



**Nebraska State Historical Society Board of Trustees Meeting
September 2, 2026 – 10:00 AM (Central Time)**

The Meeting was conducted in person and virtually via Teams

The public was invited to attend in person at:
Nebraska State Historical Society – Dr. Don Gerlach Capitol View Room,
1500 R Street, Lincoln, Nebraska 68506

or virtually at: <https://tinyurl.com/2rnufnvs>

Meeting ID: 278 090 453 607 901 Passcode: zp7YG33S

Dial in by phone: [+1 402-257-5560](tel:+14022575560), [559765790#](tel:+14022575597) Phone conference ID: 559 765 790#

MEETING NOTES

Call to Order

This special meeting was called by the Board President pursuant to Section IX of the Board's by-laws. President Bob Wickersham called the meeting to order at 10:07 am.

Roll Call – Quorum was not achieved.

ATTENDING IN PERSON: Bob Wickersham.

ATTENDING ONLINE: Mark Batt, Anna Castner Wightman, Bruce Clawson, Jamesena Moore, Tom Neal, and Shannon Smith.

ABSENT: Jack Berg, Gail DeBuse Potter, Beverly Duran, Nancy Faber, Laura Muñoz and Arlan Wine.

Certification of Publication - Notification of Nebraska Open Meetings Act

- The publicized meeting notice as required by state statute (Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 84-1411) was published on the NSHS website from August 18, 2026 thru September 2nd, 2026.
- The meeting complies with the Open Meetings Act.
- A copy of the Open Meetings Act was available on the wall.

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.

Budget Reduction Discussion

Director Bohac gave a budget reduction briefing which included a continued budget discussion from the July meeting, where he had presented strategies to meet the Governor's 5% general fund reduction request. Director of Operations, Chris Goforth

presented in-depth departmental financial information.

Current Year Reduction Requirement

- Required general fund reduction target: \$246,660.
- Several cuts and reassignments already implemented.

Trends in General Fund vs. Cash Fund

- General fund appropriations have decreased significantly since FY2021, from nearly \$6M to below \$4.7M.
- As a result of general fund reductions and increased cash fund reliance, FY2025–26 opened with only \$416,000 in cash funds, compared to \$1.2M the prior year.

Sources of Cash Funds

- Gift shop sales
- Admissions
- Foundation reimbursements
- Fees for service (including Ford Conservation Center)
- Note: Federal funds are not included in cash fund charts.

Cost-Shifting Strategies Already Implemented

- Freeze Positions / Not Refilled
 - Historic Sites Director position (formerly held by Broc Anderson) – *director's decision not to refill.*
 - Grants & Procurement Position – *director's decision to eliminate and reassign responsibilities to an accounting staff member and use services available from the Governor's office.*
- Shift Specific Costs to Collections Trust Fund
 - Environmental controls (Conserve monitoring)
 - Pest control for headquarters and museum
- Salary Adjustments
 - Minor salary cost shifts to federal Historic Preservation funding.
- Operational Reductions
 - Minimal travel authorizations; only two out-of-state exceptions approved by director.
 - Reduced device/hotspot counts initiated.
 - Review and correction of overbudgeted collection software (nearly \$100K adjustment).
 - Investigation of incorrect internet charges at Fort Robinson with OCIO.

Revenue-Increase Actions Already Taken

- Admissions: Increased Nebraska History Museum admissions rates.
- Sales tax & credit card fees: Now charged appropriately; previously absorbed.
- Magazine subscriptions: Organizational rates increased from \$35 to \$70 based on costs incurred.
- Scouting America program fees: Increased to match market rate.
- Gift Shops Review Gift shop analysis led by Daryl and Chris determined:
 - Fort Robinson gift shop: profitable
 - Chimney Rock: breaks even

- Capital Gift Shop: ~\$40K operating loss but acceptable for first reopening year; plan to reduce staffing
- Lincoln Museum Gift Shop: staffing reductions likely needed.

Potential Future Strategies (Under Consideration)

- **Transfer of Historic Sites:**
Conversations initiated by the director with the City of Neligh and the Norris Institute in McCook; further discussions planned. Legislative action required.
- **Reduction in Force (RIF):**
May become necessary if deeper cuts occur.
- **Membership Dues Increase:**
Being considered but renewal decline trends raise concern.
- **Archaeology Service Fees:**
Team led by State Archeologist Dave Williams researching fee structures.

Trustee Discussion

Trustees expressed serious concern about long-term sustainability.

Approval of Cathron O'Connor to fill First Congressional District Vacancy

Action item was deferred until the next meeting as quorum was not present.

Other Business & Trustees Roundtable

Upcoming Board Election – Board election process is progressing smoothly. The candidate list has been confirmed and ballot process is being prepared. There will be one contested race in the First Legislative District.

Legislative Proposal Requests – Daryl shared the legislative proposal requests recently submitted.

Trustee Ambassador Role to Legislators and Public Audiences – In recognition of significant challenges to the agency's viability in the upcoming biennium there was a request for talking points once State fiscal projections become available, potentially in late October.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by President Wickersham at 11:15 am.

Meeting notes submitted by:
Daryl Bohac, Director
Nebraska State Historical Society

Meeting notes remain in Draft status until reviewed at the next board meeting.

(No approval vote needed as no official action was taken due to not meeting quorum and they are not minutes.)