

# MINUTES

## LOWER LOUP NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

October 28, 2021

Ord, Nebraska

The October 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 October 28, 2021. Chairman Citta called the meeting to order at 5:08 p.m.

### CALL TO ORDER

#### Directors in attendance:

James C. Adams  
Robert L. Bauer  
Joseph L. Citta, Chairman  
Jim Eschliman, Vice Chairman  
Randy Kauk  
Todd Nitsch  
Chad J. Podolak  
Dean G. Thede  
Rick Vlach

Rollie D. Amsberry, Treasurer  
Beth Boesch  
John Coffey  
N. Richard Hadenfeldt  
Larry Mohrman  
Alan D. Petersen  
Gerald Smith  
Henry J. Thoene, Secretary

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

Darwin B. Anderson

#### Directors absent:

Timothy E. Bartak  
Matt Lukasiewicz

Gary A. Kruse

#### Staff in attendance:

Russell G. Callan, General Manager  
Irene F. Kreifels, Administrative Assistant  
Dell R. Harris, Water Resources Specialist  
Cameron Conrad, Water Modeling Coord.  
Alan Bartels, Information Specialist  
Richard L. Woollen, District Forester

Tylr Naprstek, Asst. General Manager  
Kim A. Lyons, Financial Secretary  
Larry D. Schultz, I&E Coordinator  
Jason Moudry, Water Programs Specialist  
V. Anne Freeman, Water Programs Sec.  
Lauren Keefe, Ass't Conservation Forester

Guests in attendance:

Bryce Bauer, LDC, NRCS, Ord  
Corey Schaaf, Burwell

Tyler Kaps, Lammers, Abel & Kaps

VERIFICATION OF MEETING NOTICE AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chairman Citta asked for verification of the meeting notice. General Manager Russell Callan amended the agenda to include an item on Redistricting and stated 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: Adams, Amsberry, Bauer, Boesch, Citta, Coffey, Eschliman, Hadenfeldt, Kauk, Mohrman, Nitsch, Petersen, Podolak, Smith, Thede, Thoene, and Vlach. Directors Absent: Anderson, Bartak, Kruse, Lukasiewicz.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Citta stated that Directors Anderson, Bartak, Kruse, and Lukasiewicz had asked to be excused.

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

MINUTES

Chairman Citta asked for corrections and/or additions to the September 23, 2021, Board meeting minutes. None were heard.

**Thede motioned, seconded by Vlach, to approve the September 23, 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 \$6,400.00 to EA Engineering for the cover crop study; \$3,081.72 to HDR for the Columbus Project; \$9,744.59 to JEO for the WFPO projects; \$132,670.00 to Cornerstone Mapping for infrared photography; \$5,148.90 to JEO for Drought Study; and \$13,658.30 to Downey Drilling for monitoring wells.

**Eschliman motioned, seconded by Petersen, to approve the October 28, 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

## FY 2021 AUDIT REPORT

Tyler Kaps of Lammers, Abel and Kaps, stated he appreciated the work the NRD staff put into compiling the information for the audit. Kaps gave a detailed explanation of the audit to the Directors and answered questions that were presented. He stated the audit turned out well with no discrepancies. The full audit report can be viewed at the office of the Lower Loup Natural Resources District during regular business hours.

**Smith motioned, seconded by Adams, to accept the FY 2021 Audit Report. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.**

## FORESTER'S REPORT

Richard Woollen, District Forester, reported on the annual NRD Forestry Workshop which was held at the Upper Big Blue NRD. He said that NRDs and other entities that coordinate tree programs -- including Bessey Nursery, Nebraska Forest Service, NRCS, and NARD -- gather and get updated reports on anything that has changed. He also reported that Fall container tree sales were completed and explained that container trees were larger; however, sold in smaller quantities and that different species were sold as hand plants than are regularly available. He stated that he and Lauren Keefe, Assistant Conservation Forester, were currently working on planning windbreaks.

## NRCS REPORT

Bryce Bauer, NRCS, Ord, reported that staff was still working on CSP plans and they wanted to have them all wrapped up by the end of the year. He also reported that Scott Fusby is the new Wetland Specialist from Lincoln and is working in the Ord office. He said wetland determinations are currently being done by a team instead of locally.

Bauer reported that offices were still staffed at 50% capacity and that the deadline for mandated vaccines was November 22<sup>nd</sup>. He said there were some employees that were requesting exemptions; however, they had not received the rules for exemption yet.

Bauer said that Fall construction was going well and there were sediment basins being built and pipeline being installed. He also reported that they were working on writing burn plans.

## INFORMATION & EDUCATION REPORT

### North Central Land Judging

Alan Bartels, Information Specialist, reported that he attended the land judging in Middle Niobrara on October 13<sup>th</sup> and helped with scoring the contest as well as photographing the participants.

### 2021 State Land Judging Contest

Bartels also reported that he went to Tri-Basin NRD for state land judging on October 20<sup>th</sup> and photographed and scored that contest as well. He said Fullerton can compete at the National Land Judging Contest in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, May 3-5, 2022. Schultz said the LLNRD would award a scholarship to the team to help defray expenses.

### Hazard Mitigation Plan

Larry Schultz, I&E Coordinator, reported that work continued on the Hazard Mitigation Plan and that there would be more meetings in November. He said each participant needs to take part in one meeting and can make changes to their profiles and include new areas of mitigation.

## ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

### Davis Creek

Tyler Naprstek, Assistant General Manager, reported that facilities winterization had been completed and that there were still campers using the area. He reviewed revenue numbers and stated that the Bureau had given good feedback on the improvements that have been made.

### Upcoming Field Days

Naprstek reported that there was a Cedar Tree, Manure & Soil Health Field Day on October 25<sup>th</sup> and that attendance was good. He said that there was good discussion on soil health as well as using manure vs. commercial fertilizer. He said Woollen gave a sawmill demonstration.

Naprstek said that invitation postcards were sent out for the December 9<sup>th</sup> Nitrogen and Water Management Field Day that will be held in Columbus for the Water Quality Management Areas 29 & 30. He also reported that this would count as a nitrogen certification class.

### National Groundwater Monitoring Network

Naprstek reported that Fall static water level reading was almost complete and that staff had been collecting samples for various wells chosen by NDEE and CSD for the Groundwater Monitoring Network.

## WATER RESOURCES COMMITTEE

### Boone County Well Interference Area

Naprstek reported that there had been complaints in the Petersburg area from landowners stating that their wells were having trouble from all the irrigation that was going on. He said that static water levels were up in that area; however, when the aquifer is stressed, some shallower wells may experience trouble pumping.

Cam Conrad, Water Modeling Coordinator, showed locations and recorded drawdown levels of the various wells in the area where complaints were received. Pumping rates and irrigation drawdown were discussed. Conrad showed the location of the area of concern that was in the Lower Loup NRD and the Committee suggested not allowing for new development in this area.

**Smith motioned, seconded by Adams, to implement a new restricted area in northern Boone County and that new transfers, supplemental wells, and new irrigated acres not be allowed in this area.**

Mohrman asked if this would be in effect forever or if it would get revisited. Callan stated that these areas are usually continuously monitored to see if the area needs to be redefined. Callan added that this had happened before in this area in dry years.

Petersen asked if the NRD could permanently remedy the situation. Callan stated that pumping limitations could be implemented. Kauk asked about additional acres being added in this area. Callan stated there were additional acres being allowed; however, none with any new wells. Callan added that there was water there, but some of the wells weren't drilled deep enough to get to it with some being only 250 feet, but better water was at 400 feet.

**Motion was carried by electronic vote, all preset voting yes.**

### New Irrigated Acres Allocation

Naprstek reported on the new irrigated acres applications that were received and showed a presentation of the application areas, reviewing the applications received for each basin. He reported that the technicians inspected all fields listed on applications. He highlighted three applications that were received in the new area that was just designated. Figures are shown below:

<u>Sub-Basin</u>	<u>Acres Allowed</u>	<u>Recommended Acres to be Granted</u>	<u># Applications</u>
North Loup	1,500	1,495.24	23
Middle	750	713.39	8
Beaver	750	742.33	14

**Smith motioned, seconded by Thoene, to approve the new irrigated acres applications, including the three applications that were not hydrologically connected to the streams. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.**

Long-Range Implementation Plan – Water Section

Naprstek reported that a draft of the Water Section of the plan was sent out for review and that once approved, it would be sent out to other agencies. He stated the plan included a 5% budget increase for next year.

**Smith motioned to approve the Water Section of the Long-Range Implementation Plan. Motion was rescinded to allow for one motion for entire plan.**

Area 30 Soil Isotope Study

Naprstek reported on the isotope study that was completed by Dan Snow of the Water Science Center and showed the proposed vadose sampling areas for 2022. He explained that the sampling would help with future fertilizer application recommendations and showed the modeling results. He said that there would be a full-time grad student working on the study.

**Smith motioned, seconded by Boesch, to approve an Area 30 Isotope Study in 2022.**

Coffey asked how sample areas were determined. Naprstek stated that Snow had a good idea of the area, and it would depend on if producers allowed them to sample. Citta stated this would help the Board to make reasonable recommendations with more detailed data.

**Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.**

Columbus Recharge Project

It was reported that the Bureau of Reclamation report had been submitted for grant reimbursement. Naprstek reported that someone hit the pipe in the cove, so buoy markers were installed. Callan stated there was a complaint of water ponding due to the project, and it was discovered that there was a drain grate that was covered in grass that was causing the issue.

PROGRAMS/PROJECTS COMMITTEE

Sargent Flood Project Grants

Callan reported that the BRIC grant was denied; however, the city could apply again, so they are working on reviewing other grants that they could apply for. He stated that there was a Hazard Mitigation Grant available and Water Sustainability Fund grants could be sought to cover a portion of the remaining costs. He stated that the NRD would carry the grants on our budget if approved by the Board.

**Eschliman motioned, seconded by Amsberry, to approve application for grant funds for the Sargent Flood Project. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.**

#### North Loup Flood Mitigation

Callan reported that JEO was still working on the project. He highlighted a map in the Board room that showed the bridges of concern and showed the water flow capacity. He stated that the NRD also provided a map to the Village of North Loup as well as pamphlets to hand out to those interested. Callan stated that JEO was gathering more information to show the capacity of the channel and break it down. Naprstek stated there had been an agency meeting Tuesday afternoon to discuss various options.

#### FEMA Buyout

Callan stated that there was nothing new to report and that FEMA was still working through the process.

#### Ag Group Cost-Share Agreement

Callan reported that there had been discussion with large corporations to provide cost-share money to help with nitrogen reduction. There will be more information later.

#### Executive Travel Tree Program

Callan reported that Executive Travel was wanting to put money into the NRD system to assist with tree purchases. He stated they would be looking at the total number of trees and dividing money out among the NRDs and that the NRD could decide if the money would be used for a specific tree program or used to discount trees amongst other options.

#### Long-Range Implementation Plan

The plan was sent out for Board review.

**Petersen motioned, seconded by Mohrman, to approve the Long-Range Implementation Plan as presented. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.**

#### Office Remodel Update

Callan reported that the dirt work was done, and footings had been poured. He stated he met with the contractor and architect today and that the plumber would be in next week, weather permitting. He said that the remodel for the existing shop was slated to start in April.

## VARIANCE COMMITTEE

### Jon R. Reins

Toene reported that Reins was requesting a variance to transfer surface water to groundwater irrigation and that he had old rights from 1954-56 that he was willing to relinquish. This was his first appearance, so the variance will be considered next month.

### New Acres Variances

Toene stated that this variance was discussed somewhat earlier. He said there were a lot of applicants that wanted to replace surface water with groundwater irrigation; however, these applications knocked out others in the groundwater increase area. Discussion is needed and there was concern about the effect on irrigation districts.

## MANAGER'S REPORT

### Litigation Update

No update

### New Hires

Callan reported that Jordyn Duffek was hired for the technician position in the Spalding office and would begin training with Dan Ray for the next few months. He said that the Ord position has not been hired yet.

### Non-action Reports

No Non-action items to report.

## REDISTRICTING

Callan reported that the Executive Committee met prior to the Board meeting and reviewed the proposed redistricting changes. Conrad showed a breakdown of each subdistrict and explained how they shifted east due to rising population in that area. He explained that the redistricting was done based on boundaries of counties, highways, townships/ranges, river, and sections to simplify boundaries. The new proposed boundaries were compared to the boundaries currently in place.

**Smith motioned, seconded by Boesch, to approve the redistricting boundaries as presented. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.**

## NARD REPORT

Eschliman reported that there would be a benefits meeting in Lincoln tomorrow and a regular meeting in Chadron November 7-8. Citta stated the conference in Kearney was good.

## NRC REPORT

Hadenfeldt reported that there was a meeting scheduled for December 15<sup>th</sup> and that the scoring committee was set to meet November 8-10.

## RC&D REPORT

Adams reported that the RC&D staff was running a buy-sell-trade business out of their office, and they had a clothing store at one of the churches and have been getting good donations.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS / FUTURE MEETING TOPICS

It was announced that November's meeting would be held on the 18<sup>th</sup> due to Thanksgiving and that the meetings would begin starting at 4:00 p.m. through March. Callan stated there would be a Variance Committee meeting but no regular committee meetings.

Boesch asked if the new redistricting boundaries would be posted on the website. Schultz stated that they would.

## ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Board, Chairman Citta declared the meeting adjourned at 7:33 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 November 18, 2021, at 4:00 p.m., at the Headquarters Office in Ord, Nebraska.

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Henry J. Thoene  
Secretary