2:08 p.m. Ms. Vinton left the meeting at 2:38 p.m.

Closed session concluded at 2:57 p.m. and Chair Christen reconvened the meeting.

**11. Offer for Executive Director Position/Annual Salary Recommendation**

**Motion by** Quandahl, seconded by Kanger, “I move to extend an offer to Holly Adams for the position of Executive Director, with an annual salary of \$100,000 starting on August 11, 2025.”

**Discussion:** None

**Voting Aye:** McCoy, Newmeyer, Bradley, Manning, Vasko, Kanger, Quandahl, Helgoth, Coleman, Hansen, Andersen, Christen

**Absent:** Hellbusch, Vinton

**8 Voted Aye. Motion carried.**

Ms. Holly Adams accepted the Board’s offer for the position of Executive Director.

**12. Next Meeting**

Thursday, November 6, 2025, Telegraph Lofts West, 2077 N St, Suite 310, Lincoln, NE 68510, 1:30 p.m.

**13. Adjourn**

Chair Christen adjourned the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

  
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Holly Adams  
Executive Director