



NEBRASKA EQUAL OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION  
MEETING OF October 20, 2023

Commissioner Arnold called the meeting to order in Omaha, Nebraska at 9 a.m. on October 20, 2023. It was established, after a roll call, there was a quorum.

I. ROLL CALL

*Commissioners Present*

John Arnold, Chairperson  
Eric Drumheller  
Tyeisha Kosmicki

Arla Jo Meyer, Vice Chair  
Royce Jeffries  
Lynn Brennan

We have a quorum.

*Staff Present*

Paula Gardner, Executive Director  
Shelley Foss, Unit Director  
Brandie Hinkle, Investigator III

Ben Watson, Unit Director  
Andrea Berry, Unit Director  
Cathy Fedor, Admin Tech

II. NOTICE OF PUBLICATION

Director Gardner read the dates of publication for the current Commission meeting.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Arnold approved the meeting minutes for September 15, 2023.  
Commissioner Meyer seconded the motion.

IV. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS

None at this time

V. PUBLIC INPUT (Non-Case)

Limit of 5 minutes per person for a total of a 30-minute session.

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2. Outreach Report—Unit Director, Ben Watson

Director Watson spoke about an outreach event with Heartland Workforce Solutions. This was a good outreach event as it was not just their employees, but it also included their clients which included job seekers and those that could have issues with housing.

Director Watson mentioned we are in the planning stages of finding ways to use our HUD Partnership funds. We are looking at working with marketing firms and/or local television stations in the tri cities and other out state areas to possibly air commercials. We may also consider more fairs as it worked well in the past.

3. Director's Report – Executive Director, Paula Gardner

Director Gardner talked about the all staff meeting on October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023. This was held in Omaha at NRD Chalco Hills\Wehrspann Lake. This is the first time many employees were able to meet with each other. Commissioner Arnold stopped by during our Unit Director updates. We also had an icebreaker by matching people with their pet by name and then sharing the picture. We had bingo with Halloween information we received from each other. Andrea Berry had a presentation on the PWFA. We finished with employee recognitions and shout outs. Commissioner Arnold spoke on our all staff meeting stating it was great to see such a good group engaged and working as a functional team.

Director Gardner informed the Commissioners that we have posted for Kathy Bogenreif's job position. This took a little longer than expected as we had to set up in a new system for posting jobs. We expect to interview towards the end of the month and be able to hire soon after that.

We are also making good progress on our database. There was slowdown due to staffing at OCIO, but Director Andrea Berry and Director Gardner met with staff for input to help build it and seems we are getting close to completion. We are still working on our Website and anticipate a function to permit Commissioners to read-only access to cases making it much easier than SharePoint.

Director Gardner stated she will be doing a presentation for an Employment Law Symposium a local Omaha law firm is hosting. Starting in early November she will begin a Leadership Training program the EEOC is providing to Executive Directors it works with. It will consist of 6 classes that will be conducted remotely with about 20 other directors.

Director Gardner noted that we had met our EEOC contract, albeit a reduced contract. We also received our Performance Assessment Report from HUD for July 2021 through June 2023. We were recommended for continued substantial equivalency. HUD recommended a few changes such as increasing the number of cases, although our



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numbers show we met the requirement, which could be due to information inputted into HUD's system. HUD is also wanting an action plan to decrease our case processing time and clear the aged complaint inventory. Some of the issues were caused by staffing changes but we can come up with a way to bring that number down. The other areas are things that we are doing, but perhaps they were not included in HEMS properly, like conciliation compliance monitoring and outcomes with the AG, so it is more being better in HEMS than changing anything we are doing.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Arnold declared the October 20, 2023, Commission meeting ended at 12:01p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Cathy Fedor

Administrative Technician II

10.25.23

Date

  
Paula Gardner

Executive Director

10-25-2023

Date

The Minutes of the Nebraska Equal Opportunity Commission meeting of October 20, 2023, have been corrected and accepted, and henceforth approved on this date.

Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date