THE OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF
THE WESTERN PANHANDLE REGIONAL
LAND BANK BOARD MEETING

June 3, 2026

A meeting of the Western Panhandle Regional Land Bank (WPRLB) Board was held in open session on June 3, 2026 at 1:00 p.m. in the Gering City Hall Conference Room, 1025 P Street, Gering, NE. Present were Board Members Nancy Garrett, Gabe Ingram, Tony Kaufman, Amy Newman, Brady Shaul, John Stinner and Sarah Flores (1:09 p.m.). Absent: None. Also present were the following: Annie Folck (Gering City Engineer), Michelle Coolidge (BB Associates) and Kyle Keller (Panhandle Area Development District)

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call**
   Board Chair Tony Kaufman called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. It was noted that a quorum of the WNRLB Board was present and business could be conducted.

2. **Open Meetings Act**
   Chairman Kaufman reviewed the Nebraska Revised Statutes Chapter 84, Article 14, which requires at least one copy of the Open Meetings Act be posted in the meeting room. Notice of the meeting was given in advance thereof by publication in the Star Herald, the designated method of giving notice. Availability of the agenda was communicated in advance to the Media and Board Members. All proceedings hereafter were taken while the meeting was open to the attendance of the public.

3. **Approval of Minutes of the April 1, 2026 WRNLB Board Meeting**

   A motion was made by Board Member Stinner to approve the minutes of the March 9, 2026 WRNLB Board meeting. Seconded by Board Member Shaul. There was no discussion. The Secretary called the roll. "AYES": Newman, Shaul, Ingram, Stinner, Garrett and Kaufman. "NAYS": None. Abstain: None. Absent: Flores. Motion carried.

4. **Fundraising Strategy**
   Ms. Coolidge reviewed draft fundraising and outreach materials developed for the Western Panhandle Regional Land Bank. She explained that the presentation is intended to educate potential funding partners about the Land Bank's purpose, operations, and community impact, and noted that it can be customized for various audiences. She requested Board feedback and indicated that additional revisions, contact information, and supporting handout materials would be developed.

   Board discussion focused on fundraising strategy, funding commitments, and long-term financial sustainability. Members suggested including information regarding existing public funding commitments, fundraising goals, and potential matching opportunities. Discussion also addressed future funding sources, including philanthropic support and other local funding options, as well as the importance of demonstrating successful projects and organizational effectiveness to potential contributors.

   It was emphasized the need to clearly communicate that the Land Bank's purpose is to return properties to productive private ownership and to address public concerns regarding government ownership of property. Ms. Coolidge encouraged Board members to review the materials and provide additional comments prior to finalizing future fundraising packets.

5. **Property Referral Process Update**

Annie Folck presented a draft property referral process for informational purposes. She explained that the process is still under development but is intended to provide a clear method for referring properties to the Land Bank.

Ms. Folck described two potential referral tracks. Under the first track, a property would proceed through the full code enforcement and remediation process before being referred to the Land Bank. Under the second track, a property owner willing to voluntarily transfer a property could bypass portions of the code enforcement process and proceed directly to Land Bank consideration.

Ms. Folck stated that the process had not yet been formally adopted but would provide an efficient way to identify and refer properties. She noted that both participating communities are expected to have numerous potential properties and that a standardized process will help manage referrals consistently.

The Board received the update and no action was taken.

6. **Review and Action on Executive Director Contract**

Ms. Folck reported that the Western Panhandle Regional Land Bank had officially received its 501(c)(3) designation and anticipated having a bank account established by the end of the month. She stated that with those items in place, the Board was now able to formally enter into a contract for executive director services.

Ms. Folck reviewed the proposed Executive Director Agreement included in the meeting packet. She noted that the agreement was based on the proposal previously presented to the Board and incorporated legal language recommended by counsel. The contract clarifies that the Executive Director serves as an independent contractor rather than an employee and outlines the terms and conditions of the engagement.

She further stated that Board members had previously reviewed the proposal and expressed support for moving forward, but formal Board approval of the contract was needed before compensation could begin for the services being provided by Ms. Coolidge.

A motion was made by Board Member Stinner to approve the Executive Director Agreement as presented. Seconded by Board Member Ingram. There was no discussion. The Secretary called the roll. "AYES": Kaufman, Flores, Garrett, Shaul, Ingram, Stinner and Newman. "NAYS": None. Abstain: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

7. **Standing Items:**

   a. **Financial Report**

   Ms. Folck reported that initial funding for the Western Panhandle Regional Land Bank remains at $200,000, with $100,000 contributed by each participating community. She noted that the bank account was in the process of being established and anticipated completion within the next couple weeks. No additional financial activity was reported at this time, and future financial reporting will begin once operational expenses and disbursements commence.

   b. **Property Identification**

   Ms. Folck provided an update on potential properties under consideration. She reported that a property in Kimball had been offered for donation and could serve as an initial project. She also

discussed a property in Gering that is currently undergoing the code enforcement process and may become available for Land Bank acquisition in the future.
Ms. Folck requested authorization to continue discussions with the Gering property owners regarding the possibility of a future Land Bank acquisition, emphasizing that no commitments would be made and that additional due diligence and property information would be gathered before any recommendation was presented to the Board. She also requested guidance regarding whether staff should continue pursuing multiple potential projects simultaneously or focus on a limited number of properties while Land Bank procedures and processes are being established.

The Board discussed criteria that should be taken into account when considering if the Land Bank would take on a property, including the condition, redevelopment potential, possible acquisition costs and demolition expenses associated with the property, and other due diligence considerations. Members also discussed tax issues, redevelopment opportunities, and the importance of evaluating each property's overall viability before acquisition.

Chair Kaufman emphasized the need for staff to provide summary information on prospective properties, including photographs, tax information, and other relevant details, before properties are formally presented for Board consideration. Ms. Coolidge confirmed that such information would be compiled as part of the evaluation process.

Following discussion, Board members generally supported staff continuing discussions with property owners and agreed that the Land Bank should take a measured approach while procedures and processes are being established, with an initial goal of pursuing one project in each participating community. The Kimball property was identified as a potential pilot project due to its anticipated low acquisition costs and limited complications.

Staff indicated they would continue refining procedures and identifying potential properties for future Board consideration.

c. **Executive Director Report**
Ms. Coolidge provided a brief Executive Director update, noting that work to date has focused on organizational setup, early-stage planning, and development of operational procedures. She stated that she plans to visit other land bank organizations to gain additional insight into best practices and operations.

Ms. Coolidge also noted that she will begin managing coordination of agendas and administrative communication moving forward and will continue developing reporting and tracking systems for Board review.

- **Conflict of Interest Policy**
  Ms. Coolidge informed the Board that the previously approved conflict of interest policy had been updated to reflect the correct organizational name, Western Panhandle Regional Land Bank. She distributed updated copies for signature and requested that both Board members and relevant staff execute the document for the record.

- **Meeting Schedule and Administrative Items**
  The Board discussed upcoming meeting schedules and noted that future meetings will be held in-person when possible, in accordance with requirements limiting remote participation.

Members tentatively discussed scheduling the next meeting for July, with consideration given to availability and the Independence Day holiday. After discussion, the Board agreed to tentatively plan for a meeting on July 8, with flexibility to adjust if agenda items do not require action.

The Board also discussed procedures for financial disbursements, including the role of the treasurer in approving payments and the need to establish formal internal controls and authorization processes as part of upcoming organizational procedures.

8. **Open Comment:** Discussion or action by the Western Panhandle Regional Land Bank Board regarding unscheduled business will not take place. This section is for citizen comment only.

Under open comment, Board members briefly discussed procedural questions regarding property referral coordination with City staff. Ms. Folck confirmed that she had already spoken with the City Attorney, who indicated he was continuing to work through the required steps.

Ms. Coolidge clarified the sequence of the referral process, noting that city-level actions must occur prior to Land Bank Board consideration of any property, after which the Board retains authority to accept or decline properties and determine priorities.

Members also discussed environmental considerations related to potential property acquisitions, including asbestos and remediation requirements. It was noted that grant funding may be available through state or other programs, including DEQ resources, for environmental cleanup and demolition assistance, though availability and timing may vary.

No additional public or Board comments were offered.

9. **Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn was made by Board Member Stinner and it was seconded by Board Member Shaul. There was no discussion. On roll call vote, the following voted "AYE": Kaufman, Ingram, Garrett, Newman, Flores, Shaul and Stinner. "NAYS": None. Abstain: None. Absent: None.

Meeting adjourned at 1:46 p.m.

Tony Kaufman, Chairman

ATTEST:

Karen Heins

Karen Heins, Administrative Secretary