

LOWER LOUP NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

October 21, 2015

Ord, Nebraska

The October meeting of the Board of Directors of the Lower Loup Natural Resources District was held at the Headquarters Office, 2620 Airport Drive, Ord, Nebraska, on October 21, 2015. Due to the absence of Chairman Kruse, Vice Chairman Citta called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Directors in attendance

Darwin B. Anderson, Secretary
Joseph L. Citta, Jr., Vice Chairman
N. Richard Hadenfeldt
Matt Lukasiewicz
Alan D. Petersen
Gerald P. Smith
Henry J. Thoene

Beth Boesch
Virgil W. Gellermann
Clifford P. Loseke
James C. Nelson
Dean J. Rasmussen
Dean G. Thede

Directors absent

James C. Adams
Timothy E. Bartak
Michael P. Gutzmer
Gary A. Kruse, Chairman

Rollie D. Amsberry, Treasurer
James J. Eschliman
Randy Kauk
Darwin R. Sieh

Staff in attendance

Leon "Butch" Koehlmoos, General Manager
Rich Woollen, District Forester
Larry D. Schultz, I&E Coordinator
Anne Freeman, Water Programs Secretary
Jason Moudry, Water Programs Specialist
Dell Harris, Water Resources Specialist

Russell G. Callan, Assistant General Manager
Rita A. Goldfish, Administrative Assistant
Tylr D. Naprstek, Water Modeling Coordinator
Cheryl K. Hornickel, Programs Assistant
LeeAnn Smith, Water Programs Assistant

Guests in attendance

Bryce Bauer, LDC, NRCS, Ord
Gerry Sheets, Middle Loup Irrig Dist, Arcadia
John Engel, HDR
David Kracman, The Flatwater Group
Dustin Wilcox, NARD

Tom Knutson, St. Paul
Jennifer Schellpeper, DNR
Adam Rupe, JEO
Simone Rock, HDR
Anna Baum, Manager, Upper Loup NRD

Chris Higgins, ULNRD
 Shane Young, ULNRD
 Tom Johnson, UPNRD
 Todd Schipporeit, ULNRD

Taylor Spencer, ULNRD
 Gary Reiser, ULNRD
 Rich Burnside, ULNRD
 Bobbie Jo Christensen, ULNRD

NOTICE OF OPEN MEETING LAW POSTING

Chairman Citta referred those in attendance to the open meeting law information posted in the Board room.

MINUTES

Chairman Citta asked for corrections and/or additions to the September 24, 2015, Board meeting minutes. None being heard, Chairman Citta ruled that the September 24, 2015, minutes would stand approved as submitted.

APPROVAL OF VERIFICATION OF MEETING NOTICE, ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND EXCUSED ABSENCES

Chairman Citta asked for verification of the meeting notice. General Manager Leon “Butch” Koehlmoos verified that the meeting notices were properly published in all newspapers and that the meeting notice was also posted at the NRD Headquarters office in Ord, the NRD web site, and the eight field office locations. Koehlmoos said there were no modifications to the agenda.

Smith motioned, seconded by Loseke, to approve the verification of the meeting notice, adopt the agenda, and excuse all absent directors. Motion carried by roll call vote, all present voting yes.

TREASURER’S REPORT

Chairman Citta directed the Board’s attention to the Treasurer’s Report as published in the regular and supplemental agendas.

Koehlmoos mentioned that several payments have been made for the different studies in which the Lower Loup NRD is involved.

Koehlmoos said the picnic shelters were done at Pibel Lake (one shelter) and Davis Creek (two shelters). He said pictures of the construction were posted in the NRD lobby.

Rasmussen motioned, seconded by Petersen, to approve the October, 2015, Treasurer’s Report and pay all bills. Motion carried by roll call vote, all present voting yes.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

FORESTER'S REPORT

District Forester Rich Woollen reported that some cedar wood was chipped in the Dunning area for a fuels management project at a nearby livestock facility. The chips would be used for mortality composting.

Woollen reported that recent survival checks of tree seedlings indicated good survival across the District.

Woollen said there has been some interest in windbreak renovations and that he had made some Nebraska Buffer Strip field reviews.

NRCS REPORT

District Conservationist Bryce Bauer reported that he and Jason Moudry have been working on cover crop plantings at the Aagaard Farm.

Bauer said that a Continuous CRP sign-up will begin December 1st.

Bauer said there will be a new grassland CRP for pasture/grazing. He said only 2 million acres will be available nationwide, so the program will be competitive. He said that producers wanting to sign up for the program will probably need to add a wildlife component to the grassland. He said payment rates would be \$15 to \$30 per acre.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION REPORT

North Central Land Judging

Information & Education Coordinator Larry Schultz reported that the North Central Land Judging Contest was held October 7th near Trail #11 at Sherman County Reservoir. He said 11 schools competed with 207 students. Verdigre was the 1st place team, and also had the top individual, Alexis Hrbek. He said Palmer teams placed 2nd and 3rd. Schultz said the four teams that qualified for state competition, being held today in Scottsbluff, were Verdigre, Palmer, Twin River, and Fullerton.

Statewide I&E Staff Quarterly Meeting

Schultz reported that I&E staff from across the state will be meeting at the Nemaha NRD on October 29-30. He said tours of the area are planned.

NWRA/NSIA Convention and GMDA Conference

Schultz reported that information was included in the agenda regarding the joint NWRA/NSIA Convention to be held in Kearney in November; and the GMDA Conference to be held in Sacramento, CA in January, 2016.

Hazard Mitigation Plan

Shultz said he contacted JEO and there was nothing new to report. He said JEO hoped final approval of the NRD's application would be in November.

Board Meeting Dates

Schultz reminded Board members that the November and December meetings would be held the third Thursday of each month due to Thanksgiving and Christmas. He said the Board meetings would be held November 19th and December 17th. Koehlmoos said the Water Resources Committee and Programs/Projects Committee meetings are tentatively scheduled for the Tuesday the week prior to the Board meeting.

Koehlmoos also reminded the Board of the Lower Platte River Basin Coalition Water Banking meeting at the Central Community College-Platte Campus in Columbus on November 17th at 11:00 a.m. He urged Board members to attend.

ASSISTANT MANAGER'S REPORT

Variance Committee

Assistant General Manager Russell Callan said that the Variance Committee met with Jerry Studnicka. This was his first meeting with the Committee, so no action was taken.

Water Resources Committee

Callan said the Water Resources Committee did not meet in October, but said that the Farwell Irrigation District has a request for sponsorship of a grant and that Matt Lukasiewicz would be giving a presentation to the Board. He said the Committee will make a recommendation at their November meeting.

Lukasiewicz said that the Farwell Irrigation District will be submitting a grant through LB 1098-Water Sustainability Fund for a project that could coincide with the Sargent Recharge Project on which the NRD is working. He presented a powerpoint and said the water sustainability project is a total channel control process through Rubicon gate systems. Rubicon gathered information for the proposal from Farwell Irrigation District, Sargent Irrigation District, and Middle Loup River Public Power & Irrigation District.

Lukasiewicz feels that the irrigation districts have met the obligations set forth by the Natural Resources Commission in LB 1098.

Lukasiewicz said the primary goal of the project is streamflow enhancement. He said with the automated gates, the irrigation districts hope to increase streamflows in the Middle Loup River as it would result in less diversion that they would need to take, and reduce the losses associated with the diversions. The number of gates needed will depend on the size of the canal.

Lukasiewicz said the cost estimates were broken down in to three phases. He said the costs for the whole channel control project for the three irrigation districts are: Sargent – 3510 x \$1000; Middle Loup – 6678 x \$1000; and Farwell – 12510 x \$1000. He said 60% of the costs would be covered by the Water Sustainability Fund grant.

Lukasiewicz said that with the automated gate system and total channel control, streamflow and water efficiency could increase up to 20 percent.

Tom Knutson, consultant for Rubicon, said that the project would save water. He said the project would take five to six years to complete.

Lukasiewicz said that approximately 92,000 irrigated acres would be covered by the project.

Columbus Area Water Resources Assessment

Tylr Naprstek handed out an update from HDR on the project. Callan said staff would be meeting with HDR soon to go over technical portions of the project. Naprstek said that HDR brought in JEO because they had strong resources from different entities involved in the Columbus area and they had experience working with water modeling.

PROGRAMS/PROJECTS COMMITTEE REPORT

Koehlmoos said the Programs/Projects Committee did not meet in October. No report.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Litigation Update (Prokop & Koch)

Koehlmoos reported that the NRD attorney, Tom Kruml, delivered a check for \$24,039.35 from the Nance County Court for legal expenses in the Prokop case.

New Hires

There were no new hires.

NARD REPORT

Director's Report

Rasmussen reported that NARD met at the NARD Annual Conference in Kearney. He said he attended a session on drones. He said the fundraisers went well, raising around \$25,000.

NRC REPORT

Commissioner's Report

Hadenfeldt reported that NRC met at the NARD Annual Conference last month. He said the guidelines for the Rules were adopted. He said applications are online and will be accepted by DNR from December 16-30. He said that when DNR is done sorting the applications, the Commission will score them. Hadenfeldt said the next NRC meeting will be at the Legislative Conference in January.

RC&D REPORTS

Loup Basin RC&D

Rasmussen reported that the RC&D met twice in October. Officers were elected and the budget set. He said there will be a tire collection in Loup City.

PrairieLand RC&D

No report.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Citta announced that the third and final water banking workshop would be held November 17th at the Central Community College.

LOWER PLATTE RIVER BASIN COALITION UPDATE

Chairman Citta announced that the meeting was being recorded for directors who were unable to attend. Upper Loup NRD staff and directors were in attendance.

After introductions, John Engel of HDR said the purpose of this Water Banking Basin Workshop of Loup Subbasins (Upper Loup NRD and Lower Loup NRD) was to discuss topics on water banking, conjunctive management projects, and to get input from both NRDs on goals and purposes, opportunities, framework and structure, and full basin level opportunities.

Engel said the purpose of the Coalition was to develop a water management plan that maintains a balance between current and future supplies and demands; to develop policies and practices that protect existing surface and groundwater uses and still allow for future water development; and to develop and maintain a water supply and use inventory for use in management activities, all with the overall purpose of avoiding a fully-appropriated status.

Engel said the purpose of the plan was to define goals and objectives to allow additional water use to occur within the framework of remaining outside of a fully-appropriated determination.

David Kracman then gave a summary of the first two water banking workshops that have been held. He said a water bank is an entity that brings together, through formal contracts, those who have a water supply with those who are looking for water. He said there is a regulatory body that sits over it and acts as an intermediary between the two groups to regulate the bank and can also be involved with certifying the quantity involved with the water banking operations.

Kracman said that Lower Loup NRD's water bank serves as a component of the water transfer program, and focuses on stream depletion factors and surface water.

Upper Loup NRD and Lower Loup NRD then broke into two groups to discuss the questions provided on the Water Banking Basin Workshop worksheet in the agenda. Items covered were Purpose, NRD and Basin Inventory, Geographic Area and Participant Eligibility, Management and Operation, Strategic Policy, and Other Issues. After discussion, summaries were given by both groups.

John Engel reminded the Board of the water banking workshop to be held in Columbus on the 17th. He said it will be a summary of the planning efforts of the seven participating NRDs. He said 'across NRD' and 'across subbasin' goals, projects and opportunities will also be discussed. DNR will be present.

Chairman Citta thanked everyone for their participation in the workshop. He announced that the November and December Board meetings have been moved up a week, and also the Committee meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Board, Chairman Citta declared the meeting adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

Roster for attendance of this meeting and tally of votes cast on motions at this meeting are being filed with the official minutes of this meeting at the Lower Loup Natural Resources District's Headquarters Office, 2620 Airport Drive, Ord, Nebraska. Publication notification of this meeting was made via a newspaper in each county within the District. The next Board of Directors meeting will be November 19, 2015, at 5:00 p.m., at the Headquarters Office in Ord, Nebraska.

Darwin B. Anderson
Secretary