

LOWER LOUP NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

November 19, 2015

Ord, Nebraska

The November 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 November 19, 2015. Chairman Kruse called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Directors in attendance

James C. Adams
Darwin B. Anderson, Secretary
James J. Eschliman
N. Richard Hadenfeldt
Clifford P. Loseke
James C. Nelson
Dean J. Rasmussen
Dean G. Thede

Rollie D. Amsberry, Treasurer
Timothy E. Bartak
Virgil W. Gellermann
Gary A. Kruse, Chairman
Matt Lukasiewicz
Alan D. Petersen
Gerald P. Smith
Henry J. Thoene

Directors absent

Beth Boesch
Michael P. Gutzmer
Darwin R. Sieh

Joseph L. Citta, Jr., Vice Chairman
Randy Kauk

Staff in attendance

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

Russell G. Callan, Assistant General Manager
Rita A. Goldfish, Administrative Assistant
Irene Kreifels, Financial Secretary
Cheryl K. Hornickel, Programs Assistant
LeeAnn Smith, Water Programs Assistant

Guests in attendance

Bryce Bauer, LDC, NRCS, Ord

Anthony Lowndes, Groundwater Foundation

NOTICE OF OPEN MEETING LAW POSTING

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

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

Chairman Kruse 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.

MINUTES

Chairman Kruse asked for corrections and/or additions to the October 21, 2015, Board meeting minutes. None being heard, Chairman Kruse ruled that the October 21, 2015, minutes would stand approved as submitted.

TREASURER’S REPORT

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

Koehlmoos commented on a few payments including those for hosting the NARD meetings, pits for land judging, Project SENSE, FY 2015 audit report, Arc Hydro Groundwater Training Course, Pibel Lake survey fees, and several projects.

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Anthony Lowndes of the Groundwater Foundation commented that he spent the afternoon in Loup City working on a Growing Groundwater Awareness program which engages entire communities in Nebraska in groundwater protection efforts. The program is funded through a grant project with Nebraska Environmental Trust. He said he would be in Burwell tomorrow, and will try to get in to as many communities as he can with the grant.

AUDITOR’S REPORT

Koehlmoos said that Bruce Lammers was unable to attend the meeting but would give the report at the December meeting.

FORESTER'S REPORT

District Forester Rich Woollen reported that a mini-grant was awarded to Mason City for the purchase and planting of larger trees through the ReTree Nebraska program. He said the trees are a big addition to the park.

Woollen reported that a tree planting plan was completed for the Arnold Golf Course and a formal application was submitted. Koehlmoos said that a contribution would be given to the project through the NRD's Community Forestry Program.

Koehlmoos said that Columbus schools have also submitted an application, and that the NRD would be contributing 50% of the planting cost, up to \$6,000. Woollen said the project is large and NFS grants were available. He said there is a lot of opportunities for the area and has been working with Leonard Kwapnioski.

Woollen said that the Conservation Tree ordering season began November 1st. He said pricing would stay the same.

APPROVAL OF NARD/NRD INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT

Koehlmoos said that a new interlocal agreement is set up every three years between the NARD and NRD regarding conservation trees. He said the agreement designates the NARD as the agent to deal with the USDA Forest Service in ordering/payment of trees and other activities.

Eschliman motioned, seconded by Smith, to approve an interlocal agreement with the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts for obtaining seedling trees and shrubs through September 30, 2018, and authorize the General Manager's signature on the document. Motion carried by roll call vote, all present voting yes.

NRCS REPORT

District Conservationist Bryce Bauer reported that EQIP money has been received and ranking applications has begun. He said that \$1.3 million are available for 400-500 applications in the NRD.

Bauer said that Dylan Bush has been hired under the Veteran's Authority as a technician in Fullerton. He said NRCS will be advertising again for a soil conservationist in Albion, but that an individual might be interested in transferring to Albion.

Bauer reported that there has been a lot of interest in the general CRP sign-up in Howard County. He said FSA has raised the soil rental rates on the dryland/sandy corners.

Bauer said that NRCS Engineer Tony Lampert left for a job in Albuquerque, NM. He said an engineering trainee was hired who will cover the Lower Loup NRD area.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION REPORT

Annual Award Dinner

Information & Education Coordinator Larry Schultz reported that the NRD's Annual Awards Dinner will be held at the Ord Vet's Club on December 17th, following the Board meeting. He said that, in the past, the Board has approved starting the December Board meeting earlier to accommodate the awards dinner.

Loseke motioned, seconded by Gellermann, to start the December Board meeting at 4:30 p.m. Motion carried by roll call vote, all present voting yes.

2016 NARD Legislative Conference

Schultz reported that the 2016 Legislative Conference will be held in Lincoln on January 26-27. He asked the directors to fill out the sheets provided.

Schultz mentioned that the *In the Loup* newsletter was being printed and will be mailed out soon.

ASSISTANT MANAGER'S REPORT

Variance Committee

Assistant General Manager Russell Callan said that the Variance Committee met prior to the Board meeting, hearing from Gibbons Ranches, Robert Stowell, and Jerry Studnicka. Callan said that Studnicka wants to purchase a piece of property that has 320 certified irrigated acres, exchange those acres for the right to irrigate 65 acres on his place, and relinquish the remaining 255 irrigated acres.

Amsberry said that Studnicka had not yet bought the place.

Amsberry motioned, seconded by Adams, to approve the Studnicka variance request, contingent on Studnicka completing the purchase of the property, to transfer the irrigation rights for 320 acres on Section 13, Township 12, Range 14 West to 65 acres on Section 11, Township 12, Range 14 West, relinquishing the remaining 255 irrigated acres, and to require the use of a flowmeter on the new well. Motion carried by roll call vote, all present voting yes.

Water Resources Committee

Middle Loup River Streamflow Enhancement Project

Callan reminded the Board that Lukasiewicz had given a presentation on this project at the October Board meeting. Callan said that Remy Halm of Rubicon met with the Committee on November 10th. Callan said that the NRD had not received an official request for funding from the irrigation districts, so the Committee voted to postpone action until an official request for funding was

made. Callan said the project includes millions of dollars, so the Committee wanted a firm request from the irrigation districts indicating what they wanted.

Callan said the Committee had questions and discussion on water savings and efficiency.

Pibel Lake Update

Callan reported that Frahm Construction had begun work. He said the beaver dam is out and the sediment basin is being installed. He said piling is onsite for the fishing pier.

Koehlmoos said that the old artesian well would be decommissioned.

Columbus Area Water Resources Assessment Study

Callan said that staff met recently with HDR and Columbus city officials. He said that Columbus already had a storm water plan in place. He said the project is on schedule.

Callan said that he visited with the Columbus Rotary earlier in the day and reviewed the project with them.

Lillian Creek Project

Callan reported that Lone Creek Cattle Company had signed the easement to allow preliminary work and geology study to be done on the Lillian Creek Project. He said that staff would be meeting with Lone Creek to discuss access. He said there is one other landowner on the property that could be affected.

He said that original discussion with Lone Creek indicated that they were not interested in allowing public access on the entire property. He said staff would be discussing with them the possibility of allowing public access on a portion of ground on the east side of the lake, opposite of Lone Creek's operating facilities.

Callan said that statutes indicate that the water right for impoundment over 150 acres has to allow public access.

Area 28 Activities

Callan said that three violation letters were sent recently.

Callan said staff had been approached by a few NRDs in the Area 28 region about participating in Helicopter Electromagnetic and Magnetic (HEM) survey work. He said the Lower Loup was interested and wanted to bring it before the Board. He said a joint application would be submitted for the small grant portions (under \$250,000) of the Water Sustainability Fund. Callan presented a powerpoint of the project, and said the Lower Loup NRD's share toward the project would be around \$160,000 and would be included in the FY2017 budget.

Callan said there are areas of high resistivity and low resistivity. He said currents can't travel through high resistivity areas such as gravel, but can through clay and sand which has low resistivity.

Callan said the area in which the Lower Loup is interested in would be the eastern half of Area 28, which is Platte County from Columbus to the Nance County line, and then the Columbus Area Study. He said the city of Columbus was not part of the area of the HEM survey work.

Koehlmoos said the NRD has hard data on the transect wells, and the HEM survey would fill in the gaps between the holes. The survey data would also be instrumental when making groundwater decisions based on aquifer and confining layers in the area. Callan said the survey would also help in determining water quantities in the area and leaching potential.

Koehlmoos said that each NRD would be submitting their own grant request for \$250,000 and they would be sent as a package. He said if the Lower Loup didn't receive the grant monies, it would be out of the project, but there would still be some costs for writing the grant.

Koehlmoos said that the Water Sustainability Fund could be used for research and studies for the \$250,000 requests. Hadenfeldt said that \$2.8 million has been set aside for small projects.

Eschliman motioned, seconded by Thoene, to pursue the Nebraska Water Sustainability Fund grant to conduct a Time Delay Electromagnetic Aerial Survey of the Columbus Area Study and Area 28. Motion carried by roll call vote. Directors voting yes: Adams, Amsberry, Anderson, Bartak, Eschliman, Gellermann, Hadenfeldt, Kruse, Loseke, Petersen, Rasmussen, Smith, Thede, and Thoene. Directors voting no: Lukasiwicz and Nelson. Directors absent: Boesch, Citta, Gutzmer, Kauk, and Sieh.

Groundwater Recharge/Water Quality Project in the Wood River and South Loup Drainage Systems

Callan reported that this feasibility study was a joint project proposed by the Central Platte and Lower Loup NRDs that would look at groundwater quality and recharge options in the South Loup in Buffalo County. He said proposals have been received and are being ranked.

PROGRAMS/PROJECTS COMMITTEE REPORT

Koehlmoos said the Programs/Projects Committee did not meet in November, but would discuss some items in December. He mentioned that residents of the Duncan East drainage project had called and said the mowing has been inconsistent. Koehlmoos said that there have been agreements in place for years indicating that the local landowners would take care of their portion of the project. He said that after the holidays, staff will visit with residents regarding the maintenance of the project. He said an alternative to the landowner mowing his portion, would be to hire a contractor to mow the area, then assess the cost back to the project.

Koehlmoos said another item for the Committee in December would be to discuss flooding that has occurred in the area of Ruby Slough in the Columbus area. He said that Lee Blaser called and said that some of his ground is being flooded. Blaser would like to meet with the Committee to see if a solution could be found. Koehlmoos said Ruby Slough is not in the Duncan East drainage project.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Litigation Update (Prokop & Koch)

There was no report.

New Hires

There were no new hires.

NARD REPORT

Director's Report

Rasmussen reported that the NARD group met in Ord on November 8-9. He said that the Risk Pool had some financial problems, but the rest of the finances were in good shape.

NRC REPORT

Commissioner's Report

Hadenfeldt said that DNR would be going through all the applications, then giving them to NRC to rank. He thought it would probably be the middle of March before NRC received the applications to rank.

RC&D REPORTS

Loup Basin RC&D

Rasmussen reported that the RC&D had met in Burwell. They recognized the veterans who helped with the tire collection. He said that future tire collection points might be in Loup City and St. Paul. He said the RC&D is in good financial shape due to grants received. Rasmussen said there may be a reuse collection site in North Loup in the future. He said there would be an open house at their new facility in Burwell on December 15th.

PrairieLand RC&D

Gellermann reported that the RC&D would meet December 14th to try to redo the bylaws so that PrairieLand could be transferred into another RC&D once the Shell Creek project is done. He said a lot of improvements have been made in the project.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Smith announced that a new health center was being constructed on the east side of the NRCS/NRD building in Spalding.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Board, Chairman Kruse declared the meeting adjourned at 6:11 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 December 17, 2015, at 4:30 p.m., at the Headquarters Office in Ord, Nebraska.

Darwin B. Anderson
Secretary