

**NORTHEAST NEBRASKA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT – NENEDD  
COUNCIL OF OFFICIALS MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, JULY 12, 2023 – 7:15 P.M.**

*City of Norfolk Offices – Training Room, 309 N. 5th St., Norfolk, NE 68701*

**MINUTES**

**I. Call to Order:** The Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District (NENEDD) Board of Directors meeting was called to order at 7:43 p.m. by NENEDD Chairman Charlie Bahr who informed the public about the location of the Open Meetings Act LB 898 and that it was accessible to the public.

**II. Roll Call:** NENEDD Planning & Administrative Assistant, Grace Petersen, read roll call.

**Board Members Present:**

Charlie Bahr, Chairman, Columbus City Council  
Sally Ganem, Secretary/Treasurer, Fremont City Council  
Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong, West Point Chamber of Commerce  
Troy Uhlir, Madison County Commissioner  
Blake Denton, MetLife Investment Management  
Loren Kucera, Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC), Wayne  
Meghann Buresh, Nebraska Apex Accelerator  
Judy Mutzenberger, Cuming County Supervisor  
Justin Webb, Norfolk City Council

**Board members absent:**

None.

**NED Inc. Board Members Present:**

None.

**NENEDD Staff Present:**

Thomas L. Higginbotham, Jr., Tina M. Engelbart, Jeff Christensen, Kristen Rosner, Grace Petersen, Martin Griffith, Mandy Gear, Andrea Larson, Riah Deane, Kirk Brown.

**III. Introduction of Guests:** David Branch, Cuming County Economic Development. **Council of Officials Present:** Tod Voss, Village of McLean.

**IV. Secretary's Report**

**A. Consideration to approve the July 12, 2023, agenda and the May 31, 2023, minutes.** Troy Uhlir made a motion to approve the July 12, 2023, agenda and the May 31, 2023, minutes. Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong seconded the motion. **AYES:** Sally Ganem, Troy Uhlir, Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong, Blake Denton, Loren Kucera, Meghann Buresh, Judy Mutzenberger, Justin Webb, and Tod Voss. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** None. Motion carried.

**V. Treasurer's Report**

**A. Consideration to accept the May 2023 Treasurer's Report as presented.** NENEDD Fiscal Officer Kristen Rosner presented the report. Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong made a motion to accept the May 2023 Treasurer's Report as presented. Troy Uhlir seconded the motion. **AYES:** Sally Ganem, Troy Uhlir, Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong, Blake Denton, Loren Kucera, Meghann Buresh, Judy Mutzenberger, Justin Webb, and Tod Voss. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** None. Motion carried.

## VI. Discussion Items

**A. Quarterly Staff Reports.** NENEDD staff reported to the Board their activities from April through June 2023.

**B. 2023-2024 Meeting Dates & Locations.** NENEDD Director Thomas L. Higginbotham, Jr. presented. He informed the board and the guests of the upcoming board meeting dates and locations.

## VII. Action Items

**A. Consideration to adopt the 2023-2024 Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District budget as recommended by the Budget Committee.** NENEDD Executive Director Thomas L. Higginbotham, Jr. presented. On July 10, 2023, the NENEDD Budget Committee met with staff to review the proposed Annual Budget. The committee recommends approval of the proposed 2023-2024 Annual Budget as presented. Troy Uhlir made a motion to adopt the 2023-2024 Northeast Economic Development District budget as recommended by the Budget Committee. Judy Mutzenberger seconded that motion. **AYES:** Sally Ganem, Troy Uhlir, Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong, Blake Denton, Loren Kucera, Meghann Buresh, Judy Mutzenberger, Justin Webb, and Tod Voss. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** None. Motion carried.

**B. Consideration to appoint the individuals as presented to the Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District Board of Directors for a three-year term.** NENEDD Deputy Director Tina M. Engelbart presented. The committee met on July 10, 2023, and is making the following recommendation: Charlie Bahr, Columbus City Council (second term to end 6/30/2026); Blake Denton, MetLife Investment Management (second term to end 6/30/2026); and Benjamin Benton, Randolph City Administrator (first term to end 6/30/2026). Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong made a motion to appoint the individuals as presented to the Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District Board of Directors for a three-year term. Troy Uhlir seconded that motion. **AYES:** Sally Ganem, Troy Uhlir, Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong, Blake Denton, Loren Kucera, Meghann Buresh, Judy Mutzenberger, Justin Webb, and Tod Voss. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** None. Motion carried.

**C. Consideration to elect the Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District Officers for 2023-2024 as presented.** NENEDD Executive Director Thomas L. Higginbotham, Jr. presented. The committee met on July 10, 2023, and is making the following recommendations: Chairman, Charlie Bahr, Columbus City Council; Vice Chairwoman, Selma Ganem, Fremont City Council; and Secretary/Treasurer, Troy Uhlir, Madison County Commissioners. Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong made a motion to elect the Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District Officers for 2023-2024 as presented. Troy Uhlir seconded that motion. **AYES:** Sally Ganem, Troy Uhlir, Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong, Blake Denton, Loren Kucera, Meghann Buresh, Judy Mutzenberger, Justin Webb, and Tod Voss. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** None. Motion carried.

**D. Consideration for approval of the general corporate resolution as presented.** NENEDD Fiscal Officer Kristen Rosner presented. This is the general corporate resolution stating who is authorized to sign documents. Most often, this document is used when working with the life insurance companies for business loan clients. This resolution is suggested and reviewed by attorney Michael Brogan. Troy Uhlir made a motion to approve the general corporate resolution as presented. Loren Kucera seconded that motion. **AYES:** Sally Ganem, Troy Uhlir, Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong, Blake Denton, Loren Kucera, Meghann Buresh, Judy Mutzenberger, Justin Webb, and Tod Voss. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** None. Motion carried.

**E. Consideration for approval of corporate resolutions with BankFirst, Stanton State Bank, and Midwest Bank.** NENEDD Fiscal Officer Kristen Rosner presented. With the change in officers effective July 12, 2023, the Board of Directors need to approve who can sign on NENEDD's bank accounts and certificates of deposit. The resolutions will be for the following banks: BankFirst, Stanton State Bank, and Midwest Bank. The signors on the accounts will be the Chairman, Vice

Chairman, Secretary/Treasurer, Executive Director, and Deputy Director. Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong made a motion to approve the corporate resolutions with BankFirst, Stanton State Bank, and Midwest Bank. Meghan Buresh seconded that motion. **AYES:** Sally Ganem, Troy Uhlir, Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong, Blake Denton, Loren Kucera, Meghann Buresh, Judy Mutzenberger, Justin Webb, and Tod Voss. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** None. Motion carried.

**F. Consideration for approval of billing rate increases.** NENEDD Executive Director Thomas L. Higginbotham, Jr. presented. NENEDD charged \$60/hour for approximately 10 years; changing to \$75/hour for new contracts executed after January 1, 2021. Staff recommends an increase to \$85/hour for contracts effective on or after July 1, 2023. Staff also recommends a \$5/hour increase each fiscal year up to June 30, 2029. Troy Uhlir made a motion to approve billing rate increases. Sally Ganem seconded that motion. **AYES:** Sally Ganem, Troy Uhlir, Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong, Blake Denton, Loren Kucera, Meghann Buresh, Judy Mutzenberger, Justin Webb, and Tod Voss. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** None. Motion carried.

**G. Consideration to approve the Resolution for League Association of Risk Management (LARM) Insurance.** NENEDD Fiscal Officer Kristen Rosner presented. LARM has been selected since 2013 to provide NENEDD's workers' compensation, general liability, errors & omissions, auto liability, auto physical damage, and commercial property insurance coverage. The Renewal Coverage Proposal for the 2023-2024 Pool Year needs to be approved. The effective date is October 1, 2023, and includes a discount for a three-year commitment. Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong made a motion to approve the Resolution for League Association of Risk Management (LARM) Insurance. Sally Ganem seconded that motion. **AYES:** Sally Ganem, Troy Uhlir, Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong, Blake Denton, Loren Kucera, Meghann Buresh, Judy Mutzenberger, Justin Webb, and Tod Voss. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** None. Motion carried.

**H. Consideration to certify NENEDD is operating in accordance with its EDA CARES Act RLF plan.** NENEDD Fiscal Officer Kristen Rosner presented. NENEDD submits an annual report to the Economic Development Administration (EDA) relating to its CARES Act Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) and certifies that the CARES Act RLF Plan is consistent with and supportive of the area's current economic adjustment strategy; the revolving loan fund is being operated in accordance with the policies and procedures contained in the CARES Act revolving loan fund plan; and the loan portfolio meets the standards contained therein. There were three loans closed during the last 12-month period (7/1/2022 to 6/30/2023). Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong made a motion to certify NENEDD is operating in accordance with its EDA CARES Act RLF plan. Blake Denton seconded that motion. **AYES:** Sally Ganem, Troy Uhlir, Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong, Blake Denton, Loren Kucera, Meghann Buresh, Judy Mutzenberger, Justin Webb, and Tod Voss. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** None. Motion carried.

**I. Consideration to invest excess funds with the Nebraska Public Agency Investment Trust (NPAIT).** NENEDD Fiscal Officer Kristen Rosner presented. NENEDD is a sponsor for NPAIT for over 20 years. NPAIT provides a wide variety of banking solutions for Nebraska public entities and associations. NPAIT has cash management solutions for short-term investments, along with fixed income solutions, such as certificates of deposit and government securities. NENEDD would like to invest excess funds with NPAIT. There is no minimum investment, minimum to withdraw or transaction limits. NPAIT would operate like an online bank account. NENEDD would be able to transfer funds to NPAIT to invest or from NPAIT to disburse as a loan fairly easily. Its daily rate is higher than local banks, sitting at 5.202% as of June 28, 2023. Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong made a motion to invest excess funds with the Nebraska Public Agency Investment Trust (NPAIT). Blake Denton seconded that motion. **AYES:** Sally Ganem, Troy Uhlir, Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong, Blake Denton, Loren Kucera, Meghann Buresh, Judy Mutzenberger, Justin Webb, and Tod Voss. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** None. Motion carried.

- VIII. Executive Session.** Consideration for approval to move into Executive Session to conduct the Annual Review of the Executive Director. Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong made a motion to approve to move into Executive Session to conduct the Annual Review of the Executive Director at 8:25 p.m. Troy Uhlir seconded that motion. Sally Ganem made a motion to move out of Executive Session and reconvene into regular session at 8:35 p.m. Judy Mutzenberger seconded that motion. Charlie Bahr restated for the record the only item discussed in Executive Session was the Annual Review of the Executive Director. **AYES:** Sally Ganem, Troy Uhlir, Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong, Blake Denton, Loren Kucera, Meghann Buresh, Judy Mutzenberger, Justin Webb, and Tod Voss. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** None. Motion carried.
- IX. Chairman's/Board Comments:** During the meeting, NENEDD Executive Director Thomas L. Higginbotham, Jr. thanked NENEDD Board Member Judy Mutzenberger, Cuming County Supervisor, for her time on the board. The meeting was the end of her two three-year terms.
- X. Next Meeting Date:** The NENEDD Council of Officials will meet on Wednesday, July 26, 2023, at 7:15 p.m. or following the NED, Inc. meeting. The meeting will be held at the following location: City of Norfolk – Training Room, 309 N. 5<sup>th</sup> St., Norfolk, NE 68701.
- XI. Adjournment:** Blake Denton made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Troy Uhlir seconded the motion. **AYES:** Sally Ganem, Troy Uhlir, Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong, Blake Denton, Loren Kucera, Meghann Buresh, Judy Mutzenberger, Justin Webb, and Tod Voss. **NAYS:** None. **ABSENT:** None. Motion carried. Motion carried. NENEDD Chairman Charlie Bahr adjourned the meeting at 8:41 p.m.