

MINUTES

LOWER LOUP NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

April 22, 2021

Ord, Nebraska

The April 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 April 22, 2021. Chairman Citta called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Directors in attendance:

James C. Adams
Darwin B. Anderson
Beth Boesch
John Coffey
N. Richard Hadenfeldt
Gary A. Kruse
Todd Nitsch
Chad J. Podolak
Dean G. Thede
Rick Vlach

Rollie D. Amsberry, Treasurer
Robert L. Bauer
Joseph L. Citta, Chairman
Jim Eschliman, Vice Chairman
Randy Kauk
Larry Mohrman
Alan D. Petersen
Gerald Smith
Henry J. Thoene, Secretary

Director in attendance via teleconference (voting):

Matt Lukasiewicz

Director absent:

Timothy E. Bartak

Staff in attendance:

Russell G. Callan, General Manager
Irene F. Kreifels, Administrative Assistant
Larry D. Schultz, I&E Coordinator
Dell R. Harris, Water Resources Specialist
Jason Moudry, Water Programs Specialist
Brian Kolar, Projects Technician

Tylr Naprstek, Assistant General Manager
Kim A. Lyons, Financial Secretary
Cameron Conrad, Water Modeling Coord.
Richard L. Woollen, District Forester
V. Anne Freeman, Water Programs Sec.

Guest in attendance:

James Nelson, Cairo

Guest in attendance via teleconference:

Sherry Asche, RC, NRCS, Albion

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 website, and in the eight field office locations.

ROLL CALL

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

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Chairman Citta stated that Bartak would be absent and that Thede would be late.

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

MINUTES

Chairman Citta asked for corrections and/or additions to the March 25, 2021, Board meeting minutes. Coffey pointed out a correction to the motion regarding the Genoa Water Quantity Issue.

Anderson motioned, seconded by Vlach, to approve the March 25, 2021, Board meeting minutes, with correction. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Russell Callan, General Manager, highlighted expenditures of \$166.98 to Productivity Plus for shipping; \$9,186.17 to WISH Nebraska for drip supplies; \$14,632.00 to USGS for stream gauges at Arnold, Gates, and Pressey Park; \$2,542.50 to Baird Holm for work on the Platte Republican Diversion and the personnel policy; and \$50,037.26 to JEO Consulting Group for WFPO work, the North Loup Flood Study and work on the Sargent East IPA.

Boesch asked about the lien search expense on the Profit and Loss Statement. Callan stated those were fees related to acre transfers that are billed to the producers.

Eschliman motioned, seconded by Amsberry, to approve the April 22, 2021, Treasurer's Report. Motion carried by electronic vote. Directors voting yes: Adams, Amsberry, Anderson, Bauer, Boesch, Citta, Eschliman, Hadenfeldt, Kauk, Kruse, Lukasiewicz, Mohrman, Nitsch, Petersen, Podolak, Smith, Thoene, Vlach. Director abstaining: Coffey. Directors absent: Thede, Bartak.

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

None

FORESTER'S REPORT

Richard Woollen, District Forester, reported that most of the handplant tree orders had been picked up and that machine planting started at the end of last week. Woollen reported that the buffer strip payments for Spring were being processed and would be sent out shortly. He stated that there were several producers that were re-enrolling and some new applicants.

NRCS REPORT

Sherry Asche, NRCS, reported that offices are at 50% capacity so the NRD secretary and one NRCS staff member are allowed in the office at this time. She also reported that their staff is working on the EQIP contracts that have been approved and that CSP rankings have been submitted and producers would be notified soon. She said that they were working on status reviews and that RC vacancies were advertised again.

INFORMATION & EDUCATION REPORT

State Envirothon

Larry Schultz, I&E Coordinator, reported that the State Envirothon would be held next week near Wahoo and that St. Paul, Burwell and Ord teams had qualified. He said that among the activities was a real-world problem-solving issue and teams had reached out to NRD staff for information on groundwater issues. Schultz stated that he would be in the scoring room and Eschliman would be assisting with the contest as well.

Quarterly Statewide I&E Meeting

Schultz reported that the Quarterly I&E meeting was held April 14-15 at the new NARD building. He said they discussed the State and National Envirothon, and it was decided that the National contest would be held virtually.

He also reported that ACE Camp would be held June 6-9 at Halsey this year and will be following UNL's COVID-19 safety guidelines. Also, the Nebraska Youth Range Camp will be held June 7-10.

ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Davis Creek

Tylr Naprstek, Assistant General Manager, reported that, starting the first weekend in May, reserve sites are filling up and that the new boat launch would be deployed after lake levels start to come up. He also reported that the entry road has been muddy, and staff was spreading gravel to help hold the road in place.

Cover Crop Study

Naprstek reported that Moudry had been working on a WSF request and that Moudry and Ruterbories were working on summarizing data collected in the fields in Buffalo County. He also reported that they would be working on getting the equipment back in the field around May 1st.

Director Thede arrived at 5:21 p.m.

A map was shown of the cover crop analysis that Ruterbories put together to show the various cover crops in the area. The analysis shows that cover crop usage was up 12% and in previous years had shown 7% and 5% use across all of LLNRD's portion of Buffalo County.

WATER RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Groundwater Quality Management Area Update

Naprstek showed an abridged version of the Water Quality Report. He stated that positive results were being seen in Area 28 and reviewed the long-term analysis of the area.

Naprstek stated that in 2012, samples were taken in almost every field and prior to that, fewer samples were collected. He showed a timeline of droughts, floods, and flowmeter requirements. Analysis has shown that the number of fields exceeding UNL nitrogen levels were down. Naprstek reported that Callan and other managers were working with UNL to review their formula to ensure it credits existing nitrogen levels in the soil. There have also been other studies that staff had reviewed showing that lower levels of nitrogen application can be used to produce a good crop.

The NRD rule enforcement process was reviewed along with discussion of producers who are in the pre-complaint process in Areas 28, 29, and 30 for fertilizer requirements and reporting.

2020 Water Quality Report – Approval

Naprstek reported the 2020 Water Quality Report had been distributed to Directors and the Committee made a recommendation of approval.

Smith motioned, seconded by Coffey, to approve the 2020 Water Quality Report. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.

UNL Isotopy Study in Area 30 – Daniel Snow Update

It was reported that Dan Snow was unable to attend so they were hoping he could give an update at the next Committee meeting.

Columbus Recharge Project

Callan met with HDR and the contractor for the project and are planning on a May 3rd start date. Naprstek reported that pipe was being delivered and that Callan and Kolar had flagged the property border. He also reported that staff had been mowing down debris and prepping the area. Bauer asked if the culvert under 8th street had been cleaned out and Callan stated he did not know for sure. Naprstek reported that the final monitoring well had been installed. Boesch asked about any upcoming public communication on the project. Callan stated he was working to get some May dates set.

Lower Platte River Basin Coalition Report

Naprstek reported that the 2020 Lower Platte River Basin Coalition Report was received.

Smith motioned, seconded by Thoene, to approve the Lower Platte River Basin Coalition Report. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.

Naprstek stated the Coalition would be holding a meeting at the NRD office on April 27th.

Other

Callan stated that the Kroeger land in the District was being sold and that Kroeger's wanted to keep all mineral and water rights after the land sold; however, he said in Nebraska you cannot separate land from water. Because of this, he reached out to the attorney working with the sale who was unaware of the restrictions set by the current owners. It was reported the land sale had been cancelled.

PROGRAMS/PROJECTS COMMITTEE

North Loup Flood Mitigation-Mira Creek WFPO

Kruse reported that proposals had been received from four groups to complete the project and that JEO had ranked the best.

Kolar explained the WFPO and what was being done to prevent flooding. He showed a breakdown of the proposals that had been received and went over the aspects that staff felt were good or bad with each proposal. Callan reminded the Board that this was being done with a 100% federal grant; however, the money would pass through the NRD budget. It was reported that the WFPO would pay for engineering and construction and the NRD would be responsible for land rights and permitting. Boesch asked about maintenance. Callan stated federal money may be available to use. Callan stated that the proposals were available if anyone wanted to fully review them.

Kruse motioned, seconded by Boesch, to accept JEO's bid proposal of \$543,237.00 to complete the Mira Creek WFPO project. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.

Village of Sargent Flood Project

It was reported that the City was waiting on the BRIC grant that would be awarded in September, 2021.

Sargent East IPA

Kruse reported that JEO had requested to meet and review documents that would be mailed to landowners. Callan stated the NRD would review with JEO and then mail documents to landowners that stated project benefits and associated cost prior to the Public Hearing which is expected to be held at the May Board meeting.

Building Addition

Kruse reported that plans were reviewed, and the Committee members did a walk-through of the area to be remodeled. Callan stated there were new cost estimates due to COVID-19 related price increases. Kruse asked about a timeline for proposals. Callan stated a pre-bid walk-through could be done May 5th with a tentative bid date of May 20th and that the NRD would need to send the project out for contractor bid to get exact costs and see material availability. Callan stated it could be done in phases but there would be savings if done all at once.

Kruse motioned, seconded by Mohrman, to approve the architect plans and send out RFBs on the project. Motion carried by electronic vote. Directors voting yes: Amsberry, Anderson, Bauer, Boesch, Citta, Coffey, Eschliman, Hadenfeldt, Kauk, Kruse,

Lukasiewicz, Mohrman, Nitsch, Petersen, Podolak, Smith, Thede, Thoene, Vlach. Director abstaining: Adams. Directors absent: Bartak.

Loup Public Power Fishing Pier Participation

Kruse reported that LPPD was putting in a fishing pier at Lake North and was asking for \$3,000 maximum participation from the NRD. He stated there would be more information available at the next Board meeting.

Mason City Sanitary Sewer

Callan reported that Mason City was planning sanitary sewer system improvements and since it may be pertinent to the Mud Creek WFPO project, JEO had been notified.

St. Edward Channel Cleanout

Kruse stated that Callan had talked to the mayor of St. Edward and they were working with Kirkham Michael who has completed a preliminary flood study and has identified portions of the Beaver Creek channel to be cleaned out. Further information and a participation request would be presented in May.

It was noted that entities requesting assistance need to come to the LLNRD before the project is started.

Platte County Flood Zone Buyout Program

Callan stated nothing had come through yet. FEMA was still working through the process.

Lillian Creek

Kruse reported that Callan gave an outline of what had been done thus far and that the Committee felt it would be good for the entire Board to discuss the project, possibly at a retreat.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Litigation Update

Callan stated the Platte Republican Diversion process was still going on but had not gotten any further updates. He also reported that he had a conversation with Riley, and they are working on instream flow application.

New Hires

Callan stated that Christy Berghorst and James McBride had started as tree planters and that Mike Lorenz had made an offer to a water sampler but was not yet hired.

Non-action Reports

Future meeting topics and the Awards Dinner were deferred for later discussions.

NARD REPORT

Eschliman reported that he would be an oral presentation judge at the Envirothon and that there was a stop, loss and risk meeting yesterday in Lincoln. He said they were working on figuring insurance increases and that there would be another meeting in May, so he would know more then. He reported that the Basin Tour would be at Papio June 7-8.

NRC REPORT

Hadenfeldt reported that there was a meeting held yesterday, but there was not anything to report on. Citta stated there would be another meeting in June and a two-day meeting in August. Hadenfeldt reported that the budget form from Governor Ricketts was received and they would be getting the same amount of money for the next two years.

RC&D REPORT

Adams reported there was not much to update; however, the RC&D was working on various collection projects.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/FUTURE MEETING TOPICS

Callan announced that this was the last month that teleconference attendance was allowed for meetings unless there was an emergency.

Adams asked how the inter-basin transfer was going. Citta stated there was a hearing coming up.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Board, Chairman Citta declared the meeting adjourned at 6:33 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 May 27, 2021, at 5:00 p.m., at the Headquarters Office in Ord, Nebraska.

Henry J. Thoene
Secretary