



**Nebraska State Historical Society Board of Trustees Meeting
July 17, 2026 – 1:00 PM (Central Time)**

The Meeting was conducted in person and virtually via Teams

The public was invited to attend in person at:

John G. Neihardt Center Meeting Room,

306 Elm St., Bancroft, Nebraska 68004

or virtually at: <https://tinyurl.com/32nxeraf>

Meeting ID: 236 552 709 687 16 Passcode: A5op93Mk

MEETING MINUTES

Call to Order

President Bob Wickersham called the meeting to order at 1:20 pm.

Roll Call – Quorum confirmed.

ATTENDING IN PERSON: Mark Batt, Bruce Clawson, Gail DeBuse Potter, Jamesena Moore, Thomas Neal, Shannon Smith, Bob Wickersham and Arlan Wine.

ATTENDING ONLINE: Laura Muñoz and Nancy Faber.

ABSENT: Jack Berg, Anna Castner Wightman, and Beverly Duran.

Certification of Publication - Notification of Open Meetings Act

- The legal notice required by state statute was published in the *Lincoln Journal Star* on July 9, 2026.
- The meeting complies with the Open Meetings Act.
- A copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act was available on the table.

Welcome, Remarks, and Introduction of Guests

- Five members of the public were present.

Reminder of the Nebraska State Historical Society Mission

The Nebraska State Historical Society mission was read aloud by President Wickersham.

Opportunity for Public Questions and Comments

No questions were asked nor comments given.

Approval of the April 10, 2026 Board Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the April 10, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Motion by: MOORE

Second by: BATT

Yeas: BATT, CLAWSON, DeBUSE POTTER, FABER, MOORE,
MUÑOZ, NEAL, SMITH, WICKERSHAM, WINE

Nays: NONE

Abstain: NONE

Motion approved

Committee Reports

Bylaw Adoption Discussion

Discussion on the proposed bylaws as presented by the subcommittee (Bruce Clawson, Jamesena Moore and Laura Muñoz) and amendments needed. Discussion on creating a Standing Bylaws Committee that will be responsible for annual review.

Motion to adopt the bylaws as amended during the discussion and to allow the Board President to appoint Board of Trustee members to a Standing Bylaw Committee which will perform an annual review.

Motion by: DeBUSE POTTER

Second by: BATT

Yeas: BATT, CLAWSON, DeBUSE POTTER, FABER, MOORE,
MUÑOZ, NEAL, SMITH, WICKERSHAM, WINE

Nays: NONE

Abstain: NONE

Motion approved

Nomination Committee Report and Presentation of Candidates for Trustee Elections

The Nominating Committee completed its work and prepared the required statutory report for the Director. Shannon Smith noted the process was intensive due to the number of openings but nominations for all elected positions had been secured. The Nomination Committee signed the form and forwarded it to the Director.

Slate of Nominees

1st Congressional District:

- **Bob Ripley** – Former Capitol Architect; .
- **Mary Kay Quinlan** – Responded to society-wide email; background with Humanities Nebraska.

2nd Congressional District:

- **Tom Neal** – Currently filling a remaining term; Director of Douglas County Historic Society.
- **Laura Schiffermiller** – Consultant assisting nonprofits; long-time member of the Society; active in historic preservation in Omaha.

3rd Congressional District:

- **Roger Wess** – Former Chadron State professor and county commissioner; active in numerous organizations.
- **Al Davis** – Former state legislator from Hyannis.

One additional potential candidate (a young history professor from Chadron State) will be deferred until next year.

Selection of Legislative Issues and Authorization of Drafting and Introductions Process

President Wickersham referenced a worksheet outlining potential legislative ideas and noted the need for a formal process using the state's legislative proposal framework provided by the Director. Discussion followed on how best to review and submit the potential statutory changes desired.

Motion to authorize the President to appoint a committee of three trustees to work with the Director on preparing legislative proposals for the 2026 session.

Motion by: WINE

Second by: DeBUSE POTTER

Yeas: BATT, CLAWSON, DeBUSE POTTER, FABER, MOORE, MUÑOZ, NEAL, SMITH, WICKERSHAM, WINE

Nays: NONE

Abstain: NONE

Motion approved.

Heritage Heroes Program Update

President Wickersham presented a Heritage Hero award to Dr. Roger Wess in early June at the annual Dawes County Historical Society spring fundraiser. The packets for four other winners are ready and Mark Batts discussed lining up presentations in Columbus, Pierce, Franklin and Tarnov, Nebraska. He will send out an email after the meeting seeking volunteers from the Board.

The board discussed improving public awareness of nomination cycles and refining the six month nomination period. Membership and magazine subscription considerations remain pending due to cost concerns. Certificates and frames have been updated.

Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation Report

Leslie Fattig, Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation Director, presented the Foundation's Grant Report. \$235,000 in grants were supported in the FY 2025-2026. Another \$30,000 in carryover projects were recommended and approved. The Cottonwood program has added more engagement options. Review of fund descriptions and properties owned. Fattig thanked the Board of Trustee members who have also joined the Cottonwood Society. \$90,000 was raised in Cottonwood memberships in the first year. A new Junior Pathfinder Program has been implemented at Chimney Rock. \$250,000 was awarded by the Walter Scott Foundation to launch the program for students. Nearly 800 students are expected to participate. Booklets are being printed and distributed with backpacks. Teresa Breazile has now taken over both the Wander Nebraska and the Roam Nebraska programs. Michelle Sullivan, business manager, has announced plans to retire. Plans are underway for the next new Board of Trustee NSHS Foundation orientation training as well as the need to develop a training session at the Society for new Board members.

Nebraska State Historical Society Director's Report

Director Bohac started the NSHS Director's Report by thanking the Foundation for all of their support in the last year and today's refreshments. A financial overview of the Society included budget reductions based on the Governor's recent memo to the cabinet and heads of all agencies, boards and commission which ordered 5% general fund reduction to allotments. An additional 3 - 8% in reductions expected for the next biennium. Current appropriations near \$4.7M, with target reductions around \$246,000 this year. Bohac noted cash fund appropriations are historically inflated and will be corrected to avoid misinterpretation by external reviewers. Potential actions were discussed to increase organizational efficiencies and enhance revenues. Gift Shop performance update was given for each of the four locations.

Capital project planned for Fort Robinson Headquarter renovation. \$2.4M has been approved for structural, HVAC, fire suppression, electrical and all windows in critical condition. This work could potentially close the museum and gift shop there for about 18 months. A grant application was submitted to the National Park Service for \$750,000 to support related preservation needs.

The new Our Nebraska exhibit launched successfully in June. The NSHS Foundation funded the majority of development and the VIP celebration. The Governor attended the ribbon cutting. The exhibit includes 57 notable Nebraskans. Trustees are encouraged to visit the exhibition.

A staffing update included new hires: Shawna Villa, Finance Director, Rebecca Jacobs, Director of Collections (from Buffalo Bill Museum in Denver) and Alaina Novak, Accountant I. Open positions include a grant manager (whose duties may be combined with another position) and state preservation roles (high turnover due to private-sector salary competition).

2026 Proposed Meeting Schedule

The fourth quarter Board meeting will be on Friday, October 23rd in Lincoln, Nebraska at the NSHS headquarters building. The annual membership meeting will be held on Saturday, October 24th at the Nebraska History Museum in Lincoln.

Other Business & Trustees Roundtable

Potential Changes in Leadership – Daryl shared his plan to leave the agency next May or June and succession planning has started. Leslie Fattig is also planning on retiring next year but the timeframe is on hold due to other recent personnel changes at the Foundation.

Retiring Board Member - Laura Muñoz was thanked for her service on the Board. She will not be present for the next meeting and her term is expiring in December.

Ambassador Role - President Wickersham emphasized the need to support NSHS events in their role as ambassadors for the society. Please check the newsletter and other forms of communication sent out. Last night's reception was a success meeting with the members of the Cuming County Historical Society Officers and Board as well as the John G. Neihardt Center Board and Susan La Flesche Picotte Center Board. Our Nebraska new exhibit at the Nebraska History Museum – Governor attended the VIP opening but only one board member attended. Thanks to the NSHS Foundation for all of their work and support for the event.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by President Wickersham at 3:24 pm.

Minutes submitted by:
Daryl Bohac, Director
Nebraska State Historical Society

Minutes remain in Draft status until formally approved at the next board meeting.