

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Thursday, May 28, 2026, 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.

Nebraska Public Media

1800 N 33rd Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Bryan Seck, Lincoln Literacy

Deb Robertson, Nebraska Libraries

Jamdan Clang, Nebraska Department of Economic Development

Jonathan Jank, Nebraska Public Power District

Oliver Borchart-Williams, Southeast Nebraska Development District

TinaMaria Fernandez, Hope Esperanza

Val Ankeny, Delegate for Jillian Linster, Center for Rural Affairs

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Dekow Sagar, International Council for Refugees and Immigrants

OCIO STAFF PRESENT:

Vanessa Castro, Community IT Manager

INTRODUCTIONS:

Vanessa Castro called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. Members introduced themselves by providing their professional background and recent achievements.

BEAD UPDATE

Mr. Rolfes, the guest speaker, provided background on the creation of the Nebraska Information Technology Commission (NITC) and the Community Council. He discussed the importance of participatory governance and the role each Council member plays in expanding digital access to the communities they serve. He noted that Nebraska is currently more vulnerable than many neighboring states with respect to digital access.

Mr. Rolfes also discussed the relationship between digital access and Multi-Dwelling Units (MDUs). Residents living in MDUs are often considered “served” because the building is counted as a single service location. However, multiple families may reside within one building, and not all residents have adequate internet access. As a result, many individuals remain underserved despite their location being classified as served.

Council members asked what initial steps could be taken to address challenges related to MDUs. Mr. Rolfes emphasized the importance of conducting assessments to better understand broadband needs and service gaps. Once those needs are identified, potential solutions could include bringing a circuit directly to the property or utilizing Ethernet-based infrastructure. Mr.

Rolfes also recommended [EducationSuperHighway.org](https://www.educationsuperhighway.org) as a resource for learning more about broadband access in MDUs.

Council Member TinaMaria Fernandez highlighted the importance of establishing a shared understanding of what constitutes “access” so that all stakeholders can work from the same definitions and expectations.

In the meantime, while we wait to hear federal guidance on the BEAD non-deployment funds, we can be effective by assessing the needs on digital access across the state. Council Member TinaMaria Fernandez suggested partnering with Central Navigators to assist in developing assessment tools.

COMMUNITY TECH FUND

Following the completion of assessments, the Council could engage philanthropic organizations, such as the Lincoln Community Foundation, to explore potential funding opportunities and matching contributions.

The Council anticipates submitting funding requests through the Statewide Technology Plan; however, its immediate priority will be conducting assessments to better understand community needs.

CHARTER REVISION

The Council discussed regulations concerning membership in the Charter. Vanessa Castro recommended the Council discuss regulations around missing council meetings and council member conduct.

Council Member Jonathan Jank recommended that members be permitted to miss no more than three meetings per year without attending virtually or sending a delegate. Under this proposal, members could miss up to two meetings; however, upon missing a third meeting under those circumstances, they would be deemed to have automatically resigned from the Council.

Regarding member conduct, the Council discussed allowing the body to determine appropriate next steps on a case-by-case basis should a member act outside the expectations established by the Charter (the Council will need to decide on these expectations at the next Council meeting).

Due to time constraints, the Council agreed to postpone voting on Charter revisions and approval of the previous meeting's minutes until the next meeting.

CHAIR VOTING

Vanessa Castro announced that members should submit their top two chair preferences via email by the following Friday.

NEXT MEETING

The Community Council will meet again virtually in early July.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Ms. Castro adjourned the meeting at 11:50 a.m.

Meeting minutes were taken by Vanessa Castro of the Office of the CIO/NITC.