

# MINUTES

## LOWER LOUP NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

September 23, 2021

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 23, 2021. Chairman Citta called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

### CALL TO ORDER

#### Directors in attendance:

James C. Adams  
Robert L. Bauer  
Joseph L. Citta, Chairman  
Jim Eschliman, Vice Chairman  
Randy Kauk  
Matt Lukasiewicz  
Gerald Smith  
Rick Vlach

Rollie D. Amsberry, Treasurer  
Beth Boesch  
John Coffey  
N. Richard Hadenfeldt  
Gary A. Kruse  
Chad J. Podolak  
Dean G. Thede

#### Directors in attendance via teleconference (non-voting):

Darwin B. Anderson

Henry J. Thoene, Secretary

#### Directors absent:

Timothy E. Bartak  
Todd Nitsch

Larry Mohrman  
Alan D. Petersen

#### Staff in attendance:

Russell G. Callan, General Manager  
Irene F. Kreifels, Administrative Assistant  
Dell R. Harris, Water Resources Specialist  
Cameron Conrad, Water Modeling Coord.  
Brian Kolar, Projects Technician  
V. Anne Freeman, Water Programs Sec.

Tylr Naprstek, Asst. General Manager  
Kim A. Lyons, Financial Secretary  
Larry D. Schultz, I&E Coordinator  
Jason Moudry, Water Programs Specialist  
Alan Bartels, Information Specialist

Guest in attendance:

Bryce Bauer, LDC, NRCS, Ord

James Nelson, Cairo

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

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Citta stated that Directors Anderson, Bartak, Mohrman, Nitsch, Petersen, and Thoene had asked to be excused and Adams would be arriving late.

**Smith motioned, seconded by Eschliman, to excuse absent Directors Anderson, Bartak, Mohrman, Nitsch, Petersen and Thoene. Motion carried by electronic vote: Directors voting yes: Amsberry, Bauer, Boesch, Citta, Coffey, Eschliman, Hadenfeldt, Kauk, Kruse, Lukasiewicz, Podolak, Smith, Thede and Vlach. Directors in attendance via teleconference: Anderson, Thoene. Directors absent: Adams, Bartak, Mohrman, Nitsch, Petersen.**

MINUTES

Chairman Citta asked for corrections and/or additions to the August 26, 2021, Board meeting minutes. None were heard.

**Boesch motioned, seconded by Thede, to approve the August 26, 2021, Board meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.**

TREASURER'S REPORT

Russell Callan, General Manager, highlighted expenditures of \$7,783.78 to Big Red Printing for newsletter postage; \$8,744.00 to USGS for stream gauges; \$11,268.47 to HDR Engineering and \$479,170.50 to Rutjens Construction for work on the Columbus Project; \$9,778.05 to JEO for work done on the Hazard Mitigation Plan; \$46,844.33 to JEO for work on Mud Creek and Mira Creek WFPOs; \$12,800.00 to EA Engineering for work on the Cover Crop Study; numerous payments for Wildlife Habitat cost-share; and \$5,000.00 to Ansley Public Schools for Community Forestry cost-share.

Kauk asked about the term length on the Wildlife Habitat cost-share. Callan explained that the program could be 1-year, 3-year, or 5-year with the option to re-enroll at the end of the term. Naprstek added that the land must be in CRP to qualify. Callan stated that it coincides with the Nebraska Game and Parks Access Incentive Program. Vlach asked if the land was public access. Callan stated it was.

**Kruse motioned, seconded by Kauk, to approve the September 23, 2021, Treasurer's Report. Motion Carried by electronic 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

None

## FORESTER'S REPORT

Richard Woollen, District Forester, was not present to report. Callan highlighted the Community Forestry cost-share for Ansley Schools in Woollen's report. Hadenfeldt asked if the project was an inventory program. Callan stated it was done to assist with landscaping and tree placement.

## NRCS REPORT

Bryce Bauer, NRCS, Ord, reported that staff was working on CSP payments, as the deadline was in the first couple weeks of October. He also reported that NRCS staff is mandated to be vaccinated against COVID-19 by November 2, 2021. Bauer reported staff was working with a mapping company on brush management activities to determine the percentage of cedar trees on land, which would help with mitigation efforts. Bauer also reported that Kraig Beck of the Spalding office had retired, so his position would be advertised at some point.

Eschliman asked how the vaccine mandate would affect NRD secretaries. Bauer stated they must be fully vaccinated or tested every 3 days. He stated he was awaiting more specific guidance on vaccines and testing requirements.

Podolak asked if there were any updates on the extra conservation money that was being released. Bauer stated he had heard there would be an increase in funding shortly but was waiting for more information at this time.

Coffey asked if NRCS offices would be open if everyone was vaccinated or being tested. Bauer stated they would still be operating at half staff at least until the end of the year and plans would be evaluated at that time.

## INFORMATION & EDUCATION REPORT

Larry Schultz, I&E Coordinator, introduced Alan Bartels, Information Specialist. Bartels stated he comes to the NRD after working for *Nebraska Life* magazine for several years.

### Area IV Range Judging

Schultz reported that the local teams did well at the Range Judging Contest and stated that the State Contest would be September 29<sup>th</sup>.

### North Central Land Judging

Schultz reported that North Central Land Judging would be held on October 13<sup>th</sup> and that State Land Judging would be held October 20<sup>th</sup>. He also reported the Lower Loup NRD will host both competitions next year.

Adams arrived at 5:27 p.m.

## ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

### Davis Creek

Tylr Naprstek, Assistant General Manager, reported that the reserve spots at Davis Creek were full for the weekend; however, there were still walk-in sites available. He reported the lake was nearing winter elevation and both docks remain functional and would stay in place until ice begins to form. He reported that staff would begin winterization of shower houses in the first part of October.

### Blue-Green Algae Monitoring

Naprstek reported that Calamus had tested high for algae again, this time almost double the limit. He stated that staff would be looking into testing house wells and checking septic systems to see if there is a larger spread issue that needs to be investigated. Kauk asked if it was the NRD's responsibility to find the cause. Naprstek and Callan stated that if wells at homes are showing high nitrates, there are extra nutrients or nitrates in the area that may need to be addressed for public safety reasons.

### Chemigation & Water Sampling

Naprstek reported that chemigation was winding down for the year and as of September 17<sup>th</sup> 1,379 site inspections had been completed and 3,400 applications were received. He reported there were only 14 failures this year. Kauk asked if there was a large increase in surface water this year. Naprstek stated there were a roughly a couple hundred applications.

Naprstek also reported that staff had collected 1,600 water samples and would be completing monitoring well sampling in the next two weeks. Naprstek reported that Moudry

would be working on water quality testing for the Columbus Project so impacts from the recharge area could be monitored. He said that domestic well sampling would be taking place until the end of the year.

## WATER RESOURCES COMMITTEE

### Water Quality Studies – Area 29 Isotope, Area 30 Vadose

Naprstek reported that the Committee had discussed nitrates in Area 29 in Wheeler County. He stated that the data showed that the area would likely need to go into Phase 3 management soon. A presentation was shown mapping the well locations that were tested and the levels of nitrates. It was discussed that an isotope study would be useful in determining the cause of high nitrate levels. Naprstek reported that several fields were licensed to have effluent application and highlighted a large cattle facility just outside of District boundaries. He said a hog finishing unit that was partially in the boundaries could be a factor in the nitrate levels, also.

**Smith motioned, seconded by Adams, to conduct an isotope study in Area 29. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.**

### Long-Range Implementation Plan – Water Components

Naprstek reported the Committee reviewed the *Water* portion of the Long-Range Implementation Plan and its components. Callan stated it would be put in front of the Board for approval next month.

### Drought Management Plan

Naprstek reported that the Drought Management Workshop was held in North Loup with several stakeholders present. Callan stated the attendees were very engaged and there was very good dialogue. Naprstek stated there would be additional meetings and that JEO would be working on the data and would add their input and meet with the group again to go over potential options.

### New Irrigated Acres Allocation

Naprstek reported that the application timeline for new irrigated acres had ended and there were 83 applications received for a total of 5,138 acres. He said that staff would be visiting the sites and would work on scoring. There would be more information for the Board in October.

### Columbus Recharge Project

Kolar showed rocks that came out of the well site during drilling. Kolar reviewed photos from the drilling process and showed the site after it was completed. Discussion was held on the capacity of the well, well depth, and pipe sizes used to transport water. Photos were also shown of the channel that staff had been working to clean out.

## PROGRAMS/PROJECTS COMMITTEE

### Cornhusker Public Power – Pibel Easement

Kruse reported that the Cornhusker Public Power easement request was discussed again. Naprstek showed a request letter that was submitted and showed an aerial view of the location explaining where the easement being requested was located.

**Kruse motioned, seconded by Eschliman, to grant the requested easement at Pibel Lake to Cornhusker Public Power. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.**

### FEMA Buyout Project

Kruse reported that there was a meeting in Columbus that Callan and Coffey had attended, and that FEMA approval was obtained to move forward with the process. An aerial view of the property was shown. Callan stated that the purchase would be covered 75% from FEMA funds.

### Sargent Flood Project

Kruse reported that the BRIC grant was turned down due to insufficient grant funds. He said that Sargent was told to reapply next year.

### North Loup Flood Mitigation

Kruse reported that JEO held another meeting. Naprstek stated that staff had been working on a map and looking at bridge capacity. Callan stated that a copy of the map would be provided to the town as well as in handouts for the public showing the capacity of each existing bridge.

### Thalheim Property

Callan stated that a quitclaim deed has been drawn up and submitted to the landowner's attorney.

### Long-Range Implementation Plan

Kruse reported that Naprstek reviewed the *Projects* portion of the plan with the Committee.

### Mud Creek WFPO

Maps were shown of the proposed dam locations for the project. Naprstek stated he and Kolar had met with JEO and there would be upcoming meetings to discuss the potential dams. Maps were shown highlighting the flooding in Ansley and it was discussed how the dams could

be used to divert the water from town. Callan stated this project would basically take Ansley completely out of a flood area. Naprstek stated that landowners would be compensated for access and structures on their land.

Callan showed successful dry dam projects near Curtis and Stockville that were completed through the WFPO process.

Naprstek stated that there would be similar action proposed near Broken Bow.

## MANAGER'S REPORT

### Litigation Update

No update

### New Hires

Callan reported that Alan Bartels had started and that Eleanor Berger would be starting October 4<sup>th</sup>, to fill the Secretary position in Spalding. He also reported that staff would begin interviewing for the Field Technician positions soon and that a Field Technician position had opened at Headquarters for which advertising would begin.

### Non-action Reports

Kauk asked how the building project was going. Callan stated that the well had been abandoned and there would be a pre-construction meeting on the 30<sup>th</sup>.

## NARD REPORT

Eschliman reported that Hall of Fame inductees were announced at Husker Harvest Days and that awards would be given at the NARD conference in Kearney.

## NRC REPORT

Hadenfeldt reported that the scoring committee had been established and he was not longer on it; however, Citta had been appointed.

## RC&D REPORT

Adams reported that the Clothing Closet would be open the 24<sup>th</sup> and that there had been a Flea Market on August 21<sup>st</sup>. He also reported that the plumbing and electric lines were installed at the site of the new American Legion Post in Burwell and that they still had tickets available for the tractor raffle.

Adams reported that they recently held a cardboard recycling event and had applied for a waste reduction/litter reduction recycling grant.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS / FUTURE MEETING TOPICS

It was announced that starting in November, the Board meeting would begin at 4:00 p.m. Thoene thanked staff for setting up online access since he could not be present in person.

## ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Board, Chairman Citta declared the meeting adjourned at 6:37 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 28, 2021, at 5:00 p.m., at the Headquarters Office in Ord, Nebraska.

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Henry J. Thoene  
Secretary