

MINUTES

LOWER LOUP NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

December 16, 2021

Ord, Nebraska

The December 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 December 16, 2021. Chairman Citta called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Directors in attendance:

James C. Adams
Darwin B. Anderson
Beth Boesch
John Coffey
N. Richard Hadenfeldt
Gary A. Kruse
Larry Mohrman
Alan D. Petersen
Gerald Smith
Henry J. Thoene, Secretary

Rollie D. Amsberry, Treasurer
Timothy E. Bartak
Joseph L. Citta, Chairman
James Eschliman, Vice Chairman
Randy Kauk
Matt Lukasiewicz
Todd Nitsch
Chad J. Podolak
Dean G. Thede
Rick Vlach

Directors absent:

Robert L. Bauer

Staff in attendance:

Russell G. Callan, General Manager
Kim A. Lyons, Financial Secretary
Dell R. Harris, Water Resources Specialist
Cameron Conrad, Water Modeling Coord.
Alan Bartels, Information Specialist
Harold Benton, Water Resources Tech.
Richard L. Woollen, District Forester

Tyler Naprstek, Asst. General Manager
Irene F. Kreifels, Administrative Assistant
Larry D. Schultz, I&E Coordinator
Jason Moudry, Water Programs Specialist
V. Anne Freeman, Water Programs Sec.
Dan Ruterbories, Rangeland Mgmt. Spec.
Lauren Keefe, Forestry Technician

Guest in attendance:

Bryce Bauer, LDC, NRCS, Ord

Julie Nitsch, Boelus

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

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Citta stated that Director Bauer had asked to be excused.

Boesch motioned, seconded by Smith, to excuse Director Bauer. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.

Citta announced that there was a summary of Director Absences for 2021 available for review.

MINUTES

Chairman Citta asked for corrections and/or additions to the November 18, 2021, Board meeting minutes. None were heard.

Vlach motioned, seconded by Mohrman, to approve the November 18, 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 \$6,570.00 to Lammers, Abel & Kaps C.P.A's, P.C. for the annual audit and added that next year will be a Schedule 1 audit instead of the regular audit. He also highlighted expenditures of \$16,000.00 to EA Engineering for work on the Cover Crop Study in Buffalo County and \$5,110.00 to Flood Communications for the Columbus Recharge video that explains the Columbus Project.

Mohrman asked where the video would be used. Callan stated that it would be available on the NRD website and would also be sent to the Water Sustainability Fund as part of our grant reporting, as well as sent to the City of Columbus, Loup Public Power District. He said there would also be television spots.

Callan also highlighted expenditures of \$50,606.59 to JEO Consulting Group for work on the Mira Creek and Mud Creek WFPOs and \$9,574.15 to JEO Consulting Group for work on the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Thoene motioned, seconded by Boesch, to approve the December 16, 2021, Treasurer's Report. Motion carried by electronic vote. Directors voting yes: Adams, Amsberry, Anderson, Bartak, Boesch, Citta, Eschliman, Hadenfeldt, Kauk, Kruse, Lukaszewicz, Mohrman, Nitsch, Petersen, Podolak, Smith, Thede, Thoene, Vlach. Director abstaining: Coffey. Director absent: Bauer

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, showed photos of various forestry improvement projects and explained the different projects that could be done.

NRCS REPORT

Bryce Bauer, NRCS, Ord, reported that his staff was working on 2022 EQIP applications. He said that they received 300 applications and they usually fund around 80 projects. He said that NRCS would be receiving their allocation next week for projects in the Lower Loup NRD. Bauer stated they were also working on various end-of-year things including payments on contract modifications. He said they would be working on funding for various projects and would prioritize cropland nutrients, cover crops, range and brush management, and burning and cedar tree removal.

INFORMATION & EDUCATION REPORT

2022 LLNRD Photo Contest

Alan Bartels, Information Specialist, reported that the photo contest, to go through mid-May, had been launched and that press releases were published. Bartels also stated he was on NTV's December 6th mid-day broadcast talking about the contest. He said he had received a couple dozen photos so far and made fliers for the Directors to put up in their areas.

Calendars

Bartels reported that the 2022 NARD calendars would be out soon with a 50th Anniversary theme. He said Lower Loup NRD would be spotlighted in July, August, and September.

NRD Apparel

Bartels stated that shirt order forms were placed at each Director's place and that there were samples at the front of the room.

Callan added that we have had a huge increase in Facebook followers and that the photo contest would get people looking more at the NRD's website. He also stated that he was scheduling a Board Retreat day and that each Director had a sheet to select which dates would work best for them.

ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Nitrogen & Water Management Training

Tylr Naprstek, Assistant General Manager, stated that there were 42 people from Areas 28, 29, and 30 in attendance for the nitrogen training in Columbus. Naprstek stated that the training certified attendees for 4 years as part of the Nitrogen Certification program.

Drought Management Plan

Naprstek reported that 25 people attended the Drought Management Plan meeting. He said that staff would work with JEO to develop potential management options and would come back to the Board with suggestions. He said that there would be an additional meeting in early 2022.

Domestic Water Quality Sampling

Naprstek reported that sampling was almost completed and that individual results would be sent out. He said he had received a lot of feedback from people wanting information on findings.

Irrigated Acres Violations – 2021

Naprstek reported that staff had begun to review the infrared flights collected and that Nance, Platte, and Merrick infrareds were done. He said staff was working on the remainder. Naprstek commented that he was satisfied with the end results and that it had been a dry year. He showed a map of the flights highlighting the dates each route was flown. He said that staff would review the information received and more information would be available later.

WATER RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Boone County Water Use Area

Naprstek said that there had been reports of domestic wells, which are typically more shallow than other wells, going dry and showed a map of the area. He said the Committee had discussed the next steps to remedy the issue. He reported that right now acre transfers, supplemental wells and new acres would not be allowed, and that the Committee would discuss the issue again in January.

Kauk asked if the water levels of the wells had come back up. Naprstek reported that some did within a day of major irrigators shutting down.

Smith stated that some people in Petersburg were having to use bottled water. Naprstek stated there is bacteria in their water tower and they are working to find the cause.

Water Quality in the Water Use Area

Naprstek reported that in the interference zone nitrates may be avoided with deeper wells; however, there may be other contaminants to be aware of at deeper levels. He said there were two sites north of Albion where water quality was good in the deeper well. He said that more monitoring sites were needed, and he was working on getting quotes and easements to get monitoring wells installed.

Thoene asked if Lower Platte North was getting the same numbers. Naprstek stated he had not had time to review but static were increasing in that area and he would have more information later.

Watershed Management Plans

Naprstek reported that the Committee discussed the watershed management plans for South Loup and Clear Creek. He stated that the plans needed to be updated every five years to qualify for EPA funding and that modeling needed to be updated as well. He said the Clear Creek plan expired in 2021 and the South Loup plan expires in 2022. He said that staff was waiting in information from NDEE and EPA and that more information would be available later.

Flowmeter Data 2021

A map was handed out of flowmeter sites across the District which number slightly over 1,000 meters. Naprstek stated that the overall District average for pumping was up slightly from last year and more from prior years. He stated he would get an overview of the whole project for future Water Resources Committee meetings.

Area 28 – Reverse Osmosis

Naprstek stated that staff was using domestic well sampling to see who had reverse osmosis systems and who did not and what the effects of the system were. He said staff would continue to assemble data on sampling with and without systems and make future comparative analysis.

Columbus Recharge Project

Callan reported that the valve at the canal was being installed earlier today and that they hope to have it backfilled soon. He said they were still waiting on supplies for the well.

Discussion was held on complaints of adverse effects from the project. Callan informed the Board that nothing had been pumped yet. Podolak asked if public outreach had been done. Callan stated the NRD had invited the public to meetings and put information out to all the landowners as well as personally inviting them to meetings. Callan stated that the video would be put out as soon as it was completed, as well as a story board. Callan stated the video should be completed in the next couple of months. Larry Schultz, I & E Coordinator, stated that there would be two video versions -- one that is animated and explains the project and the other which would include interviews.

PROGRAMS/PROJECTS COMMITTEE

Sargent Flood Project – Olsson Agreement

Kruse reported that the BRIC grant for the City of Sargent had been turned down and they are applying for a \$4.2 Million Hazard Mitigation Plan grant and funding from the Water Sustainability Fund. He said that the NRD was asked to help with the remaining local share.

Kruse motioned, seconded by Petersen, to provide the City of Sargent with 50% of the remaining local share, up to \$2,375.00, of the Sargent Flood Project. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.

Mud Creek

Kruse reported that JEO gave the Committee a presentation on the WFPO project. He said that findings so far have shown that the Ansley sites would be most successful in helping with flooding. Naprstek showed a map and locations of the proposed dry dams. The 100-year flood and modeling were reviewed for before and after-effects. Callan highlighted the area where flooding occurs upstream and discussed how it would be addressed. Kauk asked if these would be dry dams. Callan stated they would. Callan stated that, given the cost benefit that is being figured for the project, it has a good chance of happening. Anderson asked if the land involved was pasture or farm ground. Callan stated it was mostly pasture.

North Loup Flood Mitigation

Callan reported that he and Kolar met with the Village of North Loup, and they are working on internal drainage. He said they have money from FEMA to use for the project. Callan also stated that JEO has put together a plan and they are getting ready to take bids on redoing streets and internal drainage.

FEMA Buyout

Mohrman reported that appraisals were being done on the land involved.

Ag Group Cost-Share Agreement

No update.

Executive Travel Tree Program

Callan said that Executive Travel is seeking green credits by helping to promote tree planting. He stated that staff was working on a plan for how to apply the approximate \$5,800.00 in funding. He said that right now the NRD offers cost-share for most machine plantings and are working on a plan to use this money for handplants.

St. Edward Update

Kruse reported that St. Edward was working on a BRIC grant application and hiring a new engineer. He said they have asked the NRD for a letter of support for the grant.

Kruse motioned, seconded by Boesch, to provide a letter of support for the St. Edward BRIC grant application.

Coffey asked if Sargent got turned down and if it does them any good to apply, or if they should be looking for other funding. Callan stated they were trying this first and would be looking into other options.

Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.

Rural Broadband MOU

Kruse reported that there had been a request for NRD support and an MOU had been sent over. Callan stated he had sent the MOU to Kruml Law Office for review of commitment. Callan stated that he would have more information in January.

Office Remodel Update – Tree Cooler

Kruse reported that the tree cooler itself was not included in the bid package by either company. Callan stated it was supposed to be in the bid; however, they only included the

electrical but not the cooler itself. Callan stated there was a Change Order and that the company that sells the cooler would do the installation.

Kruse motioned, seconded by Eschliman, to approve the tree cooler Change Order for \$32,668.00. Motion carried by electronic vote. Directors voting yes: Amsberry, Bartak, Boesch, Citta, Coffey, Eschliman, Hadenfeldt, Kauk, Kruse, Lukasiewicz, Mohrman, Nitsch, Petersen, Podolak, Smith, Thede, Thoene, Vlach. Directors voting no: Adams, Anderson. Director absent: Bauer.

Bowman Lake Request

Kruse reported that there was a request for the NRD to do maintenance at Bowman Lake Recreation Area. Callan stated that he had had put some numbers together and would discuss more with the Committee next month. He stated it would cost roughly \$13,400.00 per year for mowing. He said there was currently no outhouse and there is a charge for camping. A view of the lake and camping area was shown. Citta asked if the NRD would take over collections. Callan stated he would discuss more with the County and have more information next month.

LR23

Callan reported that he attended the hearing for LR23 and that Winkler, Sousek and Shepard had testified. He said a lot of the discussion was about dams and some on nitrates. Callan stated there was concern about working with developers to sell homes near the dams. It was discussed at the hearing that the developers follow the dams and build houses as fast as the dams go up. Callan reported that since then, Senator Gregor has reached out to meet with the NRD to see where money can be used to help with nitrates.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Callan announced that Dan Ray and Marie Schmeits, long-time NRD employees, were or had already retired this year and that there were two Resolutions that were made into plaques for them honoring their service to the NRD.

Citta introduced Resolution FY2022-006:

*RESOLUTION
Adopted by the Board of Directors
Lower Loup Natural Resources District
December 16, 2021*

WHEREAS, the Lower Loup Natural Resources District has provided long-standing service in the conservation of natural resources to the residents of the Loup River Basin,

WHEREAS, Daniel Ray provided 45 years of exemplary service and valuable advice to the District as the Conservation Technician in Greeley and Spalding,

BE IT RESOLVED, by unanimous vote, the Board of Directors of the Lower Loup Natural Resources District extends recognition and commendation to Daniel Ray.

Eschliman motioned, seconded by Smith, to adopt Resolution FY2022-006. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.

Citta introduced Resolution FY2022-007:

*RESOLUTION
Adopted by the Board of Directors
Lower Loup Natural Resources District
December 16, 2021*

WHEREAS, the Lower Loup Natural Resources District has provided long-standing service in the conservation of natural resources to the residents of the Loup River Basin,

WHEREAS, Marie Schmeits provided 34 years of exemplary service and valuable advice to the District as the District Secretary in Greeley and Spalding,

BE IT RESOLVED, by unanimous vote, the Board of Directors of the Lower Loup Natural Resources District extends recognition and commendation to Marie Schmeits.

Smith motioned, seconded by Eschliman, to adopt Resolution FY2022-007. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.

Litigation Update

No update.

New Hires

None.

Non-action Reports

Callan reported that the AEM grant was approved for flights in Nance County.

NARD REPORT

Eschliman reported that the Legislative Conference would be held in January.

NRC REPORT

Citta reported that there was a meeting yesterday. Hadenfeldt reported that the scoring committee recommendations were accepted, and that one large project and eight small projects

were approved. It was also reported that the next NRC meetings would be held in February and March.

LOUP BASIN RC&D REPORT

Adams reported there was nothing new to update.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS, NARD REPRESENTATIVE/ALTERNATE, NARD ANNUAL CONFERENCE VOTING DELEGATE/ALTERNATE, LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE VOTING DELEGATE/ALTERNATE, AND RC&D DELEGATE/ALTERNATE

Hadenfeldt motioned, seconded by Podolak, to keep all officers, delegates, and alternates the same.

Adams commented that he thought the positions needed to be opened up. Mohrman stated it would be good to have rotation, so others get experience in the positions. Vlach stated that was something that could be discussed at the Board Retreat as it would take a couple of years to get into a position and would be good to have someone show new representatives the ropes. Boesch thanked everyone for the work they do in their positions. Coffey stated that he hoped that anyone that was in a position and wanted out would speak out. Citta stated the executive team had asked current representatives and alternates and they were all willing to serve again if the Board wishes.

Motion carried by electronic vote. Directors voting yes: Amsberry, Anderson, Bartak, Boesch, Coffey, Eschliman, Hadenfeldt, Kauk, Kruse, Lukasiewicz, Mohrman, Nitsch, Petersen, Podolak, Smith, Thede, Thoene, Vlach. Director voting no: Adams. Director abstaining: Citta. Director absent: Bauer

It was announced that rotations would be discussed at the Board Retreat.

2022 Board officers: Chairman - Joseph Citta
Vice Chairman - James Eschliman
Secretary - Henry Thoene
Treasurer - Rollie Amsberry

NARD Representative – James Eschliman
Alternate – Rollie Amsberry

NARD Annual Conference Voting Delegate – Rollie Amsberry
Alternate – James Eschliman

Legislative Conference Voting Delegate – Rollie Amsberry
Alternate – James Eschliman

Loup Basin RC&D Delegate – James Adams
Alternate – Henry Thoene

ITEM XVIII. APPROVAL OF 2022 BOARD MEETING CALENDAR, DESIGNATION OF OFFICIAL NEWSPAPERS & BANKS, SET MAXIMUM COST LIMIT PER PLATE FOR AWARDS DINNER AND MAXIMUM FOR 2022 AWARDS

Callan announced that the August Board meeting was set to be held in September. He stated that the counties have until the 20th of August to send out new valuations to the NRD and that creates a challenging time frame to get things ready for the Budget. He stated that the budget hearing would be moved to that day as well. Callan also stated it would be good to raise the maximum cost limit per plate to \$60.00 due to increasing costs. It was also pointed out that the October, 2022, meeting should be on the 27th instead of the 26th.

Boesch motioned, seconded by Podolak, to approve the calendar with the modifications mentioned and keep all newspapers and banks the same, and set the maximum cost per plate for the awards dinner at \$70.00. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.

Newspapers - The Grand Island Independent is the only District-wide daily publication that covers the NRD. In the past we have designated it as our District-wide paper but have also utilized The Albion News, The Burwell Tribune, The Custer County Chief, The Columbus Telegram, The Greeley Citizen, The Nance County Journal, The Ord Quiz, The Phonograph-Herald, The Ravenna News, and The Sherman County Times for meeting announcements and legal notices.

Banks - Great Western Bank in Ord has been the main repository for the Lower Loup NRD's funds, but First National Bank in Ord serves as the secondary repository. The following banks are additional repositories for Lower Loup NRD funds – Cornerstone Bank, North Loup, NE; Pathway Bank, Ord, NE; Bank First, Ord, NE; Farmers & Merchants Bank, Ericson, NE; Citizens Bank & Trust Company, Loup City, NE; State Bank of Scotia, Scotia, NE; Citizens State Bank, Spalding, NE; and Heartland Bank, Ord, NE.

Awards Maximum - The Board set the maximum Awards Dinner per-plate cost limit at \$70 and the awards maximum limit at \$125.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/FUTURE MEETING TOPICS

Callan announced that Board members need to select the date that works best for a Board Retreat and fill out the apparel order form. Ideas for the retreat topics were mentioned to be groundwater and surface water discussions, nitrate issues, possible rule changes, flood prevention, water quality projects and dams. Callan also stated he would try to have Blankenau available for questions that day as well.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Board, Chairman Citta declared the meeting adjourned at 5:45 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 January 27, 2022, at 4:00 p.m., at the Headquarters Office in Ord, Nebraska.

Henry J. Thoene
Secretary