

MINUTES

Nebraska Environmental Trust Board
1st Quarter Meeting
Thursday, February 5, 2026
1:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order

Chair Mark Quandahl called the meeting of the Nebraska Environmental Trust Board (NET) to order at 1:31 p.m. in Suite 310, 2077 N St, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Advance notice of the meeting and public hearing was published in the Lincoln Journal Star on January 25, 2026. 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 (12):

District I: James Hellbusch, Columbus; Jeff Kanger, Lincoln; Ted Vasko, Papillion

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

District III: Josh Andersen, Edgar; Rodney Christen, Steinauer

State Agency Representatives: Jesse Bradley, Director, Nebraska Department of Water, Energy and Environment; Tim McCoy, Director, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission; Ashley Newmyer, Director, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health; Sherry Vinton, Director, Nebraska Department of Agriculture

Members Absent (2):

District III: Eric Hansen, North Platte

State Agency Representatives: Matt Manning, Chief Water Officer, Nebraska Department of Water, Energy and Environment.

Staff Present: Holly Adams, Executive Director; Lana Merani, Grants Administrator; Madison Moe, Grants Assistant; Karen Plautz-Castro, Administrative Specialist

2. Consent Agenda

Background on Consent Agenda Items

The consent agenda included January 8, 2026, Board meeting minutes, financial reports, approval to set financials aside for audit, and the Grant Disbursement Report.

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

Voting Aye: Bradley, Christen, Coleman, Helgoth, Hellbusch, Kanger, McCoy, Newmyer, Vasko, Vinton, Andersen, Quandahl

Absent: Hansen, Manning

12 Voted Aye. Motion carried.

3. Public Comment

Shelly Kelly, Executive Director, Sandhills Task Force, requested that NET keep the bidding process simple, expressed concern about the unexpected pause on 2026 grants after awards were announced and urged the board to proceed with approved contracts.

4. Nebraska State Lottery Report

Nebraska State Lottery Director, Brian Rockey, provided an overview of 2025 lottery sales and compared them to sales from 2021–2024. He described lottery game introductions planned for February and August 2026. Board members inquired about demographics, future sales projections and sought Mr. Rockey's perspective on potential impacts from Nebraska casinos, cash devices, and online lotteries in neighboring states.

5. Board Development

a. Accountability and Disclosure – Conflicts of Interest Statement & Reporting

NET requires board members and staff to comply with statutes, rules, and policies, including the Nebraska Political Accountability and Disclosure Act. Members must avoid conflicts of interest by abstaining from votes that benefit their own agencies and submit annual declarations, including the NADC Form C-1 by March 1. Executive Director Adams requested that all Board members complete the NADC Form C-1 online and return the NET Conflict of Interest form to her by March 1, 2026.

b. Executive Director's Evaluation Update

Chair Quandahl outlined the Executive Director's evaluation process. An Excel form will be completed by NET Board members and agency staff. The Executive Committee will gather comments and report to the NET Board during the next quarterly meeting.

6. Habitat for Humanity Sale of Property funded by NET

Executive Director Adams summarized the Habitat for Humanity of Omaha request to sell their ReStore building (10910 Emmet Street, Omaha, NE) purchased with NET funds from grant #13-155. Utilizing the NET policy and contract language from NET project #13-155, Executive Director Adams provided three options to the Board for consideration.

- Approve the sale of the (ReStore) building as per their request.
- Approve the sale with the condition that Habitat for Humanity repay the grant funds that were put into the property from project #13-155.
- Require repayment of the grant funding plus a percentage of appreciation earned.

Tracie McPherson, Habitat for Humanity's Chief Communications Officer, read a statement regarding their intention to sell both their ReStore locations in Omaha to Thrift World. Their property at 10910 Emmet Street, Omaha, NE received \$485,000 in 2013 to purchase the building of which \$440,000 was used for the building, \$35,000 was utilized for capital expenditures and the remaining \$10,000 was not used. McPherson addressed Board member questions regarding sale price, closing date, real estate appreciation, and roof replacement. McPherson disclosed that this sale is considered a bundled asset sale, which includes the building, inventory, furnishings, trucks and transaction systems. Closing is scheduled for April 1, 2026, and McPherson confirmed the appraisal had not yet been completed.

Motion by Andersen, seconded by Coleman "I move that the Board approve the sale of the building associated with grant #13-155, in response to the request from Habitat for Humanity of Omaha, with the condition that Habitat for Humanity of Omaha repay the grant-funded amount of \$475,000 upon the sale of the property, and authorize the Executive Director to provide written notice of the Board's decision to Habitat for Humanity of Omaha."

Discussion: Executive Director Adams confirmed the Attorney General reviewed the NET real-estate policies for 2013 and 2024 and found no legal differences between them. The contract is structured so that Habitat for Humanity can either repay the

original amount or wait for a property assessment, use the appraisal and determine the percentage of gain/loss to repay NET.

Voting Aye: Christen, Coleman, Helgoth, Hellbusch, Kanger, McCoy, Newmyer, Vasko, Vinton, Andersen, Quandahl

Voting No: Bradley

Absent: Hansen, Manning

11 Voted Aye. 1 No. Motion carried.

7. Five Year Funding Category Review – Updates to Current Categories

Motion by Andersen, seconded Kanger “I move to reaffirm and continue the current funding categories and their descriptions, to remain in effect until July 2030.

Discussion: none

Vasko stepped out of meeting from 2:33 p.m. to 2:37 p.m.

Voting Aye: Coleman, Helgoth, Hellbusch, Kanger, McCoy, Newmyer, Vinton, Andersen, Bradley, Christen, Quandahl

Absent: Hansen, Manning, Vasko

11 Voted Aye. Motion carried.

8. Legislative Committee Report and Positions on Bills Affecting NET

Discussion: The NET Legislative Committee, met on January 22, 2026, led by Committee Chair Kanger. Committee Chair Kanger summarized the proposed bills, LB 60, LR 298CA and LB 1072 and committee discussions. The Legislative Committee approved Executive Director’s attendance at the February 4, 2026, Appropriations Committee hearing on LB1072, and instructed Director Adams to provide neutral, fact-based testimony. Chair Quandahl confirmed that Executive Director testified at the hearing. Bradley provided a handout titled, ‘Nebraska Environmental Trust Funds Analysis’ which he received from DAS (Department of Administrative Services) State Budget Division. The handout provided data on revenue, expenditures and fund transfers. Chair Quandahl further explained that he placed a pause on sending the 2026 grantee contracts until two pending actions are completed. The first being a review by the Attorney General to determine whether additional language should be included in the grant contracts if funding be unavailable. Secondly Chair Quandahl and Executive Director Adams are meeting with DAS State Budget personnel to review expected NET income to ensure enough funding is available for 2026 grantees.

9. Policy Discussion and Updates – Section VI.A. Bidding Policy

Discussion: At the January 8, 2026, Board Meeting, the members discussed the need to revisit the NET policy on bidding requirements for personal property and contract services. The current policy requires grantees to obtain at least three bids for purchases of personal property over \$5,000 or services over \$20,000. Board member Helgoth suggested that NET adopt Nebraska Revised Statute 81-1701, ‘Nebraska Consultants’ Competitive Negotiation Act’. Chair Quandahl suggested this may be a topic of discussion during an upcoming Ad Hoc Committee meeting.

10. Proposed Special Ad Hoc Committees

a. Ranking and Scoring Ad Hoc Committee

Executive Director Adams and Chair Quandahl proposed creating an Ad Hoc Committee to review and provide additional input into the ranking and scoring process for the 2027 application cycle.

Motion by Andersen, seconded Bradley “I move that the NET Board establish an Ad Hoc Committee, pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 81-15,173(7), to assist the Executive Director in developing a ranking system described in Title 137, Chapter 6, to meet the requirements of § 81-15,175(2). The Committee shall present its recommendations to the NET Board. The Committee shall exist until August 6, 2026, unless earlier dissolved by the NET Board.”

Discussion: Chair Quandahl requested Board members to let him know if they wish to serve on these Ad Hoc committees.

Voting Aye: Helgoth, Hellbusch, Kanger, McCoy, Newmyer, Vasko, Vinton, Andersen, Bradley, Christen, Coleman, Quandahl

Absent: Hansen, Manning

12 Voted Aye. Motion carried.

b. Real Property Improvement Ad Hoc Committee

Executive Director Adams and Chair Quandahl proposed creating an Ad Hoc Committee to review and provide input on the NET’s Real Property Improvements policy and procedures.

Motion by Kanger, seconded McCoy “I move that the NET Board establish an Ad Hoc Committee, pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 81-15,173(7), to advise and assist the Executive Director in the development of policies, grant contract and procedure updates related to NET-funded real property improvements. The Committee shall present its recommendations to the NET Board. The Committee shall exist until August 6, 2026, unless earlier dissolved by the NET Board.”

Discussion: Executive Director Adams commented there has been historical perceptions of how real property was defined and she would like the committee to review wording of the current policy to better define what real property improvements are and have the Board set policy that is clear, concise and easily understood for current and future needs.

Voting Aye: Hellbusch, Kanger, McCoy, Newmyer, Vasko, Vinton, Andersen, Bradley, Christen, Coleman, Helgoth, Quandahl

Absent: Hansen, Manning

12 Voted Aye. Motion carried.

11. Next Meeting

Thursday, May 7, 2026, Telegraph Lofts West, 2077 N St, Suite 310, Lincoln, NE 68510, 1:30 p.m

12. Adjourn

Chair Quandahl adjourned the meeting at 3:08 p.m.



Holly Adams
Executive Director