

Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Public Meeting, Saturday, November 8, 2025
Omaha State Office Building, 1313 Farnam Street,
Room 227, Omaha, Nebraska

Minutes

Call to Order. Welcome and introductions. Announcement concerning public comment periods, meeting agendas, open meeting act, proof of publication, recordings and other logistics.

Brent Heyen, Chairperson of the Board of Commissioners, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The meeting began with introductions.

Commissioners present: Brent Heyen, Chairperson, Lincoln; Cheryl Livingston, Vice Chairperson and Designee of the National Federation of the Blind of Nebraska, Lincoln; Patti Schonlau, Designee of the American Council of the Blind of Nebraska, Bellevue; Linda Mentink, Executive Secretary, Columbus; Miguel Rocha, Scottsbluff.

Staff present: Carlos Serván, Executive Director; Erin Brandyberry, Deputy Director of Services; Tammie Dunn, Deputy Director of Finance; Tim Jefferson, Omaha District Supervisor; Amy Buresh, VR Counselor; Kathy Stephens, Administrative Specialist.

Public present: Matt Masten, Lincoln; Jim Jirak, Omaha; Amy Eidenmiller, Lincoln; Lillibeth Heineman, Omaha.

The Notice of the Meeting was published in the Lincoln Journal Star, the State Government Calendar, NCBVI Website, NFB Newslines® and Radio Talking Book. The Notice was also sent to ACBN, NFBN, and the NCBVI List Serve.

Approval of the August 1, 2025, Public Meeting Minutes.

Commissioner Livingston moved to approve the Minutes of the August 1, 2025, Commission Meeting as posted on the NCBVI website. Commissioner Schonlau seconded the motion.

Roll call: Ayes: Schonlau, Mentink, Heyen, Livingston, Rocha
Nays:
Motion Carried

Report from the Commissioners

Brent Heyen -

Brent reported that he has been representing what the blind community can do in the hotel industry. He noted that he switched jobs in September 2025 and is now the

assistant general manager at the Country Inn and Suites in north Lincoln. This role is a large part of his life because it is very demanding. Brent stated that his current work schedule now allows him time to attend some NFB meetings and similar activities, which he is looking forward to.

Brent also shared that he started a YouTube channel called Blind VR, where he and other blind and low-vision friends play virtual reality games. The purpose of Blind VR is to help ease any tension that people may feel when interacting with blind individuals.

Cheryl Livingston –

Cheryl reported that she is the designee of the National Federation of the Blind of Nebraska, so she serves a couple of roles within the Federation. Cheryl has been the state treasurer for many years, and she is also the secretary of the Lincoln Chapter. Cheryl noted that October is the month when the NFB celebrates what they call BEAM, or Blind Equality and Achievement Month. This is a celebration of blind individuals' achievements, progress, and accomplishments. Cheryl stated that different affiliates do different things during the month. In Nebraska, some of the chapters held "Walks for Independence." In Lincoln, they did a walk around Holmes Lake on October 4. Omaha held a walk on October 5 around the Gene Leahy Mall, and Kearney also had a walk. Cheryl reported that they raised some money and, hopefully, raised awareness about blind people. Some chapters distributed literature and tried to be in places where they could meet the public, provide information about blindness, and answer questions—all in an effort to generate positive attitudes about blindness.

The Lincoln Chapter also had some members who read braille get together at a children's bookstore in East Lincoln called Sowers. This bookstore has a few cats in-house, so they read books in braille to the kids about cats. Cheryl noted that she thought this was especially fun because she is a cat lover.

Cheryl reported that the NFB of Nebraska has decided to donate money to support the Ski for Light bus across the state. Ski for Light will take place at the end of January. It is not affiliated with any consumer organization; instead, it offers people the chance to experience life on the slopes through activities such as skiing, snowshoeing, and snowmobiling. Cheryl added that she will have an opportunity to participate in the event in January and is very excited about it.

Miguel Rocha –

Miguel reported that he has attended the NFB at-large chapter meetings. He also attended the Cybersecurity and HTML Camp in July. In addition, Miguel participated in job preparation and job search webinars, as well as the NBE emergency meeting related to the insurance premium.

Miguel noted that he was designated to be the new blind vendor at the USSTRATCOM cafeteria.

Patti Schonlau –

During this past quarter, Patti had the opportunity and privilege to conduct two sensitivity trainings with the 38-O District Lions—one in Tekamah and one in Wahoo. Patti noted that this is her passion, and she loves being involved with the Lions because it gives her the opportunity to inform people about blindness. Many people think that all blind individuals are alike, which is not how blind people see themselves.

During her trainings, she talked about topics such as how to introduce oneself to blind people, how to act as a sighted guide, and how to gain a better understanding of what life is like for blind individuals.

Patti also reported that she attended the NCBVI State Staff Meeting via Zoom on September 15, 16, and 17. Patti noted that the speakers were wonderful.

Linda Mentink –

Since our last meeting, Linda has attended two NFBN Board of Directors meetings, serving as Secretary; three NFBN Senior Division meetings, also serving as Secretary; two Friends of NCBVI meetings, serving as Vice President; and one Alumni Association of the Wisconsin School for the Blind and Visually Impaired Board of Directors meeting serving as President. She also met for lunch once a month with blind people in Columbus who used to be chapter members. They like to keep in touch.

Friends of NCBVI met this past Tuesday afternoon. The board added a new member, Michelle Coolidge, who will be helping with writing grants. Erin Brandyberry attended on Carlos's behalf. Friends was pleased to provide snacks for the staff training in September. Linda thanked Kathy Stephens for setting up Friends' Zoom meetings and Carlos for allowing Friends to use NCBVI's account.

Focus Topic: Job Placement – Presented by Erin Brandyberry, Deputy Director of Services

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of NCBVI's job placement outcomes, current trends, and ongoing strategies to strengthen employment opportunities for Nebraskans who are blind or visually impaired. Employment is a cornerstone of independence, financial stability, and full community integration. Through meaningful work, individuals who are blind or visually impaired can build confidence, contribute their skills to Nebraska's workforce, and achieve long-term self-sufficiency.

NCBVI provides a comprehensive range of services designed to help consumers achieve successful employment outcomes. These services include vocational

counseling and guidance, job readiness training, assistive technology evaluation and support, on-the-job training experiences, job development and placement assistance, and direct business engagement. In addition, consumers may participate in alternatives of blindness training to build essential independence and self-advocacy skills that support workplace success.

NCBVI's approach is highly collaborative. Counselors work closely with consumers to identify career goals, develop individualized employment plans, and coordinate necessary training and support. Simultaneously, NCBVI engages employers to increase awareness of the capabilities of blind and visually impaired individuals, provide guidance on workplace accommodations, and facilitate successful job matches.

Employment services are an integral part of the vocational rehabilitation (VR) process. Counselors assist consumers from the initial assessment and career planning stages through training, job placement, and post-employment follow-up. Each phase ensures that consumers receive the tools, confidence, and support they need to obtain and maintain meaningful employment.

Employment Outcomes and Statistics

- RSA performance measures data from the most recent available program year:
 - NCBVI had 60% of consumers have measurable skill gains, compared to the national average for all VR agencies of 52%, or the national average of blind agencies of 48%.
 - NCBVI had 43% of consumers maintain employment through the 2nd quarter after exiting VR services, compared to the national average for all VR agencies of 56%, or the national average of blind agencies of 47%. NCBVI has initiated this to be a targeted area of focus for NCBVI to increase consumers maintaining their employment.
 - NCBVI consumer's median earnings were \$7,092, compared to the national average for all VR agencies of \$5,513, or the national average of blind agencies of \$8,551.
 - NCBVI had 57% of consumers maintain employment through the 4th quarter after exiting VR services, compared to the national average for all VR agencies of 53%, or the national average of blind agencies of 36%.
 - NCBVI had 77% of consumers gain education credentials, compared to the national average for all VR agencies of 41%, or the national average of blind agencies of 45%.
 - For the past 3 years, the average hourly wage for NCBVI consumers who gain employment has been \$20 per hour.
 - For the past 3 years, the average number of hours consumers work each week has ranged from 29.79-31.87 hours per week.
- In the past 3 years, NCBVI has had 159 occurrences of consumers gaining employment.
 - 26 of those consumers were self-employed.

NCBVI continues to enhance its approach to employment and business engagement through several key initiatives. One major focus is strengthening relationships with employers. All NCBVI staff are currently receiving training in business services, and VR Counselors will participate in intensive, hands-on instruction to improve their skills in employer outreach and engagement. In December, NCBVI will host a training with the National Research & Training Center on Blindness & Low Vision (NRTC) through Mississippi State University to further develop this capacity.

In addition, NCBVI is partnering with Sky's the Limit Communications for an ongoing training series focused on various Vocational Rehabilitation topics. This training will be tailored to the specific needs and feedback of VR Counselors, ensuring that staff development remains relevant and impactful.

The agency is also expanding pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) to better prepare students and youth for the workforce. Efforts are underway to strengthen job retention by providing more targeted follow-up services and employer collaboration to ensure job placements remain stable and long-term.

NCBVI continues to work closely with workforce partners such as NEWorks, the Department of Labor, and Nebraska's community colleges to align resources and expand opportunities for consumers. The agency also plans to enhance data tracking and consumer engagement systems to improve reporting accuracy and identify trends that can guide program improvement.

Employment transforms lives—providing not just income, but purpose, connection, and independence. NCBVI remains committed to empowering Nebraskans who are blind or visually impaired to achieve meaningful careers through individualized services, strong partnerships, and continued innovation. The successes reflected in this report are the result of the hard work and collaboration of consumers, employers, and NCBVI staff. Together, we continue to build a more inclusive and equitable workforce across Nebraska.

The following employer submitted written testimony – The Bureau of Sociological Research (BOSR) at UNL.

Dear Commissioners,

The Bureau of Sociological Research (BOSR) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) has employed blind or visually impaired individuals as telephone interviewers since 2013 with much success. Our call center operates year-round, providing consistent work for our telephone interviewers.

Bringing these individuals on board required only minimal accommodations, and the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired helped identify candidates best suited

for the position. We provide information about our telephone surveys to the Commission, and they work with clients to determine who would be a good fit. While there may be some additional upfront training, these employees consistently meet the same performance targets as all other telephone interviewers.

The Commission has been an excellent partner in helping to keep our telephone interviewer positions filled. At the University, we often rely on student employees who frequently stay for only a year or so and are typically unavailable to work during the academic year breaks. The clients we have hired from the Commission help fill those gaps left by students, both in the short-term during breaks and as long-term employees.

We are thankful for our continued partnership with the Commission and excited to see what the future holds.

Sincerely,

Amanda Ganshert
Assistant Director for Research and Methods
Bureau of Sociological Research
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Three consumers were present to tell their stories.

Lillibeth Heineman -

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Lillibeth Heinemann. Like others who have faced challenges in returning to the workforce, I've learned that readiness isn't just about having the right skills. It's about rebuilding confidence, independence, and a belief in your own potential.

When you are visually impaired and preparing to reenter the workforce, the journey can feel overwhelming. You're not only thinking about your qualifications or your experience, but you're also figuring out how to navigate a world that isn't always designed with accessibility in mind.

That's why workforce readiness programs are so valuable. They don't just prepare people for jobs—they prepare people for possibilities. Workforce readiness gives you the tools to translate your abilities into today's workplace.

From updating resumes to improving communication skills and learning how to interview confidently, every session we had added a piece to the bigger picture of independence. One of the biggest benefits I've noticed is how these sessions focus on self-advocacy. For someone who is visually impaired, advocating for your needs in a professional setting is essential.

Whether that's requesting accessible materials, explaining how to use assistive tools, or simply having the confidence to say, "I can do this, just give me the right setup," it's easy to underestimate the power of that kind of self-assurance. But when you feel equipped and supported, you stop seeing visual impairment as a limitation and start seeing it as part of your unique strength.

Another key aspect is the community connection. In these sessions, you're not only learning from instructors, but you're also learning from each other. You meet people with different levels of experience, different challenges, and different ways of adapting. That shared experience builds motivation. It reminds you that you're not alone in wanting a meaningful career and a sense of purpose. Workforce readiness also helps you keep up with how workplaces are evolving, especially when it comes to technology. Accessibility software, screen readers, and digital communication tools are changing quickly, and staying informed is part of staying empowered. What these workforce readiness sessions really give us is hope with direction.

They turn the idea of "maybe I can work again" into "I'm ready, and I know how to move forward." For me, and for many others, it's not just about finding a job. It's about reclaiming confidence, independence, and a sense of belonging in the working world. To everyone who continues to invest in and support these programs, thank you. You're not just helping visually impaired individuals get back to work—you're helping us rediscover our purpose, our skills, and our voice.

Matt Masten -

I just wanted to briefly introduce myself before I get started with my little agenda. I am from Lincoln, Nebraska, though I was originally from Omaha. I was born with central optic dysplasia, which affects a portion of the optic nerves. I was born fully developed, but I grew up adapting to the world with that and learning to navigate challenges while sometimes doubting myself.

There were times growing up when it felt like nothing could really be a part of my life in a typical way. In high school, I got involved with Amy Burge, who helped teach me how to navigate the world and manage my vision. Then, going into college, I was often doubted or told that pursuing a degree in architecture wasn't realistic for someone with a visual impairment, since it's such a visual field.

I first started with a degree that wasn't very enjoyable, and I felt unsure about my future. Then I learned about Chris Downey, a blind architect who creates fully functional blueprints. Seeing his work inspired me—I thought, if he can do it, then I can too. Throughout college, it took me a little longer, but the quality of my work was as good as, if not better than, my peers, which was very encouraging.

Amy helped me get the proper equipment, like a larger screen and other tools, to make programs accessible. When I started working, some architecture firms were hesitant to hire someone with a visual impairment because architecture is so time-sensitive, with

tight project budgets. I explained that while my impairment posed challenges, I could still be an advocate and contribute meaningfully.

I moved to Colorado for one firm, but I ended up working on tasks that weren't very enjoyable, and I realized this wasn't the right fit for me. I decided to move back to Lincoln and work at a smaller architecture firm with about 10 employees. That environment felt like a family. They accepted me fully and even provided larger computer screens and other tools I needed.

I also continued working with Amy to get additional resources that the firm couldn't afford as a small company. Being in that environment showed my coworkers what I could do. Often, people forget I have a vision impairment because the quality of my work is so high. It also taught me how to navigate, interact, and advocate effectively in a professional environment.

Using this experience, I've become a strong advocate for accessibility in architecture. I focus on ADA codes, not just for wheelchairs, but also for people with vision and other disabilities. I want to implement these codes in my future work and serve as an advocate for inclusive design.

I also want to share something exciting: just recently, my firm pulled me aside and told me, "Matt, because you've only been here for about a year, we want to give you a raise and a bonus because of the high quality of your work."

Amy Eidenmiller -

Good morning, board members. My name is Amy, and I'm a lawyer. I'd like to start by sharing where my story began.

Growing up, I was very active. I don't like to use the word, but I was a "normal" kid. I was fully sighted. I played four sports and enjoyed life to the fullest. At the age of 15, I was in a traumatic accident that caused significant challenges. One result of the accident was that I lost most of my vision due to a traumatic brain injury. I woke up in a hospital and realized that the life I had known was no longer the same. I also learned that I had lost my dad in that accident. Experiencing those things is difficult at any age, but especially at 15, when you're trying to figure out who you are, having that taken away is incredibly challenging.

I remember being in the hospital and attending team meetings, where there were always representatives—usually a couple from the Commission for the Blind—providing direction: here's what we need to do, here's how we're going to do it. That was the beginning of my story. Fortunately for me, the Commission for the Blind—though at the time it was called the Services for the Visually Impaired—has always been there for me, no matter what I needed.

Regarding my employment journey, I have worked a variety of jobs. I participated in the WAGES program for a couple of summers as a student, which was a wonderful experience and my first real taste of work. I have also worked at Open Harvest, call centers, Nelnet, Economic Assistance, and in vending.

The Commission for the Blind has always provided me with the skills, technology, confidence, and support I needed to succeed. The words that best describe my experience with the Commission are: direction, knowledge, skills, supportive community, opportunity, security, and fulfillment.

The following consumers submitted written testimony.

Dominick Gebo -

Hello, and thank you for the opportunity to share my story.

I graduated this past August from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln with a Master’s degree in child, Youth, and Family Studies, specializing in Marriage and Family Therapy, along with a certification in Medical Family Therapy. I am currently working at HopeSpoke as an outpatient family therapist. In my role, I meet with individuals, couples, and families to help them navigate both everyday stressors and deeper emotional challenges. My work focuses on helping clients process difficulties, strengthen relationships, and build healthier coping skills. Of course, the position also comes with its fair share of paperwork and documentation—something that can be tedious for anyone—but through assistive technology and skills I learned with NCBVI, I’m able to complete my job duties efficiently and independently.

Looking back, I can clearly see how vital NCBVI has been in helping me reach this point. One of the most significant ways NCBVI supported me was by helping with tuition and educational expenses. Finances had been one of the biggest barriers to completing my bachelor’s degree. Once that weight was lifted, I was able to focus on my studies—earning a 4.0 GPA for the remainder of my undergraduate degree and a 3.8 GPA during my master’s program.

Beyond financial support, the training and guidance I received through NCBVI completely changed my life. Before my training, I was hesitant and anxious about traveling independently. I often avoided walking around campus or unfamiliar areas because I lacked confidence in navigating without vision. Through NCBVI’s training, I learned to travel safely and independently using a white cane, and the sense of freedom and relief that came with that cannot be overstated. The anxiety I carried for years was replaced with confidence and peace of mind.

I also learned to use assistive technology—screen readers and other tools that allow me to effectively access digital materials, complete paperwork, and manage professional responsibilities. These skills have been essential not only for my education but also for my success in my current career.

Another invaluable part of my NCBVI experience was connecting with a community of other blind and visually impaired individuals. Through these relationships, I gained mentors, peers, and friends who inspired me and modeled what it means to live independently and fully. They helped me see that blindness does not define or limit my potential—it simply challenges me to approach life differently.

Looking ahead, my goal is to continue serving my community through both mental health work and disability advocacy. I want to be a voice for inclusion and empowerment—especially for children and young adults with visual impairments who may be struggling to accept their vision loss or build independence. Currently, I work with a few young clients who are visually impaired, and it's been deeply meaningful to help them navigate not only emotional struggles but also the practical challenges of adapting to their circumstances.

I hope to remain actively involved with NCBVI, to share my experiences, and to give back in any way I can. I want to pay forward the support and encouragement that made such a difference in my life—to help others reach the point where they can confidently say, "I can do anything I set my mind to."

I am truly grateful to the Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired for their role in helping me gain the skills, confidence, and independence that have shaped both my career and my life. Thank you for everything you do—for me, and for so many others across Nebraska.

Josh Root -

My name is Joshua Root, and I am a client of NCBVI. I was asked by my VR counselor, Amy Buresh, to submit a brief statement about how the commission has helped me achieve my career goals and greater independence.

Currently, I am an IT Applications Developer at the Office of the CIO (OCIO) with the State of Nebraska through the SOS Temp program, focused primarily on helping to ensure that all sites and applications maintained by OCIO are compliant with state and federal accessibility requirements. NCBVI has helped me get to where I am in various ways, including the WAGES program, which I participated in from 2015 to 2017, Dale Carnegie people skills training during the Winnerfest program in 2016, and the requisition of technology. While WAGES helped me gain real-world work experience, the requisition of technology is what catapulted me forward toward my desired career path of being a software developer. Without the technology provided to me by NCBVI, I would not be nearly as far along toward a job developing applications for Apple devices—a goal I have had since my freshman year of high school.

Outside of technology, continued cane travel lessons and refreshers on Braille literacy provided to me while meeting with Amy and Shane Buresh, Larry Mackey, and Stephanie Baldwin over the years have also been invaluable. I would be remiss, though,

if I didn't also mention the training center operated by NCBVI. Though my relationship with the training center has been complicated and rocky, what I did learn there will stick with me as I move forward—not just in my career, but in life as a whole.

Finally, the communication between NCBVI and my manager to ensure that I have what I need to succeed has been invaluable.

Leonard Salazar –

The real impact of the Commission and Vocational Rehabilitation services came from the support and guidance of my VR Counselor, paired with the training offered at the Center. My VR Counselor took the time to talk with employers about accommodations and blindness etiquette, which really challenged misconceptions, opened doors, and made a difference. That support, paired with skills training, helped me build confidence and start believing in myself again.

Before working with NCBVI, finding a job was really hard. I used to disclose my blindness too early in the process. I didn't trust myself to do the job, so part of the reasoning behind early self-disclosure was knowing that some employers weren't interested in hiring someone who's blind. That was very discouraging. But through the training center, I learned nonvisual techniques—technology, Braille, and even woodshop—and discovered that my blindness doesn't limit me. Those experiences taught me how to advocate for myself and gave me the tools to grow and pursue the things I want to do.

Having a job has been life-changing. It has given me structure, a routine, and a sense of responsibility—all of which have greatly improved my mental health. I work Monday through Friday from 4 p.m. to midnight. I've become confident in my cane skills—navigating safely at night, using stairs, and stepping up and down curbs. I feel empowered in my free time, too. I know that when I'm navigating busy crowds while supporting my grandkids at basketball and football games, I'm safest with my cane. I've gained independence and learned how capable I truly am.

Because I have a job, I've been able to move into a bigger house, spend more time with my family, and create the life I wanted. I now have the flexibility to fund my own transportation and manage my schedule in a way that works for me. Having my own income means freedom—it allows me to take care of my needs, support my health, and help my family, whether that's financially or by getting them the best parking spots.

Kelsey Saltzman –

Hello, my name is Kelsey. I work at a place called Bosr, a call center that is part of the University of Lincoln. I started working there last September and am still working there. I've been connected with NCBVI since I was a child, and they have been a great help to me in everyday living and finding employment.

I received 12 months of the independent living training program at the Center here in Lincoln, Nebraska. I've always dealt with anxiety about living independently and away from home, but the people at the Center for the Blind have helped me overcome that fear. Now I enjoy having my own home, a job, and being my own independent person. Finding employment has been a challenge, but my counselors helped me complete applications and provided a driver to take me to job interviews. My counselor was willing to provide any technology or support I needed for my job. Thankfully, JAWS was already provided for the computers at my workplace, but I've used JAWS and Windows computers over the years.

The Center's training also helped me with cooking and cane travel skills, which made me a lot more confident in getting out and going places. I really enjoy my job. What I enjoy most is interacting with people who are willing to take the surveys. As for advice, if any of you are losing vision or completely blind, please contact the Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Thank you.

Summer Eby -

What is your current job and where do you work?

I work 20 hours a week in the Merchandise Department at Costco.

How did you first get connected with our office, and what services did you receive?

My father learned about NCBVI services through my Vision Teacher while I was still in school. I was provided with all the assistance I needed to pursue my goals in a way that was easier for me. These services included assistive technology, job readiness training, job search assistance, transportation, and Center Training.

How did these services help you reach your employment goal?

These services gave me the confidence to pursue any goal I desire.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

I enjoy working independently.

What advice would you share with others who are looking for work?

I would advise clients to keep trying and keep putting effort into their goals. Hard work will eventually pay off.

Nate Schmidt –

Nate was first connected with NCBVI when he was only two years old. That may sound like an unusual introduction for a presentation on job placement, but it truly marks the beginning of Nate's journey to employment. I am fairly certain that as soon as he could talk, he was talking about becoming a mechanic like his dad.

NCBVI has worked with Nate for 18 consecutive years, collaborating with his schools, family, and Nate himself on the alternative skills needed for blindness, advocacy, and

setting him up for success in achieving the employment goal he never wavered from. At the age of 14, Nate completed a Work-Based Learning Experience at Taco John's, and he was subsequently hired following that work experience, at times serving as a financial support for his family.

From a young age, Nate not only knew his vocational goal but also knew he wanted to attend WyoTech, the same college his dad had attended—a goal that became even more significant after his father unexpectedly passed away when Nate was only 11. He graduated high school at 17 and enrolled in the WyoTech program as soon as he could. He completed the coursework and earned his certifications within 18 months. During this time, he also transferred to work at Taco John's in the town where his college was located and continued working there through graduation.

Nate then gained employment at a Ford dealership as a mechanic, a position that offers a solid wage, opportunities for overtime, and health insurance and benefits. At just 20 years old, Nate is now in the process of closing on his first home and has achieved his vocational goal.

The commissioners expressed their appreciation to all for sharing their stories.

Cheryl Livingston –

I think the reports were outstanding. I really appreciated hearing from different people about their experiences with NCBBI and their jobs. I think we ought to give everybody a big hand.

Brent Heyen –

I can also say that I worked as a counselor for Wages several times, and actually, some of the testimonials Erin read were from my Wages kids. Being able to know where they were when they were in Wages and to see where they are now is pretty awesome. So, thank you.

Miguel Rocha –

I just appreciate that everyone came in and shared. I echo the sentiment that others have expressed. As I prepare for my new challenge, I appreciate the mission to be supportive while guiding me to be independent and work-ready.

Linda Mentink –

I too want to thank those who are here in person and Erin for reading the testimonies. We appreciate the time it took to write them out. You're going to get tired of hearing this from me, but I'm from Wisconsin, and they have nothing like what we have here in Nebraska. These success stories really, really encourage me.

When I went to college, I didn't get much help. When I looked for a job, my VR counselor said, "I don't have anything for you. Tough luck, Charlie." So, I spent a lot of my early life unemployed and living on disability until I built up a private music studio in

my home. Then that took a dive because I lived in Jamesville and General Motors was cutting back. Private music lessons became a luxury, and people could no longer afford them. I went from 60 students down to 20—it was quite the decline.

It's harder to figure things out on your own when you don't have the resources or people to guide you. So, I know that you all here are grateful for what we have, and I just want to express that as someone who didn't have it.

Patti Schonlau –

I want to congratulate each of you. You have the backing of the Commission and, more importantly, your determination. That's a proven factor—you wouldn't be where you are today without it. This is your passion: taking your visual impairment as a challenge and meeting that challenge every day. Your success will continue throughout the rest of your journey. I also want to thank you for coming and sharing with us.

As a commissioner, it's wonderful to see people out there truly achieving. I understand your journey completely because I have walked a similar path myself. Again, I congratulate you.

Director Carlos Serván –

I want to add that all of this is possible because of the wonderful staff members of the Commission for the Blind. As the director, I usually get caught up when there are complaints or problems. But this type of representation shows what we are about.

We have a culture in the Commission in which all of us believe in the capability of the blind. It's not easy to change attitudes, but that's what we strive for—not just with consumers, but also with family members, the community, and especially employers. We build relationships with employers so that they actively seek us out. This is thanks to the work of all staff members, the deputy directors, and our field and center teams. I know you know this, but I wanted to emphasize it for the record.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Break

A break was taken at 9:51 a.m.
The meeting resumed at 10:07 a.m.

Report from the Executive Director

I. Administration

Meetings and Activities:

Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC):

The Council reviewed and approved the goals for 2026. New Council members received training on Section C of the IDEA and on eligibility requirements for special education services. The Nebraska Department of Education has expanded its parent outreach efforts and is beginning to see positive results. In addition, several Directors of Special Education presented reports providing updates on current initiatives and progress.

Olmstead Advisory Committee:

Nebraska Medicaid representatives attended the meeting to address ongoing concerns. Personal Home Care beneficiaries continue to face challenges accessing the Medicaid website due to unfamiliar terminology and limited computer skills. It was agreed that Medicaid staff will receive training to provide basic, introductory instruction to individuals with little or no computer experience.

Additionally, the group discussed strategies for making progress toward achieving established goals.

NCSAB Monthly Meetings:

Planning continues for the Fall NCSAB Conference, which is scheduled to take place in San Diego from November 5–7.

NCSAB is contracting with Mississippi State University (MSU) to conduct a new study on the effectiveness of separate agencies for the blind.

The NCSAB consultant reported that a major discussion focused on a concern raised in a letter from the U.S. Secretary of Defense to the U.S. Secretary of Education. The letter requested a waiver to exclude military facilities from the Randolph-Sheppard priority due to high-security considerations. In response, the Secretary of Education asked RSA Interim Commissioner Christopher Pope to research the issue and provide a written reply. The Interim Commissioner concluded that there is no evidence suggesting that blind vendors managing vending or dining operations in military facilities pose any security risk. However, the Secretary of Defense disagreed and indicated that he would escalate the matter to the White House.

Another concern discussed involves a recent ruling by a Federal District Court Judge stating that blind vendors themselves cannot request arbitration against the U.S. Army under the Randolph-Sheppard Act. Instead, the ruling clarified that only State Licensing Agencies (SLAs) have standing to request such arbitration. In response, the National Association of Blind Merchants (NABM) is encouraging multiple states to join together in a collective arbitration effort. I consulted with the Nebraska Attorney General's Office about participating, but they declined, citing that under Nebraska law, the Attorney General's approval is required for the state to engage in such legal actions, and they don't see how Nebraska would be affected.

On another matter, both the House and Senate versions of the federal budget include continued funding for rehabilitation programs—such as the Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB) program, Basic Support (including a cost-of-living adjustment), the Client Assistance Program, and Supported Employment. Although the FY-2026 budget has not yet passed, a federal government shutdown took effect on October 1. NCBVI remains financially stable due to sufficient federal carryover funds from 2025 and approximately \$3.1 million in state funds. However, communication with RSA has been limited, as their offices remain closed during the shutdown. Additionally, a Reduction in Force (RIF) began on October 10, further reducing RSA's staffing capacity.

On October 24, during a national call with state directors and the RSA, the RSA Interim Commissioner shared that cabinet members are currently discussing the possibility of transferring the RSA to the U.S. Department of Labor. According to the administration, this transition would be “seamless.” However, many RSA senior staff and members of the disability community have expressed serious concerns. Remaining under the Department of Education strengthens the argument that vocational rehabilitation agencies can support individuals in pursuing higher education, rather than limiting them to the most immediately available jobs. The concern arises because the culture and priorities of the Department of Labor differ significantly from those of the Department of Education.

StarTran Monthly Meeting:

We discussed Title VI, which addresses accessibility to public transportation, and approved the 2026 Plan. Other topics included Limited English Proficiency (LEP) outreach and surveys related to proposed route changes.

In addition, Mark Coleman, President of the National Federation of the Blind of Nebraska (NFBN) Lincoln Chapter, and I met with Chairman Justin Carlson and Councilman Benny Shoab. Both expressed their support for giving priority to blind vendors in operating vending machines at the new Multi-Modal Transportation Center.

Other Activities:

I was recently contacted by the Head of Education at the University of Nebraska State Museum, Morrill Hall at UNL. She reached out to discuss a new initiative to make one of their small exhibits accessible to individuals who are blind. This effort stems from NCBVI's ongoing campaign promoting tactile art and accessibility partnerships with museums across the state.

Morrill Hall is a museum, which specializes in natural history—including paleontology, archaeology, Nebraska ecology, and wildlife—also operates a planetarium that educates the public about outer space and astronomy. She expressed interest in collaborating with us to ensure accessibility and shared that they plan to contract with 3D PhotoWorks for the project. She learned about this technology through our 3D tactile exhibits and will keep us informed as the project develops and becomes ready for public display.

I gave a presentation at the Nebraska Historical Museum, where the tactile Pershing Mural is located, highlighting the importance of collaboration among state agencies, the private sector, the community, and blind consumers to make meaningful projects a reality.

I attended both the CSAVR and NCSAB Fall Conferences in San Diego, held November 3–7. Topics covered included the RSA's situation under the new administration, the government shutdown, reduction in force, the Randolph-Sheppard program, STEM opportunities for blind students, workshops for blind seniors, emerging developments in artificial intelligence for VR agencies, and more.

- The Center video filmed by Nebraska Public Media is now posted on our YouTube channel and social media.
- We continue to distribute Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to inform the public about our services.

Business Office Highlights – Tammie Dunn

The Business Office continues providing training on NCBVI's financial literacy initiative as part of the regular Supervisors' Meetings.

Progress has been made in improving the tracking, management, and distribution of client supplies and agency inventory.

NCBVI is implementing a revised process for documenting the final disposition of fixed assets valued at \$5,000 or more that are assigned to consumers.

The Business Office, in collaboration with field staff, has initiated ongoing training sessions focused on contract development and related financial processes.

Technology Highlights – Charles Anderson

- Attended AI Data Summit in Omaha with Executive Director Carlos Serván.
- Coordinated and attended meeting with Don't Panic Labs to discuss their education program and how it can impact our consumers.
- Mickie Saltzman and Charles Andersen met with the TVI team for Omaha Public Schools and Millard Public Schools to discuss how our agency can support them and talk about new accessible technology.
- Completed technology needs assessment of the agency.
- Attended and worked in the fall Winnerfest program.
- Completed OCIO approval process for Google Workspace.
- Began OCIO approval process for Outlook Insight.

Kathy Stephens

- Completed the year-end fixed assets inventory and submitted it to Administrative Services before the August 31, 2025 deadline.

- Processed CVRCB certificates for new staff as their applications were approved and completed CVRCB re-certification documents for staff with expiring certificates.
- Updated the NCBVI website as needed.
- Facilitated an additional leased vehicle request with the Transportation Services Bureau (TSB).
- Arranged travel, hotel accommodations, and registrations for staff attending various conferences, including the Fall CSAVR and NCSAB Conference in San Diego, California; the Assistive Technology Industry Association Conference in Orlando, Florida; and the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute in San Diego, California.
- Coordinated with State Surplus Property to arrange for the disposal of Center refrigerators.

Human Resources

Staff Updates

- Kristal Platte was hired as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for the Omaha District, filling the position Candace Dollar vacated when she moved to work for the Center and NBE. Kristal started her Center training on October 6.
- Charli Saltzman was hired as the Technology Specialist for the Lincoln District, filling the position Charles Andersen vacated when he was promoted to Agency Technology Specialist.
- Denise Torticollo was hired as an Orientation Counselor for the Lincoln District, filling the position Charli Saltzman vacated. She started Center training on October 20. Denise has a master's degree and comes to us with direct experience working with the blind.
- Amber Stephens completed Center training and began working in the field on August 13, 2025.

All areas are now fully staffed, except for the NBE Supervisor position. NCBVI interviewed several candidates for this position and is currently working with the Department of Administrative Services to fill it.

Training Opportunities:

Sania Kellog earned her certification in Unified English Braille (NCUEB), which is valid for five years. With this achievement, four staff members at the Center now hold this certification.

Tammie Dunn, Tim Jefferson, and Pam Rademacher attended the CSAVR regional meeting in August.

Additionally, Pam Rademacher and Tammie Dunn participated in their summer cohort training at the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute (NRLI) in August.

We held our State Staff Meeting on September 15–17 in Grand Island, where staff participated in training sessions covering a variety of topics, including Emergenetics – Meeting of the Minds, responding to potential suicide attempts, team-building presentations and activities, strategies for self-care, and other professional development topics. Some staff also participated in webinars on a range of subjects, including AI training with Julie Abe, an educational Zoom meeting with Don't Panic Labs, How to Overcome Lack of Employment for the Blind and Visually Impaired (Amelia Scott, World Services for the Blind), GPS and Tech Safety for Victim Advocates (Justice Clearinghouse), Advocacy Training with Dave Stone from United Way of Central Iowa, and Native Youth – A Journey to Adulthood.

Other training included a Suicide Prevention class with Midtown Clinic at the Norfolk Public Library and Project Homeless in Norfolk, as well as the Working with Humans workshop through the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce. Staff also met with Don't Panic Labs for an educational session, completed an OIB TAC Training and Certification in Functional Independent Living, and attended the Pathway to Employment Success: Engaging Families in Conversation training, which focused on supported employment.

Jodi from CAP provided an overview of CAP services to the North Platte District. Jason earned both Youth and Adult Mental Health First Aid certifications. Additionally, staff completed training in critical thinking skills.

II. Field Services

Fall WINNERFEST was held October 24–26 and focused on teaching the principles of 3D printing and how to make it accessible. Students calibrated and operated the 3D printers under the guidance of Thomas Madura and Carol Christianson and used them to print a variety of models, including a cup/cell phone holder for one student's wheelchair.

Students also visited the Innovation Studio, part of the Innovation Campus at UNL. During the visit, they learned about different types of 3D printers, how university students use them, and how Nebraska businesses partner with the studio for commercial purposes.

As part of the weekend, students participated in an essay contest. Based on the decisions of Thomas and Carol, all seven of the 3D printers purchased for the program were awarded to consumers.

Other Programs and Events

- Cybersecurity Program hosted by NCBVI in early August, providing consumers with a highly engaging, hands-on experience.
- Omaha, Lincoln, and North Platte districts hosted their GATE programs.
- Lincoln District developed a new VR focus group called **RISE—Ready, Inspired, Skilled & Empowered**, which focuses on job readiness, including résumé

preparation, social media professionalism, mock interviews, and presentations by the American Job Center.

Field Staff Partnerships and Community Engagement

Field staff across the state continue to strengthen strategic partnerships with key stakeholders, including employers, businesses, and public schools. These collaborative relationships enhance our ability to deliver high-quality services and expand employment and training opportunities for consumers.

Staff actively:

- Provide mock interviews to clients
- Participate in Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings
- Deliver presentations about NCBVI services to various agencies and businesses
- Identify work-based learning experiences
- Promote accessibility in the workplace
- Engage in numerous outreach activities

Key Stakeholder Partners by District

Lincoln District:

- Community and business partners: Prairie Village, Madison House Wellness Fair in Norfolk, Senior Center in Beatrice, Belmont Senior Center, Greater Lincoln Workforce Development Board, American Job Center meetings, EmployLNK Steering Committee meetings, NFB webinar on How to Overcome Lack of Employment for the Blind and Visually Impaired, United Way, Helen Keller National Center, Hands of Heartland, The WELL in Norfolk, Growing Community Connections in Northeast Siouxland, Spanish Networking Group in Fremont, The Magnet, Department of Labor in Norfolk, Norfolk Family Collaboration Project, Community Family Partnership in Columbus, Nebraska Business Development Center, Senior Community Employment Program
- Schools contacted: ESU #8, Southeast Community College, Northeast Community College, Bloomfield, Fremont, Atkinson, Columbus, Nebraska City

Omaha District:

- Community and business partners: First Presbyterian Church, Dunklau Gardens, City of Omaha, Job Fair at the American Job Center
- Schools contacted: Millard, Omaha Public Schools, ESU 3, Millard Central Middle School

North Platte District:

- Community and business partners: Perkins, Country House in Grand Island, Alliance Career Fair, Greater Nebraska Workforce in Scottsbluff, Grand Island Casino tour, in-service to the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Scottsbluff retirement facility, West Pharmaceutical Company, Parker, CHI Good Samaritan Hospital, Royal Engineered Composites, Malika from Don't Panic Labs, Employ Grand Island, Project Search sites in Grand Island and Kearney, Wood River Dog Groomers, Senior and Disabilities Fair in North Platte, Imperial

Manor and Regional West Medical, Primrose Health Fair for Seniors, Central
Region Transition Agency Fair, ESU 10, Southeast Community College

Overall, these programs, trainings, and community partnerships demonstrate NCBVI's ongoing commitment to empowering consumers, expanding employment and training opportunities, and fostering meaningful connections across Nebraska. Through innovative initiatives like Fall WINNERFEST, RISE, and the Cybersecurity Program, along with active engagement with schools, businesses, and community organizations, NCBVI staff continue to ensure that individuals who are blind or visually impaired receive the support, skills, and resources they need to thrive. These collaborative efforts strengthen both local communities and the statewide network of services, creating lasting impact for consumers and stakeholders alike.

Statistics

Number of Clients in All Statuses Served at the End of the Period:

- OIB (Older Individuals who are Blind): 684
- IL (Independent Living) clients under 55: 98
- VR (Vocational Rehabilitation): 531

Successful Consumer Closures in the Following Occupations:

Adult Basic/Secondary Education/Literacy Teacher (2), Automotive Service Technician, Bill/Account Collector, Business Operations Specialist, Cashier, Childcare Worker (3), Computer Network Support Specialist, Computer Occupations/Other, Customer Service Representative (5), Fabric and Apparel Patternmaker, Farmer/Rancher (2), Fashion Designer, Fitness Instructor/Trainer (2), Food Server-Nonrestaurant, Healthcare Support Worker, Host/Hostess-Restaurant/Lounge, Interpreter/Translator, Interviewer, Janitor/Cleaner, Laborer/Freight/Mover, Management Analyst, Market Research Analyst, Nursing Assistant, Office/Administrative Support Worker (2), Personal Care Aide, Psychiatrist, Randolph Sheppard Operator, Receptionist/Information Clerk, Registered Nurse, Security Guard, and Social Science Research Assistant.

III. Nebraska Center for the Blind

As of October 23, nine individuals are attending training at the Center. This includes seven consumers (four VR consumers, two IL consumers, one out-of-state consumer) and two staff trainees. During this period, two VR consumers and one OIB consumer graduated, and three new consumers began training. Additionally, seven consumers toured the Center, and four completed their three-day stay.

The Center continued to provide drops, mini meals, commencement meals, techniques of daily living instruction, weekly philosophical seminars, and monthly virtual vocational seminars. In addition, Nikki Jackson and Anil Lewis from the National Federation of the Blind conducted a two-day, in-person workshop focused on employment for Center students.

Activities this quarter included a tour of the Nebraska History Museum, grilling sessions, a Saturday trip to the farmers market in downtown Lincoln, a sensory safari at the Lincoln Children's Zoo followed by dining at local restaurants, and a presentation at the Nebraska History Museum about the 3-D Pershing Mural.

IV. Nebraska Business Enterprise (NBE)

Federal Building:

At USSTRATCOM, we selected Sodexo Inc. as a new teaming partner to help run the cafeteria. The Committee of Blind Vendors interviewed two candidates, and Miguel Rocha was recommended as the blind manager on-site for the USSTRATCOM cafeteria.

We continue to collaborate with USSTRATCOM on the ongoing cafeteria upgrade/remodel, which is expected to be completed by the end of January 2026.

The project to consolidate two existing USCIS facilities in Lincoln into a single location has been delayed. Originally scheduled for completion in February/March 2025, the new projected occupancy date is currently unknown.

Ashland:

NCBVI was contacted by the Camp Ashland National Guard Armory to run the cafeteria again. We asked our blind vendors if they were interested in bidding, but no one expressed interest. Therefore, NCBVI plans to contract with Jessica Beecham, a Blind Vendor from Colorado, who is teaming with Blackstone. Ms. Beecham and Blackstone will need to submit their proposal in the next couple of months, with plans to open the cafeteria in January 2026.

NBE Licensed Vendors:

NBE currently has 15 licensed vendors actively servicing routes. One licensed vendor has returned to the program, one individual is currently in training, and one vendor recently left the program, bringing the total number of vendors in the program to 17.

Complaints:

NBE received several complaints from locations regarding insufficient stocking of machines and markets. As a result, one vendor left the program in September, and those sites were taken over by a vendor in training. This vendor is working weekly with Jeff Scheer to ensure proper stocking and continued training.

State Buildings:

The vendor who operated the Lincoln State Office Building cafeteria and vending machines for the past 14 years has exited the program. A current licensed vendor has been assigned to manage the vending machines. The cafeteria is currently operated under a short-term emergency placement by the State Building Division. NBE is actively exploring long-term solutions to ensure continued cafeteria service.

Summary of NBE Vendors:

- 15 licensed vendors are actively servicing routes.
- One individual is currently in training.
- One vendor recently exited the program.
- Several others have expressed interest in joining the NBE program.

Vendor Training Retreat:

NBE held a Vendor Training Retreat on August 15–16 in Grand Island, Nebraska.

Highlights included:

- Presentations by Terry Smith, representative of the National Association of Blind Merchants, and Scott Eggen, President of Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of America.
- A variety of additional training sessions designed to support vendor growth and development.

Additional Activities:

- NBE is currently mentoring one WAGES student, who is gaining valuable experience across multiple aspects of the Randolph-Sheppard Program.

Newsline® Update

November 3, 2025

Jamie K. Richey

It's fall, which means crisp air, cozy sweaters, hot cider—and another quarterly report for NFB-Newsline®! Here's how engagement stacked up as we moved from summer to autumn.

As summer leaves fell, our subscriber base stayed strong and kept growing. We ended summer with 2,179 subscribers and welcomed 19 new ones across August, September, and October. It's great to have so many new leaves added to the tree!

On the phone lines, activity was steady with a few brisk gusts. August brought 504 calls averaging over 19 minutes each and totaling 53,833 minutes. In September, call volume peaked at 678, with slightly shorter calls averaging 16.3 minutes, pushing usage to just under 65,000 minutes. October saw 435 calls, averaging 17.5 minutes for a total of 7,621 minutes. Local call rates ranged from 36 to 50 percent across the three months.

Online reading layered up for cooler days, with steady online sessions and In-Your-Pocket deliveries. In August, users launched 6,528 web sessions and accessed content 83,917 times, including over 20,000 In Your Pocket deliveries—perfect for busy end-of-summer schedules. September saw an impressive 90,893 total accesses, with 3,064 In Your Pocket sessions. Activity tapered in October, but remained steady with 6,629 total online interactions, including over 3,000 web sessions and 2,535 pocket deliveries—still a go-to tool as fall routines settled in.

Nebraska-specific content continued to lead with subscribers checking the latest Husker's headlines! Local newspaper readers peaked at 6,700 in August, fell slightly in September, and bounced back to 6,761 in October. Readers also made steady use of national newspapers, breaking news, and TV listings, with additional engagement in international news, local weather and emergency alerts, and magazines. On average, users accessed content every 4 to 9 minutes depending on the month.

Behind the scenes, we're raking out glitches with a new cloud phone system. This new system is designed to improve speed, stability, and user experience. All subscribers were emailed the details, but if you'd like instructions on how to try it out and offer feedback, let me know—I'll be happy to send the test number and checklist.

As a board member for the National Federation of the Blind, I've had the opportunity to serve as a national representative at state conventions. It's been exciting to see how other affiliates run their NFB-Newsline® programs. Some host monthly Zoom Q&As. Others hold creative contests to encourage readership. I'm bringing home fresh ideas we can explore here in Nebraska as we head into a new year.

If you have questions or suggestions, I'm always happy to connect. And as we approach the holiday season, don't forget to check NFB-Newsline® for store circulars and great deals! Wishing you a joyful, safe, and cozy November.

Client Assistance Program (CAP) Complaints or issues

There were no CAP complaints or issues to report.

New Business

Date/Time/Location/Focus Topics for 2026 Board meetings

The commissioners discussed dates, locations and focus topics for the upcoming 2026 Commission Board meetings. The following was decided upon.

Saturday, February 7, 2026

Lincoln, Nebraska

Focus Topic: Client Assistant Program (CAP) - Tentative

Saturday, May 9, 2026

Lexington, Nebraska

No Focus Topic as the Annual Evaluation of the Executive Director will take place.

Friday, July 31, 2026

Lincoln, Nebraska

Focus Topic: Transition

Saturday, November 7, 2026
Bellevue or Omaha, Nebraska
Focus Topic: USSTRATCOM Cafeteria

Commissioner Rocha moved to hold the NCBVI Commission Board meetings for 2026 with the dates, locations and Focus Topics as discussed.
Commissioner Schonlau seconded the motion.

Roll call: Ayes: Rocha, Schonlau, Mentink, Heyen, Livingston
Nayes:
Motion Carried

Public Comment

Jim Jirak –

Jim noted that he had a question for Carlos. He mentioned that in Carlos' Executive Director report, it was suggested that the Attorney General, when approached regarding the blind merchants' request for state licensing agencies to assist with the vending issue, had responded that Nebraska wouldn't be able to benefit, or something to that effect. Jim asked whether the agency had considered — or if there was any way to — “appeal” that decision. He added that, in his view, it didn't make any sense.

Director Serván responded, clarifying that any appeal would need to be initiated by the consumers. He explained that if the cafeteria or one of the federal military facilities were affected, then he could become more involved. Director Serván added that, at this point, Nebraska is doing okay. That doesn't mean that the state won't be affected in the future, but that was the reasoning of the Attorney General. There is currently no reason for the agency to take action because the line vendors in the military facilities are not being impacted. He also noted that, in fact, the agency was approached to renew the contract.

Executive Session – Discuss Survey

Commissioner Mentink moved to go into Executive Session at 11:04 a.m. to discuss a survey.

Commissioner Livingston seconded the motion.

Roll call: Ayes: Rocha, Schonlau, Mentink, Heyen, Livingston
Nayes:
Motion Carried

Commissioner Livingston moved to come out of Executive Session at 11:55 a.m.

Commissioner Mentink seconded the motion.

Roll call: Ayes: Rocha, Schonlau, Mentink, Heyen, Livingston

Nayes:
Motion Carried

Final Announcements

Commission Chair Heyen announced the he has been asked to participate in a panel at the ACBN convention in April, 2026 and he is requesting NCBVI support for transportation and attendance at the ACBN convention.

Commissioner Rocha moved to approve the request.

Commissioner Schonlau seconded the motion.

Roll call: Ayes: Rocha, Schonlau, Mentink, Heyen, Livingston

Nayes:
Motion Carried

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:57 a.m.

If you have an item that you would like to have placed on the agenda of the February 7, 2026 Commission Board meeting, please email it to the NCBVI Commission Board at ncbvi.commission-board@nebraska.gov.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Stephens, Administrative Specialist
NCBVI

Brent Heyen, Chairperson
NCBVI Board of Commissioners