NEBRASKA COMMISSION ON PROBLEM GAMBLING
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 8, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 a.m.

Roll Call: Present in person: Leckband, Lutz, Zohner, and Moore. Absent excused Volnek, Monheiser, Lambert.

Announcements:
Chairperson Lutz made the following announcements:
The notice of this regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission on Problem Gambling was posted publicly on May 1, 2026 on the State events calendar and on the website of the Gamblers Assistance Program. The notice of meeting with the agenda has been available continuously in the office of the Gamblers Assistance Program in Whitehall Campus, building 7, 5800 Walker Avenue, Lincoln, Nebraska since the date when the notice was posted publicly.
This meeting of the Commission on Problem Gambling is conducted in compliance with the requirements of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act. A copy of the Open Meetings Act is on the table in this room.
Copies of other printed materials that may be considered by the Commission during the meeting are also available to the public on the table in this room.
Public comments on issues presented during this meeting will be allowed by the chair from time to time during the meeting and may also be requested by any member of the commission at any time.
The sequence of our discussion of agenda items and the timing of discussion are tentative and subject to ruling by the chair as this meeting goes on.
Let us now pause for a moment of reflection before we move on to the next item on the agenda.

Approval of minutes of previous meetings:
The Chair called for amendments or corrections to the minutes of the meeting of February 13, 2026. Commissioner Leckband moved to approve the minutes as distributed, seconded by Commissioner Zohner. Hearing no objection, the Chair called for a vote. Voting aye, Commissioners Moore, Zohner, Lutz, Leckband. Voting nay, none. Motion passed.

Director Narrative Report: Legislation; Administrative Services Financial Reports; Operations and Data Reports.
The Director presented a series of reports about program activities, program finances and data. The director's narrative report is attached to these minutes.

Agenda Item 6: New Provisional Counselor Certification
Vanessa Suarez, Lincoln. Commissioner Leckband moved approval of her application, seconded by Commissioner Moore. After discussion the Chair called for a vote. Voting aye, Commissioners Moore, Zohner, Lutz, Leckband. Voting nay, none. Motion passed.

Allen Bartu, Lincoln. Commissioner Leckband moved approval of his application, seconded by Commissioner Moore. After discussion the Chair called for a vote. Voting aye, Commissioners Moore, Zohner, Lutz, Leckband. Voting nay, none. Motion passed.

Holly Porter, Fremont. Commissioner Moore moved approval of her application, seconded by Commissioner Leckband. After discussion the Chair called for a vote. Voting aye, Commissioners Moore, Zohner, Lutz, Leckband. Voting nay, none. Motion passed.

Agenda Item 7: Counselor Training and Certification
The Director explained the recent decision by Bellevue University to discontinue offering new counselor training, and the difficulty arranging a local substitute. The proposal by Evergreen Council, Olympia, Washington, would cost over $20,000 per year, or nearly $3,500 per student given recent enrollments of 6 students per year. Alternatives that are free to the students and would not cost the Commission any underwriting expenses exist, and can be recommended to interested counselors as alternatives. Commissioner Leckband moved that the Commission should stop subsidizing new counselor education, seconded by Commissioner Moore. After discussion the Chair called for a vote. Voting aye, Commissioners Moore, Zohner, Lutz, Leckband. Voting nay, none. Motion passed.

Agenda Item 8: Counseling Guidelines and Rates

The Director proposed an amendment to the Contract Provider Manual, which would replace the current Urgent Care standards with a new standard called Screen/Brief Intervention. The Commission reviewed the proposed change in the standard, with assurance that exact new contracts issued for the coming year will include detailed specifications applicable to payment for the service. Commissioner Leckband moved for adoption of the new standard, seconded by Commissioner Zohner. After discussion the Chair called for a vote. Voting aye, Commissioners Moore, Zohner, Lutz, Leckband. Voting nay, none. Motion passed.

The Director proposed a revision of the rates paid for counseling services, to increase the rates to restore part of the reduction that was enacted at the November, 2025, meeting. The revised rates will increase overall payment by 8%. Commissioner Moore moved for adoption of the rate increase, seconded by Commissioner Leckband. After discussion the Chair called for a vote. Voting aye, Commissioners Moore, Zohner, Lutz, Leckband. Voting nay, none. Motion passed.

Agenda Item 9: Increases to current counselor contract awards
The Director proposed a list of increases to assure counselors can be paid for their services through the month of June. The increases are based on recent utilization of the individual counselor's services. Commissioner Leckband moved for approval of the increases, seconded by Commissioner Moore. After discussion the Chair called for a vote. Voting aye, Commissioners Moore, Zohner, Lutz, Leckband. Voting nay, none. Motion passed.

Agenda Item 10: Approval of Executive Committee actions
The Executive Committee took three actions after the last meeting: approving new contract for Albert Sparks, a counselor from Omaha, in the amount of $10,000; approving spending approximately $4,000 to buy furniture for the new office at the NRGC space; and approving an increase in the contract award for Shannon Bolter, Omaha, in the amount of $7,000. Commissioner Moore moved for approval of the Executive Committee actions, seconded by Commissioner Zohner. After discussion the Chair called for a vote. Voting aye, Commissioners Moore, Zohner, Lutz, Leckband. Voting nay, none. Motion passed.

Agenda Item 11: Approve renewal of four service contracts

The Director proposed renewal of four contracts for the fiscal year starting July 1: Argus Communications, $350,000; Justin Antons helpline service, $34,000; Juan Paulo Ramirez, data collection and analysis, $82,400; Zoom Communications, $7,250. Commissioner Leckband moved for approval of the contract renewals, seconded by Commissioner Moore. After discussion the Chair called for a vote. Voting aye, Commissioners Moore, Zohner, Lutz, Leckband. Voting nay, none. Motion passed.

Agenda Item 12: Election of Officers

As required by the Commission bylaws, a slate of officers for the coming two years was elected by unanimous consent: Susan Lutz, Chair; Paul Leckband, Vice-Chair; Todd Zohner, Secretary.

Agenda Item 13: Fiscal Year 2026-27 Program Budget

The proposed budget for the new year beginning July 1, 2026, was reviewed. Commissioner Leckband moved for adoption of the budget including a 3% increase in the Director's pay, seconded by Commissioner Moore. After discussion the Chair called for a vote. Voting aye, Commissioners Moore, Zohner, Lutz, Leckband. Voting nay, none. Motion passed. The approved budget is attached to these minutes.

Meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, August 28, 2026, beginning at 9:30 a.m. at the offices of the Gamblers Assistance Program, 3400 Village Drive, Lincoln.

ATTEST: ____________________

Todd Zohner, Secretary

GAMBLERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BUDGET FISCAL YEAR 2026-2027

REVENUE

Share of State Lottery profits *500,000 + 1%; Constitution Article III Section 24*	875,000
5% of State Lottery ad budget *Statute Section 9-831*	250,000
Share of Casino Wagering Tax *Racetrack Gaming Act Section 9-1204*	1,500,000
Share of MACD Gaming Tax	360,000
Investment Income *Gamblers Assistance Fund earnings*	10,000
TOTAL PROJECTED REVENUE	**2,995,000**

EXPENDITURES

510000 PERSONAL SERVICES	
511100 PERMANENT SALARIES *Limit set by Legislature*	154,334
515100 RETIREMENT PLANS EXPENSE *Employer share 7.5%*	11,575
515200 FICA EXPENSE *Employer share 7.65%*	11,807
515500 HEALTH INSURANCE EXPENSE *Employer share of premiums*	46,000
516500 WORKERS COMP PREMIUMS *State assessment*	1,000
Personal Services Total	**224,716**
520000 OPERATING EXPENSES	
521100 POSTAGE EXPENSE	150
521400 CIO CHARGES *State data; communications*	10,000
521500 PUBLICATION & PRINT EXPENSE *State printing*	2,000
522200 CONFERENCE REGISTRATION *National Conference*	1,500
531100 OFFICE SUPPLIES EXPENSE	750
534600 EDUCATIONAL SUPPLIES *Texts, manuals*	500
541100 ACCTG & AUDITING SERVICES	5,000
541200 PURCHASING ASSESSMENT	400
554130 VIDEO SERVICES *Zoom Video*	7,250
554900 OTHER CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	
Data analyst	82,400
Helpline service	34,000
559100 OTHER OPERATING EXPENSE	
Midwest Conference sponsorship	5,000
559164 PROBLEM GAMBLING MESSAGES *RFP Awarded Contract*	350,000
Operating Expenses Total	**498,950**
570000 TRAVEL EXPENSES	
571100 BOARD & LODGING *Commissioner travel; Hotels/2 conferences*	3,500
572100 COMMERCIAL TRANSPORT *National Conference air fare*	750
573100 STATE-OWNED TRANSPORT	1,000
574500 PERSONAL VEHICLE MILEAGE *Commissioner, staff travel .70/mile*	1,500
Travel Expenses Total	**6,750**

544300 PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES *Counseling services*	**2,303,250**
Assumes total 13,000 hours counseling + 425 new client assessments:	
1,300 SBI @ 160	*208,000*
11,700 OP @ 170	*1,989,000*
425 Assess. @ 250	*106,250*
TOTAL	*2,303,250*
TOTAL ALL PROJECTED EXPENDITURES	**3,033,666**

APPROPRIATION	**3,217,273**

CASH FUND STATUS

BALANCE 07/01/26	**518,089**
PLUS PROJECTED REVENUE FYE26-27	**+ 2,995,000**
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE FY26-27	**3,513,089**
MINUS PROJECTED EXPENDITURES FY26-27	**- 3,033,666**
PROJECTED BALANCE 06/30/27	**479,423**