

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS’  
MEETING MINUTES  
MARCH 26, 2026**

|                                   |                   |                   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Members Present-In Person:</b> | Nathan Avery      | Brooke Fricke     |
|                                   | Jennifer Bantam   | Myron Kouba       |
|                                   | Coy Clark         | Cecelia Loganbill |
|                                   | Roger Dorn        | Barb Roebuck      |
|                                   | Linda Fitzsimmons | Michael Stromer   |
|                                   |                   | Jerry Woodruff    |

**Members Attending via ZOOM:**

|                         |             |                 |
|-------------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| <b>Members Excused:</b> | Joe Brayton | Joy Kyhn        |
|                         | Deb Granger | Bernardo Revelo |

|                        |                  |                 |
|------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Others Present:</b> | Meredith Collins | LaDonna Jackman |
|                        | Carrie Eureka    | Tammy Jeffs     |

President Roebuck started the meeting by declaring a quorum and joined the Board in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and the Community Action Brand Promise.

**INTRODUCTIONS:**

**AGENDA APPROVAL:** There were four additions to the agenda. Coy Clark moved the Board approve the amendment to the agenda. Jerry Woodruff seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

**APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY MINUTES:** Brooke Fricke moved to approve the February minutes. Jennifer Bantam seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously by voice vote. The minutes stand approved as written.

**ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT:** Staff and board members offered congratulations to Bernardo and his wife on the birth of their new baby boy!

We have received notification about our Head Start Focus 2 Review monitoring. The reviewers will be onsite the week of April 13<sup>th</sup>. This review is a Comprehensive Services Review that focuses on:

- Program Design, Management, and Improvement
- Fiscal Infrastructure
- Background Checks/Fingerprinting
- Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance
- Education and Child Development
- Health Services
- Family and Community Engagement Services

Head Start changed their monitoring reviews, so our Focus Area 1 Review last year was a combination of most of the things listed above but also included Board and Policy Council governance. Head Start staff just completed the CLASS review so it will be additional work on top of being short staffed. On the bright side these reviews are ways to highlight our staff and program while learning ways in which we can improve. Our CLASS monitoring scores were received at all met the necessary thresholds. We scored 5.9 for

Emotional Support, 5.71 for Classroom Organization, and 2.85 for Instructional Support. These totals are between the Competitive and Quality Thresholds.

So far, we have not been able to locate new space for our two Head Start classrooms in North Platte. Meredith and staff have contacted many churches and non-profits, and none currently have space available. The only commercial space for lease available is retail space which we couldn't use as it has no playground options. North Platte Public School officials had no suggestions for alternative space so next steps will be ask the papers or local news to do a story on Head Start and our need for new space for two classrooms next school year. We have also provided correspondence to the Regional Office about this issue. Meredith provided an update on the new Early Head Start facility along with project milestones.

March 16<sup>th</sup> through March 20<sup>th</sup> was Nebraska Public Transit Week that celebrates the great work of rural transit providers. Thank you to all of our RYDE Transit staff for their hard work and dedication. Charles has presented at many County meetings on funding for next year. So far, all meetings have gone well. We do have some concerns about Dawson County and their continued support. We also received notification that the land behind RYDE Transit in Kearney has had a Public Hearing to rezone from an Agriculture to Residential for new housing. This will probably mean eventual street paving on Avenue H. When the RYDE Transit Facility was being built, the agency agreed to pay for water, paving, and sewer assessments if that street was ever developed. Meredith also provided an update on Community Service Block Grant funding. OMB has not released third and fourth quarter funding yet even though it has been approved by Congress. The National Community Action Foundation is working to try and get the situation resolved.

Things have not slowed down in Lexington. The community had some good news that the Sherwood Foundation has donated \$1.1 million to help community members with emergency needs. Those displaced from Tyson can apply for relief checks up to \$500 per individual. Also, Price Rentals has offered transportation seven days a week to those commuting to North Platte to the Walmart Distribution Center and Beef Sustainable Plant at no cost to riders.

Our Lexington Food Pantry has received a lot of community support which includes grants and monetary donations. We used some of the funding to purchase two pallets of ground beef from Covenant Marketing for \$3.86 per pound. Thankfully, the Pantry purchased another freezer last year, so we have additional space to store frozen items. Black Hills Energy would like to construct and then stock a small outdoor food pantry at our building. Service counts below are from January 1<sup>st</sup> through March 24<sup>th</sup>.

| Service   | # of Services Provided | # of Unduplicated Clients Served |
|---|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Food: Food Pantries                                   | 1,458                  | 1,130                            |
| Hotel Motel Vouchers: Hotel/Motel Vouchers            | 9                      | 9                                |
| Life Skills: Financial Literacy Training              | 2                      | 2                                |
| Rental Assistance: Rent Payment Assistance            | 4                      | 4                                |
| Transportation: Gas Money                             | 2                      | 2                                |
| Transportation: Transportation Expense Assistance     | 3                      | 3                                |
| Utility Payments: Electric Service Payment Assistance | 1,153                  | 1,075                            |
| Utility Payments: Gas Service Payment Assistance      | 37                     | 37                               |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>2,668</b>           | <b>1,814</b>                     |

**Jennifer Bantam moved the Board approve the Administrator's Report. Coy Clark seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**FINANCIAL REPORT:** The credit card, bank statement, and monitoring files were passed around at the board meeting. There was a monitoring report for the CLASS Video Review. The February financial report was reviewed. Since February is the fifth month of the fiscal year, we should be at 41.67% for both revenue and expenses. We are at 51.04% for revenue and 4.69% for expenses. A review of the balance sheet for February was completed. The financial ratio increased from 6.46 in January to 6.5 in February. The cash ratio increased

from 3.55 in January to 3.58 in February. If the financial ratio and the cash ratio calculations are over 1, they are considered good. **Roger Dorn moved the Board accept and place on file the financial report as presented. Jennifer Bantam seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

## **SPECIAL REPORTS**

**HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START REPORTS/POLICY COUNCIL ACTIONS by Brooke Fricke** – Brooke provided an overview of the Policy Council meeting including the Change of Scope discussion and the training provided by staff. Early Head Start/Head Start reports and financials were passed around and also shared on board portal website. The notebook with the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Program Instructions (PIs) and Information Memorandums (IMs) updates is available. The following items require approval:

- \* Community representatives
- \* Monthly enrollment reports
- \* Monthly meal & snack reports
- \* Enrollment attendance
- \* Monthly health mandate reports
- \* New hire approvals

**Coy Clark moved the Board approve the report. Linda Fitzsimmons seconded the motion; motion carried by unanimous voice vote.**

**NORTH PLATTE SENIOR CENTER REPORT by Meredith Collins** – Last month, the Center served 2,298 meals in 19 serving days. Of those meals served, 1,181 were congregated meals, 87 were to-go meals, and 1,030 were home delivered meals. The average donation rate was \$5.14. The Great BIG Puzzle is almost down to the last three bags. Saturday night Bingo continues to be on hold due to lack of volunteers. **Jennifer Bantam moved the Board approve this report. Nathan Avery seconded the motion; motion carried by unanimous voice vote.**

**MINDEN SENIOR CENTER REPORT by Meredith Collins** – Last month, the Center served 689 meals, (375 Congregate and 314) to go with an average of 31 people per day. Donations were \$3,754.00 with an average of \$5.45 per meal. **Nathan Avery moved the Board approve this report. Cecelia Loganbill seconded the motion; motion carried by unanimous voice vote.**

**PETERSON SENIOR CENTER MEAL REPORT by Meredith Collins** – Last month, our program served 2,254 total meals (1,460 Congregate and 794 To-Go Meals) averaging 102 people per day with a donation average of \$4.45. **Michael Stromer moved the Board approve this report. Roger Dorn seconded the motion; motion carried by unanimous voice vote.**

**AGENCY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN REPORT by Carrie Eurek** – All board members received a summary of the Risk Analysis. Carrie provided a comprehensive overview of the full plan and the risk management mitigation plan for Employment Practices, Personnel Injury, Property Damage, Agency Funding, Accounting, Record Keeping, Agency Mission, and Staff Training. We will continue to see an increased risk in program funding, Workers Compensation and insurance costs. (*Org Standards: 4.5, 4.6, 7.3*) **Myron Kouba moved the Board approve this report. Roger Dorn seconded the motion; motion carried by unanimous voice vote.**

**2026-27 COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN by Tammy Jeffs** - Tammy provided a summary of the Nebraska Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Work Plan/Application. This document provides information on the agency needs assessments and gaps analysis conducted, planning that is done by the agency to address those needs, program strategies implemented to address the gaps, partnerships involved in addressing those gaps, updates on the progress of agency strategies and goals addressing needs, innovative programming within the agency to address needs, and discussion of future program change. The CSBG Discretionary funding was also discussed as it will be used for direct service to clients for

rent, utility, and vehicle repair assistance. *(Org Standards: 4.2-4.4)* **Linda Fitzsimmons moved the Board approve this report. Coy Clark seconded the motion; motion carried by unanimous voice vote.**

## **A. ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**Approval of Revised Agency By-Laws** – All board members received a copy of the proposed changes and an overview of the changes in February. These are the changes recommended from our attorney review. **Jennifer Bantam moved the Board approve the revised By-Laws. Brooke Fricke seconded the motion; motion carried by unanimous voice vote.**

**Senior Volunteer Program Grant Application** – We are requesting \$25,000 from the State of Nebraska to continue the Senior Volunteer Program. This program is to support older Nebraskans to remain independent in their own homes and communities with supportive services that meet all the requirements of the Older Americans Act and Title 15 Services and Regulations. The effective date is July 1, 2026, through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2027. *(ROMA Goals 1-3)* **Jerry Woodruff moved the Board approve. Cecelia Loganbill seconded the motion; motion carried by unanimous voice vote.**

**Head Start Continuation Grant Application, Year 4** – For the program year, August 1, 2026 to July 31, 2027 program year, which is the fourth year of the five-year grant cycle; the grant budget requested will be \$4,732,322. Head Start requires a local match of 20% of total funding. *(ROMA Goals 1-3)*

|                              |                    |                            |
|------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Head Start Program Operating | \$3,472,425        | (Funded enrollment of 208) |
| Head Start Training          | \$ 38,382          |                            |
| Early Head Start Operating   | \$1,205,514        | (Funded enrollment of 40)  |
| Early Head Start Training    | \$ 16,001          | (Total enrollment of 248)  |
|                              | <b>\$4,732,322</b> |                            |

**Cecelia Loganbill moved the Board approve. Brooke Fricke seconded the motion; motion carried by unanimous voice vote.**

**Head Start Strategic Plan Update** – Carrie provided an update on progress with the Strategic Plan goals. **Brooke Fricke moved the Board approve. Myron Kouba seconded the motion; motion carried by unanimous voice vote.**

**Head Start Community Assessment** – An overview of the assessment was provided including survey data, parent feedback and updated census data. The full assessment will also be available on the agency website. **Linda Fitzsimmons moved the Board approve. Roger Dorn seconded the motion; motion carried by unanimous voice vote.**

**Lexington Community Foundation Grant Request** – We are requesting \$100,000 (\$50,000 for food, \$50,000 for utilities) to assist former Tyson employees and subcontractors with emergency assistance. *(ROMA Goal 1)* **Brooke Fricke moved the Board approve. Coy Clark seconded the motion; motion carried by unanimous voice vote.**

**Farm Credit Services - Working Here Fund Grant Request**– We are requesting \$5,000 to help support the Lexington Food Pantry. *(ROMA Goal 1)* **Jerry Woodruff moved the Board approve. Cecelia Loganbill seconded the motion; motion carried by unanimous voice vote.**

### **Charitable Fund of Cozad Grant Application *(ROMA Goal 1)***

**a. Head Start** - This application for \$2000 will be used to support the Cozad Head Start Program. **Linda Fitzsimmons moved the Board approve. Michael Stromer seconded the motion; motion carried by unanimous voice vote.**

**Lexington United Way Applications (ROMA Goal 1)**

- a. Homeless Prevention** – The application is for \$2,000.
- b. Head Start** – This application is for \$1000.
- c. Immunization** – This application is for \$2,900.

**Brooke Fricke moved the Board approve. Michael Stromer seconded the motion; motion carried by unanimous voice vote.**

**Head Start Change of Scope/Proposed Reduction of 20 Home-based Lots** – Discussion included the availability of center-based slots in Arapahoe, located in Furnas County. Data from the 2025 Head Start Community Assessment indicates that existing center-based services across Furnas County have the capacity to absorb the 10 home-based slots proposed for reduction in that county.

It was also noted that, due to one staff retirement and the transfer of another employee, no staff reductions would result from this change. Funding saved through the reduction of 20 home-based enrollment slots in Furnas and Dawson Counties would be redirected to address increasing personnel costs.

Additional factors discussed in support of the proposed change included:

- Declining population trends in Furnas County, including among children ages 0–5, and the closure of the Tyson plant in Dawson County, both of which have reduced the pool of income-eligible children available for recruitment. Dawson County did not reach full enrollment until January 2026, nearly six months into the program year, despite extensive recruitment efforts. Continued under-enrollment could result in the program being placed on an under-enrollment plan, potentially jeopardizing funding. Under-enrollment in home-based program options was also a significant factor in the agency’s prior Change of Scope request for 2024–2025.
- According to the 2025 Head Start Community Assessment, more than 70% of children under age 6 in both Furnas and Dawson Counties have all available parents in the labor force, limiting demand for home-based services.
- The program has experienced ongoing difficulty recruiting qualified Family Educators. With a tenured Family Educator retiring, prior hiring trends suggest the program will likely face continued challenges filling and retaining this role.
- A projected 0.6% COLA for the 2026–2027 school year, combined with no COLA for 2025–2026, has contributed to increased staff turnover. Turnover has doubled during the 2025–2026 school year, with departing staff frequently citing higher-paying opportunities elsewhere. This places additional strain on center staff and management, who must fill gaps to maintain required child-to-staff ratios. Without additional funding to support competitive wages, the program anticipates continued recruitment and retention challenges that could affect program quality.
- Parent survey data reflects a strong need for and preference toward center-based services.

Reducing enrollment slots was discussed as a last-resort option after consideration of multiple alternatives. The Head Start Policy Council approved this change at the March 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**After discussion, Nathan Avery moved the Board approve. Coy Clark seconded the motion; motion carried by unanimous voice vote.**

**Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) Grant Award** - This is the additional subaward for FY26 in the amount of \$32,157.04 with total obligated funds at \$50,011.89. *(ROMA Goal 1)* **Brooke Fricke moved the Board accept the funds. Cecelia Loganbill seconded the motion; motion carried by unanimous voice vote.**

**Lexington Community Foundation Grant Award** – We were awarded \$100,000 (\$50,000 for food, \$50,000 for utilities) to assist former Tyson employees and subcontractors with emergency assistance. *(ROMA Goal 1)* **Coy Clark moved the Board accept the funds. Linda Fitzsimmons seconded the motion; motion carried by unanimous voice vote.**

**Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program (NHAP) Grant Application, NHAP for Southwest (Region 3)** - This is in the amount of **\$190,000.00** is for the Homeless Prevention Program and Rapid Re-Housing efforts. It is used for rent deposits, utility deposits, rent arrearages, utility disconnects, rental assistance, and eviction notice assistance. **Brooke Fricke moved the Board approve. Roger Dorn seconded the motion; motion carried by unanimous voice vote.**

**Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program (NHAP) Grant Application, NHAP for Southeast (Region 4)** - This is in the amount of **\$142,500.01** is for the Homeless Prevention Program and Rapid Re-Housing efforts. It is used for rent deposits, utility deposits, rent arrearages, utility disconnects, rental assistance, and eviction notice assistance. **Linda Fitzsimmons moved the Board approve. Jerry Woodruff seconded the motion; motion carried by unanimous voice vote.**

**B. OTHER ISSUES/COMMENTS:** Meredith discussed potential ribbon cutting dates for the Early Head Start facility in Kearney. It was decided that the event will take place on August 20<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 am followed by the Board meeting.

**C. ADJOURNMENT --** With no further business, President Roebuck adjourned the meeting. It was announced that the next Board of Directors' Meeting would be on **April 23, 2026.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
LaDonna Jackman  
Recording Secretary

**VERIFICATION**

The forgoing minutes were amended/approved.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Board Secretary**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Board President**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**