

MINUTES

LOWER LOUP NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

February 22, 2018

Ord, Nebraska

The February 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 February 22, 2018. Chairman Citta called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Directors in attendance

Rollie D. Amsberry, Treasurer
Robert L. Bauer
James J. Eschliman, Vice Chairman
N. Richard Hadenfeldt
Larry G. Mohrman
Alan D. Petersen
Dean G. Thede

Darwin B. Anderson
Joseph L. Citta, Jr., Chairman
Virgil W. Gellermann
Gary A. Kruse
James C. Nelson
Chad J. Podolak
Henry J. Thoene, Secretary

Directors absent

James C. Adams
Elizabeth L. Boesch
Matt R. Lukasiewicz
Rick D. Vlach

Timothy E. Bartak
Randy G. Kauk
Gerald P. Smith

Staff in attendance

Russell G. Callan, General Manager
Irene F. Kreifels, Administrative Assistant
Brent D. Lakin, Water Resources Technician
Jason W. Moudry, Water Programs Specialist
V. Ann Freeman, Water Programs Secretary

Tylr D. Naprstek, Ass't General Manager
Kim A. Lyons, Financial Secretary
Cheryl K. Hornickel, Programs Assistant
Larry D. Schultz, I&E Coordinator
Brian D. Kolar, Projects Technician

Guests in attendance

Mark F. Sintek, RC, NRCS, Ord
Janet Thede, St. Paul

John Krohn, Albion

NOTICE OF OPEN MEETING LAW POSTING

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

VERIFICATION OF MEETING NOTICE AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chairman Citta asked for verification of the meeting notice. General Manager Russ Callan 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. Callan said there were no modifications to the agenda.

EXCUSED ABSENCES AND ROLL CALL

Callan reported that Adams, Bartak, Boesch, Kauk, Lukasiewicz, and Smith would not be present at the meeting and had asked to be excused.

Roll Call – Directors present: Amsberry, Anderson, Bauer, Citta, Eschliman, Gellermann, Hadenfeldt, Kruse, Mohrman, Nelson, Petersen, Podolak, Thede, Thoene. Directors absent: Adams, Bartak, Boesch, Kauk, Lukasiewicz, Smith, Vlach.

Thede motioned, seconded by Hadenfeldt, to excuse absent directors. Motion carried by voice vote, all present voting yes.

MINUTES

Chairman Citta asked for corrections and/or additions to the January 25, 2018, Board meeting minutes. None were heard.

Anderson motioned, seconded by Gellermann, to approve the January 25, 2018, Board meeting minutes as presented. 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.

Callan highlighted expenditures to Red Thread for expenditures related to the NRD video and flyers and from Yanda's Pro Audio & Video for half of the down payment for upgrades to the Board room and small conference room.

Kruse motioned, seconded by Eschliman, to approve the February 2018, Treasurer's Report and pay all bills. Motion carried by roll call vote, all present voting yes.

The Treasurer's Report Approval Policy states that the approved expenditures are to be published and each director who has per diem and/or reimbursement of expenses included in such financial reports, abstains from voting for the approval of his or her own per diem and/or expense reimbursement.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

FORESTER'S REPORT

In the absence of District Forester Rich Woollen, Callan highlighted the biochar information presented in the agenda. He stated there would be a small test plot at the Aagaard Farm and informed the Board that a Biochar Workshop would be held in Ord on March 27th. Schultz stated that anyone interested in more information on the workshop could follow the links found on the LLNRD website. Citta reminded directors that tree planting season was quickly approaching and tree orders should be submitted as soon as possible for the best selection.

NRCS REPORT

Mark Sintek, RC in Ord, said that state and area office NRCS personnel would be in the district next week to conduct quality assurance reviews. He reported that NRCS staff met to review the highest ranked EQIP applications and said that \$1.6 million was awarded in conservation contracts for development, with a split of 60% for range and 40% for cropland. He said 12 wetlands applications had been sent to Lincoln for consideration.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION REPORT

Central Region Envirothon

Larry Schultz, Information and Education Coordinator, reported that the Central Region Envirothon in Columbus will be February 27th and he was expecting a dozen or more schools to participate. He said that the scores from Columbus and the contest held in Grand Island would be combined and the top scorer would move on to the State Envirothon at Niobrara State Park on April 25th. The international competition will be held in Pocatello, Idaho, in July, 2018.

Children's Groundwater Festival

Schultz reported that the Groundwater Festival was cancelled due to a snow storm this year, so the 30th anniversary will be held next year.

Schultz presented directors with a brochure showing what the Lower Loup NRD does, as well as a sheet of PowerPoint slides from the February 13th Directors Retreat. He updated the Board on the upcoming Washington, DC conference, stating that all registrations and reservations were made and he was working on setting up a tour of the Capitol.

ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Davis Creek – Phase II Update

Tylr Naprstek, Assistant General Manager, reported on progress of the Davis Creek recreation projects and referred to a handout showing a draft of the Long-Range Master Plan designed by JEO. Naprstek highlighted possible sites for tent camping, a hike/bike trail, and an equestrian campground.

Naprstek said Phase II was complete and staff was reviewing bids on the maintenance shop for Davis Creek, playground equipment for both the electrical and non-electrical site areas, and inlet latrine. He stated staff would be bringing a recommendation to the Programs/Projects Committee.

Pibel Lake Update

Naprstek reported that staff had received four bids for the outlet auxiliary structure reconstruction and repair and would have a recommendation for the Programs/Projects Committee next month. He said that, due to miscommunication between Olsson Associates and the Army Corps of Engineers, Olsson Associates was working on an after-the-fact 404 permit for work that had already been done on Pibel Lake.

Buffalo County, Ravenna Lake Report

Naprstek reported that staff had hoped to collect water samples earlier in the day; however, due to weather conditions, testing was postponed until Monday. He stated that a lake level monitor would be ordered to help track fluctuations and that the sampling would be done to model how much influence the lake has on the South Loup River.

Columbus Areas Water Resources Assessment Study Update

No current updates

ELM Update

Callan reported that he had visited with Steve Peterson of USGS and was told that the ELM report is in their internal reviewer's hands and they're looking at archiving data and releasing the final report soon. Callan said he got the okay to use the data the NRD currently has.

VARIANCE COMMITTEE

Thoene reported that the Committee had heard a request from John Krohn to transfer 14.5 acres off of pivot corners in Section 27, Township 20 North, Range 7 West in Boone County to Section 36, Township 20 North, Range 7 West, just outside the 1-mile contiguous boundary requirement for transfers. He said the transfer would have no impact to nearby surface water diversions.

Toene motioned, seconded by Nelson, to approve the variance request submitted by John Krohn to transfer 14.5 acres upstream and just outside the transfer boundary. Motion carried by roll call vote, all present voting yes.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Committee Reassignments

Citta stated he had interest from a director seeking to be on the Variance Committee. He said that Gellermann would be added as an alternate to that committee, as there was already the maximum number of people serving on the committee. He stated the rest of the committees and chairs would remain the same.

Board of Directors Retreat

Callan referred the Board to a list in the agenda of the priorities of the LLNRD developed by the retreat attendees. Callan stated that the priorities would eventually be added to the Long-Range Implementation Plan. He said he is planning a staff meeting in April and will have staff rate the priorities, also.

Positive testimony was received from the Board members who attended the retreat and it was suggested to hold retreats possibly every three years to keep Board members updated. Citta said the presentation by Don Blankenau on NRD statutes, Board responsibilities, and ethics was very informative. Podolak felt there needed to be more discussion on performance measures and ways of determining both the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of the programs offered so the NRD could focus its resources in ways they could best be used.

Litigation Update

Callan informed the Board that Prokop had filed an appeal, so the attorneys will get together in April and more updates would be available after their meeting. Callan also stated that the Koch case had been finalized, as Koch had not appealed during the allotted time.

New Hires

Callan reported that staff would be taking applications for a Water Modeling Coordinator to fill Naprstek's former position, a shop/parks person, and a range specialist.

Non-action Reports

No report.

NARD REPORT

Director's Report

No report.

Legislation Report

Callan reported on his testimony against LB 1123 dealing with the separation of land and water in regard to water management in Nebraska. He said he didn't think it would get out of committee. Callan said that LB 758 is upcoming that would allow NRDs to pay in lieu of tax on augmentation projects. He said that would get out of committee and would probably pass.

NRC REPORT

Commissioner's Report

Hadenfeldt said that the Commission met the previous day. He reported that LB 808 was in committee and has caused a stir, indicating that the bill would take \$100,000 out of the Water Sustainability Fund to irrigate community gardens. Hadenfeldt reported that the Rules Committee had passed the rules they had been working on for nearly a year, but said the rule stating that entities had to have all their permits in place before submitting a project, got thrown out. He said one of the new rules states that participants don't have to take the full 60% funding from the Water Sustainability Funds in the 60/40 split if they don't want it.

RC&D REPORTS

Loup Basin

Thoene reported that the RC&D was in the process of organizing a Friday Night Flea Market at the RC&D office in Burwell to promote local businesses. He stated that grants had been approved for litter reduction in the Basin, Sandhills weed management, and Cedar River stabilization, and that the tire recycling grant is expected to be approved. He said that Taylor has had high water and lagoon problems and can no longer pump the lagoon through the North Loup River irrigation ditch, so the different entities are working on a solution. He also stated that the North Loup River is encroaching and eroding into a portion of highway in Loup County, so a drone will be sent up to try to determine how the problem can be solved.

PrairieLand

Gellermann reported that PrairieLand RC&D is scheduled to close on February 28th. He said he had requested that some of the remaining funds be distributed to the Center for Survivors in Columbus and the NARD Scholarship Fund. He said that the Newman Grove water testing will continue.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/FUTURE MEETING TOPICS

Schultz reported that all the Lower Loup NRD incumbent directors had filed for re-election, and stated that Gellermann would be in a challenged race facing John Coffey. Schultz said new candidates have until March 1st to file.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Board, Chairman Citta declared the meeting adjourned at 5:50 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 held Thursday, March 29, 2018, at 5:00 p.m., at the Headquarters Office in Ord, Nebraska.

Henry J. Thoene
Secretary