

# NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Sacrifice.

**VETERANS' AFFAIRS**



## **VETERANS' ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES May 19, 2026**

The Veterans' Advisory Commission met at 1:30 p.m., May 19, 2026, at the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs, 301 Centennial Mall South, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Lincoln, Nebraska, in a publicly convened session, the same being open to the public and having been preceded by advanced publicized notice.

In compliance with the provisions of Neb. Rev. Stat. Section 84-1411, printed notice of this meeting was sent to each member of the Commission. Notice of the meeting was on the Nebraska.gov Public Meeting Calendar, NDVA calendar, news & events. Availability of the agenda was communicated in the published notice. As a courtesy, emails are sent to the Veterans' Homes Board, Veterans' Council, and the County Veterans Service Officers. The Open Meetings Act (Neb. Rev. Statute 84-1407 through 84-1415) was posted at the entrance of the NDVA Conference Room.

### **Commissioners Present:**

John Iossi, Chairman  
Jim Cada, Secretary  
John Liebsack  
Daniel Stramel

### **Commissioners Excused:**

Ron Winchell

### **NDVA Staff Present:**

John Hilgert, Director  
Levi Bennett, Deputy Director  
Charlene Sheltraw  
Holden Armstrong  
Jenifer Acierno  
Nicole Zimmermann  
Joe Conroy  
Brian Stoltenberg  
Dan Benes  
Nathan Nelson

### **CALL TO ORDER**

#### **Roll Call**

The Commission was convened at 1:30 p.m. at the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs, 301 Centennial Mall South 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Lincoln, Nebraska. Attendance is noted above.

#### **Entering of Public Notice of Meeting**

Sheltraw announced that the public notice of the meeting appeared as noted above.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Motion: Cada made a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting, seconded by Stramel to forego the reading of the minutes and approve them as all members had been mailed the minutes from November 14, 2025

Action: Voting Yes: Iossi, Cada, Liebsack, & Stramel Voting No: None  
Motion Passes 4-0

### **Public Comment Period**

Thomas Gann, Lincoln County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO) thanked the staff of NDVA and the Commissioners for everything they do. CVSO Gann expressed the relief and gratitude that he sees from the veterans and the families who receive NVA assistance.

### **Discuss and Review Nebraska Veterans' Aid Program: Action to be taken.**

Bennett went through the recommendations on changes to the Nebraska Veterans' Aid Fund.

- a. NDVA recommends increasing the maximum allowable funding for shelter (essential structural repairs).

Motion: Cada made a motion to approve the maximum allowable expenditures for repairs or replacement for essential standard furnishings or replacement for essential structural repairs from \$10,000 to \$15,000, seconded by Liebsack.

Action: Voting Yes: Iossi, Cada, Liebsack, & Stramel Voting No: None  
Motion Passed 4-0

- b. NDVA recommends increasing the maximum allowable funding for vehicle repairs/purchase.

Motion: Stramel made a motion to approve the maximum allowable for vehicle repairs or a vehicle purchase from \$5,000 to \$10,000, seconded by Liebsack.

Action: Voting Yes: Iossi, Cada, Liebsack, & Stramel Voting No: None  
Motion Passed 4-0

- c. NDVA recommends increasing the maximum allowable funding for total allowance per family for dental care.

Motion: Cada made a motion to approve the maximum allowable for total allowance per family for dental care from \$10,000 to \$20,000, while maintaining the per-applicant cap at \$10,000, seconded by Liebsack

Action: Voting Yes: Iossi, Cada, Liebsack, & Stramel Voting No: None  
Motion Passed 4-0

- d. NDVA recommends increasing the maximum allowable funding for headstones.

Motion: Cada made a motion to approve the maximum allowable for headstones from \$600 to \$1,000, seconded by Stramel.

Action: Voting Yes: Iossi, Cada, Liebsack, & Stramel Voting No: None  
Motion Passed 4-0

- e. NDVA recommends increasing the allowable fund balance for combined accessible accounts.

Motion: Cada made a motion to approve the increase allowable fund balance for combined accessible accounts from \$1,500 to \$2,000 for individual or \$4,000 per household applicants (a household is a married couple or single individual with dependent child(ren)), seconded by Stramel

Action: Voting Yes: Iossi, Cada, Liebsack, & Stramel Voting No: None  
Motion Passed 4-0

**Introduction of State Service Officer candidates**

Daniel Benes, stationed at the Central Office & Nathan Nelson stationed at the Central Office gave a few comments about themselves.

**Executive Session**

Business to be conducted in Executive Session – to discuss the personnel action regarding the appointment of State Service Officers. In compliance with the provisions of Neb. Rev. Stat. Section 84-410

	Motion to close to executive session 1:53 p.m.
Motion:	Moved by Cada, Seconded by Stramel
Action:	Voting Yes: Iossi, Cada, Liebsack & Stramel Voting No: None Motion Passes 4-0
	Out of executive session to regular session 2:08 p.m.

**Approval of the hire of the Veterans’ Affairs Service Officer**

Motion to approve the appointment of Daniel Benes as new State Service Officer

Motion: Moved by Cada to approve David Pinney, Seconded by Stramel  
Voting Yes: Iossi, Cada, Liebsack, & Stramel Voting No: None  
Motion Passed 4-0

Motion to approve the appointment of Nathan Nelson as new State Service Officer

Motion: Moved by Cada to approve Bradley Musick, Seconded by Liebsack  
Voting Yes: Iossi, Cada, Liebsack, & Stramel Voting No: None  
Motion Passed 4-0

**Reports**

Administration Reports - John Hilgert and Levi Bennett

Gave updates on:

- \*Nebraska Veterans’ Aid Fund
- \*State Veterans Homes
- \*Reservist Tuition & Waiver of Tuition
- \*Incarcerated Veterans
- \*State Cemetery in Alliance & Grand Island
- \*Nebraska Resource Center – now have Graydon Tuffield from Department of Labor stationed there.
- \*1<sup>st</sup> Memorial Day at the Grand Island Cemetery

**ADJOURNMENT**

Iossi asked if anyone had any further business to discuss - none.

Motion to Adjourn:

Motion: Moved by Cada, Seconded by Stramel  
Action: Voting Yes: Iossi, Cada, Liebsack, & Stramel Voting No: None  
Motion Passes 4 -0

The meeting was adjourned at 2:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

\_\_\_\_\_  
John Iossi  
Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jim Cada  
Secretary