

Minutes of the January 27, 2023, Board of Registered Environmental Health Specialists Meeting

1. ROLL CALL

Kathy King, Chairperson, called the meeting of the Board of Registered Environmental Health Specialists to order at 9:27 a.m. on Friday, January 27, 2023, in Conference Room 3G at the Nebraska State Office Building located at 301 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln, Nebraska. In accordance with Neb. Rev. Stat. § 84-1411 of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act, copies of the agenda were e-mailed to the Board members and other interested parties, posted on the DHHS website at <https://dhhs.ne.gov/licensure/Pages/Agendas-and-Minutes.aspx>, and posted in the Licensure Unit on January 25th, 2023.

King announced that this is an open meeting and the Open Meetings Act is posted.

Members Present: The following members answered roll call:

Kathy King, Chairperson (via Webex)
Sara Pistillo, Vice-Chairperson (via Webex)
Nathan Hartman, Secretary
Jeremy Collinson, Member (via Webex)
Michael Wentink, Member (via Webex)
Larry Hardesty, Member (via Webex)

Staff Present:

Jennifer Miralles, DHHS Legal Counsel (via Webex)
Claire Covert-ByBee, Program Manager
Amy Blinston, Health Licensing Coordinator
TJ O'Neill, Assistant Attorney General

Guests:

McKenzie Petersen, Two Rivers Public Health Department (via Webex)
Scott Holmes, Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department (via Webex)

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

MOTION: Wentink moved, seconded by Collinson, to adopt the agenda. Voting aye: King, Collinson, Pistillo, Wentink, Hartman, and Hardesty. Voting nay: none. Motion carried.

3. LB262 DISCUSSION

The Board discussed that LB262 would eliminate educational requirements for food inspectors which poses a risk to public safety. An individual with little to no training would be making decisions that could impact public health on a larger scale, such as in a food manufacturing setting. Concerns were also raised that without licensure, the requirement for 24 hours of continuing education is eliminated, as well as the ability to discipline individuals who perform substandard inspections.

MOTION: Wentink moved, seconded by Hartman, that the Board's official position is in opposition of LB 262 based on the degradation of educational standards required for food inspectors performing food inspections. The proposed changes do not set a minimum educational standard nor provide for continuing education requirements; the proposed language is lowering the qualifications to perform food inspections; the proposed language would not provide the same level of training to provide inspections of food establishments at the level necessary to adequately protect public health. The Board appoints Jeremy Collinson and Sarah Pistillo to form an advisory committee to draft the testimony and for Jeremy Collinson to represent the Board's official position in person before the LB 262 Hearing before the Agriculture Committee on January 31, 2023. Voting aye: King, Collinson, Pistillo, Wentink, Hartman, and Hardesty. Voting nay: none. Motion carried.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:08 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nathan Hartman, Secretary