NORTHEAST IOWA COMMUNITY ACTION CORPORATION
305 MONTGOMERY STREET, P.O. BOX 487
DECORAH, IA 52101

Approved

The Northeast Iowa Community Action Corporation Board of Directors meeting was held on Monday, September 28, 2026, at the Fayette County Courthouse. The Finance Committee met at 5:46 pm. The Board of Directors meeting was called to order at 6:16 pm. Board Chair, Les Askelson, called the meeting to order followed by reciting the NEICAC mission statement.

Present were:

Dan Byrnes
Janel Langreck
Jasmin Morrison (Virtual)
Linda Voshell (Virtual)
Jeff Bunn
Jim Perry
Steve Doeppke
Melissa Timmermans (Virtual)
Wendy Shea
Joseph Pisney
Corey Cerwinske (Virtual)
Marcia Hesse
Stacie Cooper
Les Askelson
Nina Brickman
Melissa Nation (Virtual)
Rachelle Driscoll

Trisha Wilkins, Staff
Karli Schmelzer, Staff
Chrishelle Stravers, Staff
Martin Ahrndt, Staff
Theresa Hogenson, Staff

Board members unable to attend are as follows:

Nick Winter (3)
Steve Breitbach (2)
Lynn Weidler (3)
Shirley Vermace

After the Mission Statement was recited, Les Askelson introduced Rachelle Driscoll as the Board's newest member. Rachelle was elected by the Clayton County Head Start parent group as the low-income sector representative. Rachelle served as a NEICAC employee for years, working both in Early Head Start and Head Start programs.

Next was the review of the 9/28/26 meeting agenda. Move to approve the 9/28/26 meeting agenda by Joseph Pisney, seconded by Steve Doeppke. Motion carried all voting aye.

The next item was the consent agenda which includes the minutes for the 8/3/26 Board Meeting; September Program and Agency Dashboard Report; Head Start, Early Head Start, and CACFP Reports; September Policy Council Minutes; Crisis Reports; Board Committees and Head Start Designations Update; Board Conflict of Interest Paperwork Update; and set next meeting date of October 26, 2026 (Virtual). Move to approve the consent agenda by Wendy Shea, seconded by Stacie Cooper. Motion carried all voting aye.

Trisha Wilkins then reviewed with the Board the August Financial Reports, while the July Financial Reports were included in the August Board letter and packet. Move to approve the July and August

Financial Reports as presented by Jim Perry, seconded by Dan Byrnes. Motion carried all voting aye. The balance sheet was included with the Board packet and was for the Board's information.

Dan Byrnes presented on behalf of the Finance Committee, stating that everything looked to be in order with no discrepancies noted. Move to approve the Finance Committee report of the bill and credit card statements as presented by Dan Byrnes, seconded by Janel Langreck. Motion carried all voting aye.

Program presenters this month were Martin Ahrndt, Family Services Coordinator and Theresa Hogenson, LIHEAP Coordinator. Martin Ahrndt shared the office hours and locations of the Family Service outreach offices. NEICAC has been partnering with the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque to assist clients affected by the Agri fire in Postville. Theresa Hogenson reported that LIHEAP applications opened October 1 for applicants age 60 and older and/or those with disabilities. Approximately 1,300 Auto Eligible letters were mailed and returned. Applications will open to all applicants on November 1. A total of 3,824 applications were approved last year. This was for the Board's information.

Trisha Wilkins reviewed the annual Board Assessment report with the Board. Trisha shared that there was just over a 50% response rate overall, with an indicated "met" in most areas surveyed, but a few questions indicated that work was needed. This was for the Board's information.

Next on the agenda were the program customer satisfaction reports. Trisha Wilkins shared there were reports from Head Start/EHS, Family Services, FaDSS, Weatherization and Transit. As in previous years, the agency's customer satisfaction remains positive. Janel Langreck commented that Head Start only had one negative answer with so many positives. Wendy Shea asked why there were no responses for Clayton County in the FaDSS department, Trisha stated the responses come after the participants exit the program. Move to approve the Customer Satisfaction Reports as presented by Corey Cerwinske, seconded by Jasmine Morrison. Motion carried all voting aye.

NEICAC's Transit FTA Title VI program was next on the agenda. The Title VI plan ensures compliance with federal requirements under the 1964 Title VI Civil Rights Act, outlines the Transit's procedures for public posting/notices and complaints, and includes additional documents such as the Public Participation and Limited English Proficiency plans; the plan and the required resolution were emailed and posted to the Board portal. Move to approve NEICAC's Transit FTA Title VI program as presented by Macia Hesse, seconded by Joe Pisney. Motion carried all voting aye.

Trisha Wilkins shared Transit's revised Drug & Alcohol Policy. Move to approve the revised Transit Drug & Alcohol Policy as presented by Nina Brickman, seconded by Stacie Cooper. Motion carried all voting aye.

Lastly for Transit, Trisha Wilkins reviewed the most recent Facility Condition Assessment that was conducted at the West Union Maintenance Shop. Given the age of this building, the assessment turned out well. This was for the Board's information.

Next on the agenda was NEICAC's very first Open House, which was on September 22. Trisha Wilkins shared it was a resounding success while serving 218 people and having a lot of interest in each of the agency program tables. The event planning committee included NEICAC staff from across the agency, and they addressed every detail while also making business connections to keep

the costs low. Several board members attended and commended staff for representing the agency and the programs so effectively. This was for the Board's information.

Trisha Wilkins then shared NEICAC, will officially launch the Thrive Iowa Initiative in Fayette and Clayton Counties with an event planned on October 20 at 1:00pm at the Earth Moving Legacy Center in Elkader. Special guest speakers will include NEICAC Board Chair Les Askelson, State Representatives Michael Bergan and Chad Ingles, and District Court Judge Alan Heavens. A highlight of the event will be the signing of the Thrive Iowa Declaration of Participation, a shared commitment among Alliance members to work together to help families move from crisis toward stability and long-term success. The launch will provide an opportunity to celebrate the partnerships already taking shape through Thrive Iowa and reinforce the initiative's guiding principle: For the Community, By the Community.

Trisha Wilkins reported on a statewide opportunity led by the Iowa Community Action Association to establish a Co-Location program. If funded by Iowa HHS, NEICAC would participate in the five-year program to reduce barriers to healthcare and connect individuals with other services, particularly those living in rural communities. This was for the Board's information.

Training specific to Head Start and Early Head Start eligibility was next on the agenda. Trisha Wilkins reviewed the training handout and added that it is also posted to the Board portal. This was for the Board's information.

The next item on the agenda was a request for approval of NEICAC's comments for federal submission on recently proposed Head Start Program revisions. The changes would have long-lasting impact on the national Head Start Program and its future stability. Move to approve NEICAC's comments for federal submission as presented by Nina Brickman, seconded by Wendy Shea. Motion carried all voting aye.

Trisha Wilkins reported that the annual campaign would soon be underway and asked Board members to provide her with the names of business or individual contacts who may be interested in supporting the agency's fundraising efforts. This was for the Board's information.

Next on the agenda was the Housing Programs Monitoring Report. Trisha Wilkins shared that inspection was conducted in Strawberry Point and Maynard. Both the physical and the file concerns were addressed, and no further action was needed. This was for the Board's information.

Federal and state legislative updates were presented. Trisha Wilkins reported that Congress passed a bipartisan continuing resolution to fund the federal government through December 11 and delay implementation of the proposed OMB revisions. This was for the Board's information.

Trisha Wilkins then reviewed the Grants, Contracts & Funding Report. This included contract amendments for Weatherization and Community Services Block Grant, amended agreement for the number of bus replacements for Transit; contracts for the new program year FY2027 for Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Grants were awarded through Upper Mississippi Gaming Corporation and Community of Greater Dubuque. This was for the Board's information.

Next, Trisha Wilkins shared her CEO Report. This was for the Board's information.

Move to adjourn the meeting at 7:15pm by Janel Langreck, seconded by Jeff Bunn. Motion carried all voting aye.

Reporting Secretary
Chrishelle Stravers, CFO