

MINUTES

LOWER LOUP NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

September 24, 2020

Ord, Nebraska

The September 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 September 24, 2020. Chairman Citta called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Directors in attendance:

James C. Adams
Darwin B. Anderson
Robert L. Bauer
Joseph L. Citta, Chairman
Jim Eschliman, Vice Chairman
Gary A. Kruse
Larry Mohrman
Alan D. Petersen
Gerald Smith
Henry J. Thoene, Secretary

Rollie D. Amsberry, Treasurer
Timothy E. Bartak
Beth Boesch
John Coffey
N. Richard Hadenfeldt
Matt Lukasiewicz
Todd Nitsch
Chad J. Podolak
Dean G. Thede

Directors absent:

Randy Kauk

Rick Vlach

Staff in attendance:

Russell G. Callan, General Manager
Irene F. Kreifels, Administrative Assistant
Jason Moudry, Water Programs Specialist
Larry D. Schultz, I&E Coordinator
V. Anne Freeman, Water Programs Secretary

Tylr Naprstek, Assistant General Manager
Kim A. Lyons, Financial Secretary
Dell R. Harris, Water Resources Specialist
Cameron Conrad, Water Modeling Coord.
Brian Kolar, Projects Technician

Guests in attendance

Jim Nelson, Cairo

NOTICE OF OPEN MEETING LAW POSTING

Chairman Citta referred those in attendance to the open meeting law information posted in the Board room and stated that meeting material was available at the entrance to the Board room.

VERIFICATION OF MEETING NOTICE AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chairman Citta asked for verification of the meeting notice. General Manager Russell Callan stated that the agenda was current, and that the meeting notices were properly published in all newspapers, posted at the NRD Headquarters office in Ord, on the NRD web site, and in the eight field office locations.

ROLL CALL

Roll Call was conducted electronically. Directors present: Adams, Amsberry, Anderson, Bartak, Bauer, Boesch, Citta, Coffey, Eschliman, Hadenfeldt, Kruse, Lukasiewicz, Mohrman, Nitsch, Petersen, Podolak, Smith, Thede, Thoene. Directors absent: Kauk, Vlach.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Chairman Citta stated that Directors Kauk and Vlach had asked to be excused.

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

MINUTES

Chairman Citta asked for corrections and/or additions to the August 27, 2020, Board meeting minutes. No changes were heard.

Smith motioned, seconded by Mohrman, to approve the August 27, 2020, Board meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried by roll call vote, all present voting yes.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Russell Callan, General Manager, highlighted expenditures of \$400.92 to Lewis & Clark NRD; \$2,502.30 to Lower Elkhorn NRD; \$891.70 to Lower Niobrara NRD; \$894.01 to Lower Platte North NRD; \$760.37 to Middle Niobrara NRD; \$3,023.04 to Upper Elkhorn NRD; and \$3,513.82 to Upper Loup NRD for refund on the ELM project contributions; and \$30,000 to Upper Loup NRD for a share of the NET Drought Resilience Study. Callan also highlighted expenditures of \$6,400.00 to EA Engineering for Cover Crop Study expenses; \$8,620.00 to USGS for steam gages; \$8,373.11 to HDR Engineering for the Columbus project; and \$7,436.60 to JEO for Mud Creek WFPO expenses.

Thoene motioned, seconded by Kruse, to approve the September 24, 2020, Treasurer's Report and pay all bills. Motion carried by electronic vote. Directors voting yes: Amsberry, Anderson, Bartak, Bauer, Boesch, Citta, Coffey, Eschliman, Hadenfeldt, Kruse, Lukasiewicz, Mohrman, Nitsch, Petersen, Podolak, Smith, Thede, Thoene. Director abstaining: Adams. Directors absent: Kauk, Vlach.

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

No comments.

FORESTER'S REPORT

Richard Woollen, District Forester, was not present to report. Citta directed the Board to the information provided in the agenda. Adams stated he had visited with Woollen, and indicated he was working on buffer strip contracts. He said NRCS was overwhelmed, though, so the process was difficult to complete.

NRCS REPORT

Due to the absence of anyone from NRCS, directors were referred to Bryce Bauer's report provided in the agenda. Callan pointed out the photos that showed erosion near St. Paul that was caused from flooding. It was reported that some NSWCP funds were used for the repairs.

INFORMATION & EDUCATION REPORT

Larry Schultz, Information & Education Coordinator, reported that the quarterly *In the Loup* mailing was sent out and prompted calls to the NRD regarding new irrigated acres for 2021.

ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Davis Creek

Tylr Naprstek, Assistant General Manager, reported that Davis Creek was at wintering elevation and staff was setting up the docks for winter. He reported that staff had received several compliments for the cleanliness and well-kept grounds at the recreation area. Naprstek reported that, as of last week, the total income from online reservations and walk-ins was almost double the income from last year, despite opening in late-May.

Pibel Lake

Naprstek reported that sampling season at Pibel was winding down and that there was a slight spike in algae bloom in mid-September but was not overly high levels. He reported that there would be one more sample taken this year. He also stated there had been many good comments received and people asking for electrical hookups.

Cover Crop Study

Jason Moudry, Water Programs Specialist, reported that he and Dan Ruterbories, Rangeland Management Specialist, had recently removed equipment in two of the soybean fields and would go out in the coming weeks and remove equipment from the corn fields. He said there would be another report later this year and there should be more updates at the next Committee meeting.

Thoene asked if the NRD had been doing any demos at the Aagaard Farm this year. Moudry stated he was open to it but there was nothing scheduled. Callan stated if anyone wanted to see a cover crop stand to have them contact the NRD and staff would show them.

Coffey asked about the acre numbers for cover crop cost-share in Area 28. Naprstek informed directors that there was full sign up for everything that was available this year. He said the planting deadline had been changed to November 1st. He said staff went through the entire ranking process and there were a couple applications that did not get financed because of questions on what crop was being used. He said there would be more information available at the next Committee meeting.

Kruse asked about number of acres planted. Naprstek showed that there were 3,028 acres included in the approved applications with payments totaling \$90,853 for 34 applications. He stated the ones that were not approved had previous cover crops on them or were applied on a rye crop.

WATER RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Columbus Recharge Project

Naprstek showed a map of the recharge project area. Callan stated that not much had changed. He reported that staff was waiting on the Gates property for signatures from the corporation, but he had not heard any comments on the price. Callan stated there was some concern with the City of Columbus's planned storm water cell that would close to the pipe, so he wanted to get easements signed and done before that work began.

Mohrman asked if the well location had always been the same. Callan stated it had moved a couple of times; however, it had been in its current location for quite a while. Mohrman asked if the NRD was getting anything from the well and Callan stated the NRD was getting recharge water pumped to Christopher's Cove.

Coffey asked why water would be piped from the canal north of 8th Street and crossed under the street. Callan stated it was due to the location of utilities.

Citta stated there would be more updates on the project during Executive Session.

Drought Management Plan

Naprstek stated that, based off the input received from the Mud Creek WFPO virtual meeting, the stakeholder meeting portion of the project was on hold until a public meeting could be held. He said it was practically impossible to virtually try to assemble a drought tournament, have in-depth management discussions regarding what people are willing to live should a drought occur, and define drought for the area. He said that Cam Conrad, Water Modeling Coordinator, had investigated Water Sustainability Fund funding and it appeared staff could just write an annual report and hold off until face-to-face meetings could occur. He said there were no more requirements for proceeding with this plan until possibly in February/March of 2021.

New Irrigated Acres Allocation

Naprstek reported that 49 applications were received totaling 2,015.6 acres. Dell Harris, Water Resources Specialist, said that the number of acres applied for was down from previous years, reporting that the North Loup Basin received 852 acres, Beaver Basin received 690 acres, and Middle Loup Basin received 473 acres. Naprstek said that field staff would be visiting the sites and taking pictures. He said that staff should have a recommendation prepared for the next Committee meeting.

Monitoring Well Installations

Naprstek had showed maps to the Committee highlighting locations of groundwater irrigation and high nitrates in SubArea 30. He said he hoped to soon have preliminary well sites identified across Area 30 for measuring the aquifer at shallow, medium and deep levels and hoped to get bids out in late October/early November and get the wells installed by the end of the year, weather permitting. He said some additional shallow wells with monitoring equipment would also be installed for the Columbus Recharge Project.

LLNRD Long-Range Implementation Plan

Naprstek stated that the Water Resources Committee had not made a motion but had reviewed the plan. Naprstek highlighted the water portions of the plan, saying the rest of the document pertained to projects. The Committee had discussed the budget for this year and next five years. He said there would be more discussion during Programs/Projects and a motion would be made at that time.

PROGRAMS/PROJECTS COMMITTEE

North Loup Flood Mitigation

Kruse reported that North Loup was working on an interlocal agreement for the Mira Creek channel improvements and the North Loup interior drainage improvements. Callan stated that the Village would act at their Board meeting in October and that JEO had a contract ready to be signed.

City of Sargent Area Drainage Issues

Callan reported that a copy of the interlocal agreement with the City of Sargent was in the Supplemental Agenda, but there were some typographical errors that needed correcting. Callan stated the City was agreeable to the 75%/25% split but counsel felt it would be better to put the percentages only in the contract, so the interlocal agreement could be used for other work. He said the percentages might change for other projects going forward. He said the City of Sargent was agreeable to the changes.

Amsberry motioned, seconded by Eschliman, to approve, with corrections, the Interlocal Agreement for Sargent Flood Mitigation Project. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.

Sargent East IPA Drainage

Kruse reported that staff was finalizing the agreement for JEO's work. Callan stated there would be a meeting and that the signed contract with JEO was completed and they were working on putting together landowner meetings. He said they would meet on September 30th in Ansley, prior to the WFPO meeting.

Sandhills Task Force Project

Callan stated he had received an email from the Sandhills Task Force stating they were backing out of the proposed streambank stabilization project. Callan said the project would have addressed streambank erosion north of Ericson, on private property, where the river was eroding into an existing pond. Due to concern about the Western Prairie Fringed Orchid habitat, the entities involved decided they were not interested in pursuing the project.

Platte County Flood Zone Buyout

No updates were available. Mohrman stated his property had been surveyed.

LLNRD Long-Range Implementation Plan

Kruse reported that the Committee reviewed the plan and had recommended Board approval.

Anderson motioned, seconded by Boesch, to approve the LLNRD Long-Range Implementation Plan as presented. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.

Callan stated he could show the full numbers version if anyone wanted to see it. Podolak asked about the difference in the charts. Callan explained that one chart showed the prior budget and the other reflected is approximately a 5% increase going forward.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Litigation Update

Callan reported he did not have any new information on the Platte Republican Diversion and that there would be no action until the new DNR director took over in November. He thought it had been refiled but may not be through DNR's review process yet.

Boesch asked who the new director was and Citta stated it was Tom Riley from Flatwater Group.

New Hires

Callan reported that there were no new hires.

Non-Action Reports

Callan reported that he heard from Dean Rasmussen and he said "Hi" to everyone. Callan also reported that staff was working on getting iPads for Directors ordered and after they are received, staff would be able to load information for Directors to the website enabling them to access it.

NARD REPORT

Director's Report

Eschliman reported that the building NARD was looking at was sold, as well as a few others they were looking at. He said they were looking at a different building now and it would be presented to the NARD Board on Tuesday to see if they could negotiate a price. He said they were looking more into buying than renting due to high rent costs.

NRC REPORT

Commissioner's Report - Hadenfeldt

Hadenfeldt reported that there would be a scoring meeting next Tuesday to get final scores put together. He said the Commission meeting should be sometime in October. Lukasiewicz asked what the total of all the projects was. Hadenfeldt did not have an exact

number but reported that, combined, they were under the limit available to spend, so it was possible that all projects would be funded. He said seven project applications were submitted—two large and five small, totaling \$5M to \$6M. Hadenfeldt did not know why so few projects were applied for.

RC&D REPORT

Adams expressed concerns that he may have to resign his position on the RC&D Board due to missed meetings. Thoene assured the Board that there have not been many meetings and that most meetings had been online and just to pay the bills. Adams asked if the collection for electronics was held. Thoene said that they did hold the collection and got a straight truck size load collected. Kruse asked if a tire collection would be done this year and it was reported that the RC&D would not be holding one, but there would be one in Columbus this year. Adams stated he would contact the RC&D office and would attend when they hold a meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/FUTURE MEETING TOPICS

No announcements or future meeting topics were heard.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Smith motioned, seconded by Eschliman, to enter into Executive Session to discuss legal issues and proprietary business matters at 5:53 p.m. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.

Adams motioned, seconded by Boesch, to exit Executive Session at 6:49 p.m. with no action taken. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Board, Chairman Citta declared the meeting adjourned at 6:51 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 October 22, 2020, at 5:00 p.m., at the Headquarters Office in Ord, Nebraska.

Henry J. Thoene
Secretary