



Minutes – Quarterly Meeting

Date and Time: June 10, 2026, 9:00am central time

Location: Niobrara Inn, Valentine, NE

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by the committee at 9:00 a.m. CT

- Susan Connell moved to appoint Brenda Masek as presiding officer for this meeting
Steve Stroup seconded the motion
No Discussion

Steve Stroup Yes
Brenda Masek Yes
Susan Connell Yes

Motion passed.

- Roll Call
Duane Gangwish Not Present
Steve Stroup Present
Brenda Masek Present
Susan Connell Present
Sherry Vinton Present

The open meetings statement was read by Dean Anderson.

- **Introduction of Attendees**

Brenda Masek
Steve Stroup
Susan Connell
Tom Hughson
Dean Anderson
Kayla Jesse
Danna Schwenk
Sherry Vinton
Jacey Schmit
Scott Lindsey
Mark Fahleson
Spike Jordan

- **Adoption of Agenda**

Steve Stroup moved to approve the agenda as presented.

Susan Connell seconded the motion.

No discussion

Steve Stroup	Yes
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Brenda Masek	Yes
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Susan Connell	Yes
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Motion passed

- Approval of Meeting Minutes

March 11, 2026

Steve Stroup moved to approve the minutes as presented.

Susan Connell seconded the motion.

No further discussion

Steve Stroup	Yes
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Brenda Masek	Yes
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Susan Connell	Yes
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Motion passed.

- **Current Business**

1. Consideration and Acceptance of Financial Statements

Dean explained the documents presented and expanded on the current year.

Steve Stroup moved to accept the financial statements as presented.

Susan Connell seconded the motion.

No discussion

Steve Stroup	Yes
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Brenda Masek	Yes
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Susan Connell	Yes
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Motion passed.

2. Budget

Dean spoke on the upcoming budget cycle and plans for working with the Budget office to complete the upcoming biennium.

No action taken

3. Staff Updates and Ratification of Personnel Changes

Dean discussed the changes to personnel over the last quarter.

Tom asked for direction on the hiring of a new RFL auditor with the idea of a contract person to work during audit times.

Susan Connell moved to authorize to Tom Hughson to begin the process of seeking a contracted employee to conduct RFL audits at appropriate intervals.

Steve Stroup seconded the motion

No discussion

Steve Stroup	Yes
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Brenda Masek	Yes
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Susan Connell	Yes
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Motion passed.

Susan Connell moved to ratify the personnel changes as presented.

Steve Stroup seconded the motion.

No further discussion

Steve Stroup	Yes
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Brenda Masek	Yes
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Susan Connell	Yes
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Motion passed.

Brena Masek discussed the need to hire an Executive Director. Mark Fahleson discussed the requirements of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act and suggested creating a subcommittee to work on this task, with assistance from staff.

Susan Connell moved to create a sub committee consisting of Brenda Masek, Steve Stoup and Susan Connell, to hire a new Executive Director.

Steve Stroup seconded the motion.

No further discussion

Steve Stroup	Yes
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Brenda Masek	Yes
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Susan Connell	Yes
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Motion passed.

Steve Stroup moved to name Tom Hughson as interim executive director, until the position is filled, with the understanding that he would still be performing his current duties as a Chief Investigator.

Susan Connell seconded the motion
No further discussion

Steve Stroup	Yes
Brenda Masek	Yes
Susan Connell	Yes

Motion passed.

4. Cost of Living and pfp

Dean presented on the State recommended payroll increases and recommended that the Brand Committee follow suit, due to the rising cost of insurance for the upcoming year.

Steve Stroup moved to give full-time employees a 2.25 percent cost of living increase and a 1 percent pay-for-performance raise.

Susan Connell seconded the motion.

No further discussion

Steve Stroup	Yes
Brenda Masek	Yes
Susan Connell	Yes

Motion passed.

5. Estray Reports/School Fund Cases

Dean presented the estray cases up for review to be sent to the permanent school fund.

Susan Connell moved to approve the cases to be sent to the permanent school fund.

Steve Stroup seconded the motion.

No further discussion

Steve Stroup	Yes
Brenda Masek	Yes
Susan Connell	Yes

Motion passed.

6. South Dakota Reciprocal Agreement

Tom and Dean spoke on the agreement with South Dakota.

Steve Stroup moved to continue the Reciprocal Agreement with South Dakota.

Susan Connell seconded the motion.

No further discussion

Steve Stroup	Yes
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Brenda Masek	Yes
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Susan Connell	Yes
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Motion passed.

7. Strategic Plan Review

Dean spoke on the strategic plan and recommended no changes at this time.

No action taken

8. Fee Schedule Review

Dean presented on the current fee schedule.

Steve Stroup moved to suspend the rules to permit consideration of this agenda item until after executive session and receipt of privileged legal advice.

Susan Connell seconded the motion.

No Discussion

Steve Stroup	Yes
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Brenda Masek	Yes
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Susan Connell	Yes
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Motion passed.

9. Policy, Rules, and Regulations Review

Dean stated that there were no recommendations for changes at this time.

No action taken.

10. Investigator Reports

Tom gave an overview of the state and nature of the investigators' work over the past quarter.

11. Supervisors Reports

Tom expanded on the supervisor's written reports.

12. RFL Report

Dean and Tom gave an overview on the status of RFL audits.

13. Technology report

Kayla gave a brief overview of technology changes.

14. Legislative Updates

Steve Stroup moved to suspend the rules to permit the consideration of this agenda item until after executive session and receipt of privileged legal advice.

Susan Connell second the motion.

No further discussion

Steve Stroup	Yes
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Brenda Masek	Yes
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Susan Connell	Yes
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Motion passed.

15. Executive Director report

As the Executive Director position is currently vacant, no report.

16. Public Comment

Spike Jordan spoke on the impact of decisions of the Brand Committee on an 85 cents/head inspection fee verses 1 dollar/head, in the past, and non-visual identifiers needing to go through the rules process. He also stated his appreciation for the Brand Committee members for their service.

17. Executive Session

Steve Stroup moved to move into executive session to protect the public interest to receive privileged legal advice.

Susan Connell seconded the motion.

No further discussion

Steve Stroup	Yes
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Brenda Masek	Yes
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Susan Connell	Yes
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Motion passed.

The Committee moved to executive session at 11:20 a.m.

The Committee reconvened in open session at 12:34 p.m.

Susan Connell moved to come out of executive session.

Steve Stroup seconded the motion.

No further discussion

Steve Stroup	Yes
Brenda Masek	Yes
Susan Connell	Yes

Motion passed.

18. Return to Fee Schedule.

Significant discussion occurred among Committee members regarding the changes made by LB 1187 and the Legislature's intentional decision to remove an "emergency clause" and to have the legislation not go into effect until July 16, 2026, which was part of the give-and-take that occurs during law making and the various compromises made by legislators to address the varied stakeholder interests. Committee members also discussed the Committee's historical practice of sending registered feedlot renewal notices in June of each year with payment due on or before July 1st. Because the Legislature was aware of the historical practice, and because the Legislature intentionally chose for LB 1187 to not go into effect until July 16, 2026, Committee members expressed interest in proceeding pursuant to the Committee's established historical practice in order to fulfill the Legislature's intent. Brenda Masek stated that pursuant to current Nebraska law the registered feedlot renewals are due July 1st and should be billed at the current existing rate. Consensus among the Committee members existed on this issue and they agreed that no action of the Committee was required on this issue and that the only issue requiring a vote by the Committee was what to do after July 16, 2026.

Steve Stroup moved that, in order to maintain the financial viability of the Brand Committee, to permit the Committee to continue to fulfill its statutory mission and to implement LB 1187 as the Legislature intended, to change the following effective July 17, 2026 or the soonest date thereafter that the Committee's IT vendor can implement the changes: (a) inspection fees increased to \$1.40/head; (b) brand renewal fee changed to \$200.00; and (c) a surcharge of \$30.00 to cover travel expenses incurred for inspections as authorized by LB 1187.

Susan Connell seconded the motion

No further discussion

Steve Stroup	Yes
Brenda Masek	Yes
Susan Connell	Yes

Motion passed.

Steve Stroup moved to decrease the "add freeze brand" fee to \$20.00 per side effective the soonest date the Committee's IT vendor can implement the change.

Susan Connell seconded the motion.

No further discussion

Steve Stroup	Yes
Brenda Masek	Yes
Susan Connell	Yes

Motion passed.

19. Other Business

Susan Connell moved to set Tom Hughson's salary during the period of time he serves as the Committee's Interim Executive Director/Chief Investigator to the same salary of the previous Executive Director and to authorize him to contract with a third party for consulting purposes to assist with the Executive Director duties.

Steve Stroup seconded the motion.

No further discussion

Steve Stroup	Yes
Brenda Masek	Yes
Susan Connell	Yes

Motion passed.

20. Return to legislative updates

Tom sought guidance on the registered dairy program and how to proceed. Mark Fahleson provided his interpretation relating to the LB 1187 and the heifer development facility provisions as well as the transition to the new Committee structure beginning August 28, 2026, as set forth in LB 1187.

21. Adjournment

Susan Connell moved to adjourn the meeting.

Steve Stroup seconded the motion.

No discussion

Steve Stroup	Yes
Brenda Masek	Yes
Susan Connell	Yes

Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 12:56 p.m.