



# State of Nebraska

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

### NEBRASKA EQUAL OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION MEETING OF March 21, 2025

Commissioner Meyer called the meeting to order in Lincoln, Nebraska at 9:01 a.m. on March 21, 2025. It was established, after a roll call, there was a quorum.

#### I. ROLL CALL

##### *Commissioners Present*

Arla Jo Meyer, Chairperson  
Eric Drumheller

Royce Jeffries  
John Arnold

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  
Rebekka Hergenrader, Admin Tech

#### II. NOTICE OF PUBLICATION

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

#### III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Meyer approved the meeting minutes for February 21, 2025.  
Commissioner Arnold seconded the motion

#### IV. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS

#### V. PUBLIC INPUT (Non-Case)

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

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M

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#### ONLINE:

Website:  
[NEOC.nebraska.gov](http://NEOC.nebraska.gov)

Facebook:  
<https://fb.me/NebEOC>

VI. INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC INPUT (Agenda Cases)

The cases, wherein a party to the case was present or provided a written statement, were moved to the front of the agenda under Section VII. CASE DISPOSITIONS.

VII. CASE DISPOSITIONS

A. EMPLOYMENT Complainant submitted a written statement and Respondent was present.

NEB 1-23/24-5-54497

Commissioner Drumheller moved for no reasonable cause.

Commissioner Meyer seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL:           Ayes:     Meyer, Arnold, Drumheller, Jeffries  
                          Nayes:  
                          Abstained:  
                          Motion Carried

A. EMPLOYMENT Complainant was present.

NEB 2-23/24-3-54307

Commissioner Meyer moved for no reasonable cause.

Commissioner Jeffries seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL:           Ayes:     Arnold, Drumheller, Jeffries, Meyer  
                          Nayes:  
                          Abstained:  
                          Motion Carried

A. EMPLOYMENT Respondent was present.

NEB 1-23/24-4-54371

Commissioner Arnold moved for no reasonable cause.

Commissioner Meyer seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL:           Ayes:     Drumheller, Jeffries, Meyer, Arnold  
                          Nayes:  
                          Abstained:  
                          Motion Carried

A. EMPLOYMENT Complainant submitted a written statement and Respondent was present.

NEB 1-24/25-7-54603

Commissioner Arnold moved for no reasonable cause.

Commissioner Meyer seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Meyer, Arnold, Drumheller, Jeffries

Nayes:

Abstained:

Motion Carried

A. EMPLOYMENT Complainant was present.

NEB 1-24/25-7-54604

Commissioner Drumheller moved to table this case to a later meeting.

Commissioner Meyer seconded the motion

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Drumheller, Jeffries, Meyer, Arnold

Nayes:

Abstained:

Motion Carried

C. HOUSING Respondent was present.

NEB 2-23/24-4-3857

Commissioner Meyer moved for no reasonable cause.

Commissioner Jeffries seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Jeffries, Meyer, Arnold, Drumheller

Nayes:

Abstained:

Motion Carried

A. EMPLOYMENT Respondent submitted a written statement.

NEB 2-24/25-7-54571

Commissioner Arnold moved for no reasonable cause.

Commissioner Meyer seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Jeffries, Meyer, Arnold, Drumheller

Nayes:

Abstained:

Motion Carried

A. EMPLOYMENT

NEB 1-23/24-4-54413

NEB 2-23/24-12-54058

NEB 1-23/24-2-54280

Commissioner Meyer moved for no reasonable cause on the above cases.  
Commissioner Arnold seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL:           Ayes:     Drumheller, Jeffries, Meyer, Arnold  
                          Naves:  
                          Abstained:  
                          Motion Carried

B. PUBLIC ACCOMMODATION

NEB 2-24/25-7-3870

Commissioner Meyer moved for no reasonable cause on the above case.  
Commissioner Arnold seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL:           Ayes:     Arnold, Drumheller, Jeffries, Meyer  
                          Naves:  
                          Abstained:  
                          Motion Carried

B. HOUSING

NEB 2-23/24-5-3861

NEB 2-24/25-8-3873

NEB 2-23/24-6-3865

Commissioner Meyer moved for no reasonable cause on the above cases.  
Commissioner Arnold seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL:           Ayes:     Drumheller, Jeffries, Meyer, Arnold  
                          Naves:  
                          Abstained:  
                          Motion Carried

VIII. SUCCESSFUL AGREEMENTS

NEB 2-24/25-12-3900-H

Commissioner Meyer moved to adopt the agreement.  
Commissioner Arnold seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL:           Ayes:     Jeffries, Meyer, Arnold, Drumheller  
                          Nayes:  
                          Abstained:  
                          Motion Carried

IX. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

A.   EEOC  
      NEB 1-24/25-8-54688-RD

Commissioner Meyer moved to adopt the findings of the EEOC.  
Commissioner Arnold seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL:           Ayes:     Drumheller, Jeffries, Meyer, Arnold  
                          Nayes:  
                          Abstained:  
                          Motion Carried

B.   WITHDRAWALS  
      NEB 1-24/25-1-3907-H

Commissioner Meyer moved to administratively close the above case based on withdrawal by  
Complainant.  
Commissioner Arnold seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL:           Ayes:     Meyer, Arnold, Drumheller, Jeffries  
                          Nayes:  
                          Abstained:  
                          Motion Carried

C.   LACK OF JURISDICTION  
      None at this time.

X. CONCILIATION

NEB 1-22/23-10-53041

Commissioner Meyer moved to adopt the recommendation of the Director of Conciliation.  
Commissioner Arnold seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL:           Ayes:     Arnold, Drumheller, Jeffries, Meyer  
                          Nayes:  
                          Abstained:  
                          Motion Carried

XI. CONCILIATION CASES TO BE CONSIDERED FOR PUBLIC HEARING

None at this time.

XII. PUBLIC HEARING

None at this time.

XIII. CIVIL ACTION

None at this time

XIV. BUSINESS

1. Previous Month's General Ledger Report

Commissioner Meyer moved to approve and adopt the previous General Ledger report.  
Commissioner Arnold seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL:           Ayes:     Arnold, Drumheller, Jeffries, Meyer  
                          Nayes:  
                          Abstained:  
                          Motion Carried

2. Outreach Report—Unit Director, Ben Watson

Director Watson stated he conducted a requested training session with Nebraska Workers' Compensation judges. He learned that Workers' Compensation judges can order an employer to pay for accommodations for recipient's housing modifications.

Director Watson shared the Nebraska Department of Labor reached out to the agency for copies of our statutes and rules and regulations for outreach.

Director Watson announced the NEOC would have a table at the 2025 Lincoln Commission on Human Rights conference that will be held on May 8-9, 2025. He encouraged commissioners to attend.

Director Watson disclosed he is still setting up training for the Scottsbluff, Nebraska area for housing providers. The coordinator has not yet set a date, but the conference will now be virtual.

Director Watson discussed reviewing the data from the annual reports to analyze opportunities for targeted outreach.

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

Director Gardner introduced Ryan Yang, who is with State Budget Office. Mr. Yang is assigned to the NEOC and wanted attend to learn more about the agency's operations.

Director Gardner reported she and Cathy Fedor had their hearing with the legislative Appropriations Committee on March 6, 2025. The hearing went well. One Senator remarked positively about the detailed budget information shared with Senators. Director Gardner had the opportunity to explain how the agency's federal funds work, noting that current appropriation of 40% federal funds and 60% general funds is not sustainable moving forward and that based on federal receipts, 30% federal funds and 70% state funds is the more appropriate ratio. She also shared information with the Senators from the Annual Report, including monies returned to Nebraskans through settlements, number of charges taken and resolved, as well as contacts to the agency. Director Gardner indicated to the Senators that while the agency should be able to mostly manage the reduced funding for the next biennium, the agency was requesting a nominal increase of around \$9000 in year one and \$11,000 in year two to cover insurance costs that were unknown when the budget request was made.

Director Gardner announced the agency had a meeting with the EEOC and it was expected that the EEOC contract would be received. There are current no outstanding HUD funds coming to the agency. HUD did initiate the PAR (Performance Assessment Review) for 2023-2025, which was about five months earlier than past reviews. Director

Gardner said at this time they are operating as if there have been no changes to the contracts with the federal agencies.

4. Legislature --

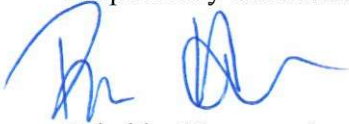
Director Gardner testified in a neutral capacity on LB 361 (adding filing a Workers' Compensation claim as a protected activity under FEPA). As this is not a priority bill it is unlikely this will progress much past committee.

Director Gardner did not testify on LB 694 (adding Veteran's and Military status as a protected class to the statutes). The bill that was heard prior to this one had a significant number of individuals testifying, and due to having submitted a fiscal note already explaining the agency's position on the bill's impact, it did not seem necessary to testify given the lateness of the hearing.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

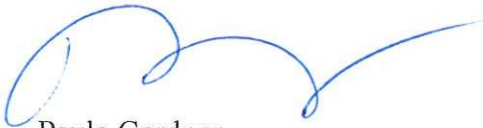
Commissioner Meyer declared the March 21, 2025; Commission meeting ended at 10:53 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Rebekka Hergenrader  
Administrative Technician

3-27-25  
Date



Paula Gardner  
Executive Director

3-27-2025  
Date

The Minutes of the Nebraska Equal Opportunity Commission meeting of March 21, 2025, have been corrected and accepted, and henceforth approved on this date.

Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date