

NAHT Monthly Board Meeting

March 10, 2026

Present: Tom, John, George, Lyna, Sarah Simon, Linda, Maggie, Austin, Bernadette, Karl, Stephanie, Shirlee

Excused absence: Heather, Teresa, Sr. Shirley, Tricia

Key takeaways

- House File 1036 (comprehensive human trafficking bill) is expected to move forward after the second funnel (March 20th) and has strong bipartisan support
- The tobacco tax bill that would have provided \$1 million for human trafficking services failed by one vote due to inter-party politics; Senator Warne continues seeking alternative funding sources
- Massage establishment licensure legislation is positioned well with live bills in both chambers
- February 2026 had zero income, marking the worst financial month in three years for the NAHT
- The 2026 proposed budget of \$24,028 was approved, slightly higher than 2025's actual spending of \$23,619.80
- DHHS and Department of Public Safety continue to resist removing "child prostitution" language from Iowa code despite it contradicting federal human trafficking definitions and other sections of the Iowa Code
- New website sections for legislation and Instagram page have been launched to improve outreach

Legislative Update

Catherine Pollard provided updates on three top legislative priorities currently moving through the Iowa legislature. House File 1036 (comprehensive human trafficking bill authored by Rep. Lohse) is expected to move after the second funnel with strong support from both chambers, despite some pushback from DPS. Massage establishment licensure legislation has live bills in both Senate and House, positioned to pass their respective chambers and go directly to the governor. A criminal record expungement bill passed the House Judiciary Committee unanimously and has been placed on the calendar for a vote. Human trafficking training for truck drivers passed the House unanimously and awaits Senate approval. The Attorney General's Bill (Katie's Law) passed out of full committee in both chambers and placed on calendars. The second funnel date is March 20th, after which House File 1036 is expected to advance. However, appropriations conversations continue but no concrete funding commitments yet.

Tobacco Tax Bill Controversy

The board discussed the failed tobacco tax increase that would have allocated \$1 million to human trafficking survivor services. George noted that Sen. Warne championed the

bill to increase the tobacco tax (unchanged for 20 years) with \$1 million designated for survivor services, but it lost by one vote. He expressed disappointment that the NAHT did not register support for the bill, saying it was a missed opportunity. Catherine explained that the NAHT registered as "undecided" because the organization doesn't take positions on tobacco policy, though they expressed support for the appropriation for human trafficking to Senator Warme. John said that tobacco tax policy involves disincentives and policy positions beyond human trafficking and that NAHT maintains a policy of not taking positions on issues unrelated to human trafficking. Catherine added that the bill ultimately failed due to caucus politics between Republican and Democrat parties. Bernadette noted that one party opposes raising taxes regardless of the purpose. Karl confirmed this is a pattern where one party will not support tax increases.

Treasurer's Report, Financial Status and Minutes

George presented the February 2026 financial report showing unprecedented zero income. February 2026 had no income whatsoever, the worst treasurer's report in three years. On the other hand, very few expenses were recorded for the month. The beginning February checking account balance was \$27,282 and ending was \$26,627. 2025 total income was \$28,532.99, with a critical \$10,000 donation from Lohse Family Foundation in December. Without the December donation, NAHT would not have met 2025 expenses. 2025 expenses totaled \$23,619.80, leaving a small surplus that helped offset deficits from previous two years.

Treasurer's report was approved unanimously (moved by George, seconded by Stephanie). Approval of the 2026 budget proposed by George was moved by Maggie and seconded by Stephanie. The proposed budget for 2026 was passed unanimously. The February minutes were accepted without revision (moved by Maggie, seconded by George).

2026 Budget Proposal

George presented the proposed budget for 2026 with detailed category breakdowns. Key items:

- Printing, graphic design, signs, and manuals budgeted at \$900 (2025 actual: \$816.57)
 - Contract services (tech consultants) proposed at \$3,900, down from \$5,200 in 2023 and \$4,600 in 2024
 - Website, Facebook, blog posts, and newsletter (primarily Linda McConley/Code and Content) budgeted at \$6,000 (2025 actual: \$2,919)
 - Subcontractors (Advocacy Strategies) at \$10,300 including \$300 for Day on the Hill printing
 - Miscellaneous category includes Day on the Hill expenses, checks, and reduced t-shirt budget of \$300 due to existing inventory
- Total proposed budget is \$24,028 compared to 2025 actual spending of \$23,619.80.

Maggie: Moved to approve the 2026 proposed budget. Stephanie seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Fundraising and Donation Platform Discussion

Tom raised concerns about fundraising and proposed exploring DonorPerfect as a CRM solution. He urged all board members to share the monthly blog on social media platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram) to increase visibility. and encouraged promoting t-shirts at events as fundraising tools (\$20 donation). He also proposed that John, George, and Linda evaluate DonorPerfect, with potential approval for \$1,776 annual expenditure pending their review. Stephanie strongly advised against using DonorPerfect based on direct experience, describing it as "extremely clunky and expensive" and noting potential lawsuit issues. She recommended GiveButter as a free alternative that is more user-friendly and intuitive. John shared his experience from another nonprofit that went through a 6-week TechSoup course evaluating donation platforms. He noted that DonorPerfect comes from an older generation of software and is comparatively expensive. He added that CRM platforms require a threshold of transactions and donors to justify costs. The NAHT's current simple donation system costs zero and works adequately for NAHT's needs.

A CRM is a back-office functionality that won't directly raise money. Stephanie offered to share research from her organization's platform evaluation

DHHS Follow-up and Child Prostitution Code Issue

Discussion about inviting Vera Wallican from DHHS back and addressing the child prostitution category in Iowa code. John reminded that group that we offered to invite Vera Wallican to return in April, but noted Teresa Davidson had the most knowledge and concerns about the DHHS statistics issue. George questioned whether having Vera return would be productive regarding the child prostitution category issue. George noted that Teresa Davidson has worked on this issue for years and is closely tied with DHHS and explained that Iowa code still allows children to be charged with prostitution despite contradicting state and federal definitions of trafficking. Stephanie pointed out that no one else in the country calls child survivors "prostitutes." John noted the code contradiction where one section defines minors as trafficking victims while another maintains child prostitution charges. George stated the charge is used as a threat even if rarely prosecuted. Maggie suggested DHHS needs to propose legislative change. Bernadette asked if any legislator could propose fixing the contradictory laws. George explained previous bill passed subcommittee but was killed when DPS head opposed it in full committee. DPS claimed they need the ability to detain teenage girls "for their protection." Karl confirmed this is a pattern where DPS protects their discretion but doesn't want to argue the point publicly. Bernadette asked if children are actually arrested as prostitutes. John explained it's extremely rare but the threat is what matters and causes trauma. Stephanie raised related issue of youth sexting criminalization and sextortion disclosure problems. John

said he would consult with Teresa Davidson before inviting Vera back to ensure productive conversation and added that change at DHHS and DPS likely requires new department heads after November elections. Karl suggested contacting Natalie Lampley from AG's Victim Services for education perspective

Website Updates and Improvements

Discussion of website functionality, recent improvements, and a proposal for major redesign. John someone emailed George proposing website revision, which could be expensive. Web consultant Linda McConley estimated \$2,500 to \$5,000 for implementation of newer platform. George noted that the last major update was done four years ago and took significant time. George noted that new legislation section added to homepage with legislative priorities and updates. He noted: the March blog post from Teresa about legislative session posted to new legislation section; new Instagram page launched in addition to active Facebook page; and the time investment required for maintaining all platforms. John suggested that a major redesign not a top priority unless windfall funding received.

Call to Action for \$1 Million Appropriation

Maggie urged board members to contact state senators, emphasizing that human trafficking exists in Iowa and demands collective response in the form of a \$1 million appropriation for HT survivors. The current Human Trafficking Survivor Services Fund provides only \$150,000, requesting increase to \$1 million. Increased funding would allow nonprofits to expand residential programs, restoration centers, wraparound services, counseling, medical care, job training, education, and safe housing. She urged all board members to contact their Iowa state senators to support the funding increase. She added that policy moves when people move and legislation changes when citizens speak.