

# MINUTES

## LOWER LOUP NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

April 23, 2026

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 23, 2026. Chairman Thoene called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

### CALL TO ORDER

#### Directors in attendance:

Rollie D. Amsberry, Treasurer  
James Eschliman  
Justin W. King  
Gary A. Kruse  
Alan Petersen  
John Shadle  
Henry J. Thoene, Chairman

Robert L. Bauer  
Jeremy Eschliman  
Thomas L. Knutson  
Todd Nitsch  
Chad J. Podolak  
Gerald Smith  
Rick Vlach, Vice Chairman

#### Directors absent:

Timothy E. Bartak  
Randy Kauk  
Alexander L. Vlach

Colton R. DeBower  
Larry Mohrman, Secretary

#### Staff in attendance:

Russell G. Callan, General Manager  
Irene Kreifels, Administrative Assistant  
Alan Bartels, I & E Coordinator  
Dell Harris, Water Resources Specialist  
Kevin Gustafson, District Engineer  
Ann Freeman, Water Programs Secretary  
LeeAnn Smith, Water Admin. Assistant

Tylr Naprstek, Assistant General Manager  
Kim A. Lyons, Financial Secretary  
Brant Bechtold, I & E Specialist  
Makenzi Woollen, Financial Assistant  
Jason Moudry, Water Programs Specialist  
Aron Lewis, District Conservation Forester  
Brian Kolar, Projects Technician

#### Guests in attendance:

Bryce Bauer, NRCS, DC West  
Angie Joyce, Aurora  
Jeremy Hoefler, Elgin

Clifford Sterner, Merna  
Tina Oswald, Aurora

## VERIFICATION OF MEETING NOTICE AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chairman Thoene asked for verification of the meeting notice. General Manager Russ 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.

## EXCUSED ABSENCES

Thoene stated that Directors Bartak, DeBower, Kauk, Mohrman, and A. Vlach had asked to be excused.

**James Eschliman motioned, seconded by Podolak, to excuse absent Directors Bartak, DeBower, Kauk, Mohrman, and A. Vlach. Motion carried by electronic vote. Directors voting yes: Amsberry, Bauer, James Eschliman, Jeremy Eschliman, King, Knutson, Kruse, Nitsch, Petersen, Podolak, Shadle, Smith, Thoene, R. Vlach. Directors voting no: None. Directors absent: Bartak, DeBower, Kauk, Mohrman, A. Vlach.**

## MINUTES

Thoene asked for corrections and/or additions to the March 26, 2026, Board meeting minutes. None being heard, Thoene announced that the minutes will stand approved as presented.

Callan stated that last month he commented that paperwork returned to us by Jeremy Hoefler had been changed before it was returned and he wanted to correct that statement to reflect that Hoefler stated that he didn't make the changes. He also stated that the cease and desist for Hoefler is on the agenda this month and it will not be necessary at this time as Hoefler has turned in the necessary documentation.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Russell Callan, General Manager, highlighted expenditures of \$13,723.00 to GVW Trailer Sales LLC for a new tilt trailer and \$20,558.87 to HDR Engineering, Inc. for work on the Nance County Model and the large water user rule. Callan also highlighted additional expenditures of \$19,651.45 to WISH Nebraska, Inc. for drip supply inventory for resale; \$11,937.02 to Ward Laboratories, Inc. for vadose samples; and \$101,729.00 to USGS for work on the Vadose Project and the operation of stream gages.

Knutson asked about the drip supplies and if we get that money back. Callan replied that the supplies are for resale.

**Knutson motioned, seconded by Jeremy Eschliman, to approve the April 23, 2026, Treasurer's Report. Motion carried by electronic vote. Directors voting yes: Amsberry, Bauer, James Eschliman, Jeremy Eschliman, Knutson, Kruse, Nitsch, Petersen, Podolak,**

**Shadle, Smith, Thoene, R. Vlach. Directors not present for vote: King. Directors absent: Bartak, DeBower, Kauk, Mohrman, A. 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

Thoene asked for public comments.

Angie Joyce, Hamilton County, introduced herself and addressed the Board regarding her concerns about water in Nebraska. She presented the Board with an information packet she put together and stated that she has visited other NRDs with concerns about large water users. She expressed major concerns with large water using entities coming into Nebraska. She stated that there was a large water user that came into Hamilton County that provided a hydrologic evaluation that stated that Hamilton County would not have any problems with the new user, adding that a third party did another study stating that it was non-sustainable. She cautioned that you cannot depend on the entity that the user hires, based on this instance, the facility was not sustainable for the area despite their report. She also discussed the CO2 pipeline at ethanol plants and the amount of water used to cool it, adding that the reports only take into consideration what they say they are pumping and not the total number they are permitted to pump. She strongly cautioned the Board to look into data centers and other potential large water users that wish to come into the District.

## FORESTER'S REPORT

Aron Lewis, Conservation Forester, reported that we are in the middle of tree planting season and that 50,834 trees have been sold so far, adding that there is a list of people waiting for leftover trees. He added that 12,000 coco mats have been sold. Lewis stated that Dawson and Duffek's tree planting crew should be done with machine plants by next Wednesday and that the drip crew has been moving along and installing either the same or next day. He estimated that all tree plantings and drip installations should be completed by May 8<sup>th</sup>.

Lewis stated that he received a \$10 million grant to be used in Rock County that he will be focusing on after trees are in. He stated that there is a tree cutting shutdown scheduled from May 15<sup>th</sup> to August 1<sup>st</sup> for the Northern long-eared bat. He added that no cuttings will be allowed without special permission by Nebraska Game & Parks.

Lewis also reported that there are 11 reported wildfires in Nebraska. He added that the Pressey Fire in Broken Bow has burned 10,000 acres and is 0% contained, adding that the National Guard has sent in helicopters and that one house and many outbuildings have been lost. He stated that the Peterson fire south of Atkinson has burned over 1,000 acres and is approximately 20% contained, and the McKelvie fire has burned 570 acres and is out. He also

reported that there are 6 smaller fires between Lake McConaughy and Cody, WY, as well as one small fire south of O'Neill and a 100-acre fire in northern Knox County.

## NRCS REPORT

Bryce Bauer, NRCS, DC West, reported that spring and early summer producer meetings are getting started and that they have started funding EQIP contracts, adding that they are funding State projects and then the local work group contracts will be funded. He said that 21 State funding pool projects for just over \$2 million have been funded and there is an additional \$1 million for Local funding pools. He said they will start next week funding on the \$2.4 million available.

Bauer stated that NRCS submits reports on the fires to the State Conservationist and they are then sent to DC, adding that reports are sent every day until the fires are out. He also stated that the State reserves EQIP money to use for natural disasters such as wildfires, large hail events, etc. He added that once all the money is officially in contracts, they can request more. He added that the funding helps with fences and livestock deferment to help to get the grass to grow back as well.

Bauer also thanked the Board for their support through the Summer Intern program adding that Dylan Petersen will be starting in Burwell, Elijah Pollard will be in Ord and Riley Bishop will be in the St. Paul office.

Callan asked if the Phase II Management Area in Wheeler Central has been officially set as a priority for water quality cost-share. Bauer responded that it has under EQIP.

## INFORMATION & EDUCATION REPORT

### Arbor Day Programming

Alan Bartels, I&E Coordinator, reported that Wheeler County Elementary School held a field trip on April 17<sup>th</sup> at Pibel Lake and learned about the national champion, record-setting Eastern cottonwood tree.

He also reported that an Arbor Day event was held at the Columbus Children's Museum on April 21<sup>st</sup>. The 95 students from Twin River, St. Michaels in Albion, and Shell Creek in Columbus participated in a craft activity and all received a free seedling. Bartels reported that kids from Ord Elementary and Ord St. Mary's schools planted a tree earlier in the week at the Elementary School. He said that Centura and Central Valley schools had been visited, adding that Arbor Day programs will also be held in St. Edward, St. Paul, Arcadia, and Loup County schools. He reported that approximately 400 trees will be given away during this season.

## 2026 NRD Basin Tour

Bartels reported that the Basin Tour will be held in North Platte June 8-9, touring the Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District diversion system, recent wildfire damage, the Perkins County canal site in Colorado, and Lake McConaughy's hydropower system.

## ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

### Flow Meter Cost-share – Quantity Areas 18, 19, & 20

Tylr Naprstek, Assistant General Manager, reported that there have been 501 completed flow meter forms in Area 18, with a few more added this week. He added that flow meter installation in Area 19 is about 30-35% complete, with one more year left to get meters installed. Area 20 has 268 completed or active forms, with 2 producers yet to install meters. He stated that staff visits and inspects each site to be sure all flow meters are installed properly.

Dialogue with producers has been able to dispel two of the major falsehoods associated with meters – 1) If a meter is put on, water will be taxed; and 2) Once a meter is put on, an allocation will be required. As of now, both are false.

Naprstek stated that staff uploads the flow meter data into our database and the annual reports are sent out based on the readings. Naprstek showed a map of all flow meters logged in the District.

Naprstek discussed the Area 29 water quality meter requirement, adding that producers have 2 years from November 1<sup>st</sup> to have their flow meters installed. He also added that meters are required on anything requiring a permit, including supplemental, replacement, transfer, and acre rotation.

He stated that the entire state is about 51% metered.

### Recreation Areas

Naprstek reported that water is being filled at Davis Creek and that people have been fishing. He added that the NRD's post on Facebook about the water level has received 90,000 views. He stated that the lake is at 2,061 feet, which is 6 feet higher than the wintering level. He said the top half will take longer to fill because the lake gets wider. Naprstek added that the shower house, RV dump, and fish cleaning stations are operational and reservations are coming in. He added that the bigger holidays are filling in.

Naprstek stated that burn ban signs have been removed and fires are allowed in the rings at Davis Creek and Pibel Lake.

### Chemigation Permits

Naprstek reported that chemigation permits were mailed out prefilled with information from last year's permits. He stated that last year there were 3,327 renewals, 290 new, and no emergency permits issued. Naprstek added that 1,354 inspections were conducted last year and there were 72 sites that needed equipment replacement or repair. He also added that 16,750,000 pounds of nitrogen was applied, as well as 1,100 pounds of Lorsban and about 46 pounds of Mustang. Across the District, slightly less than 380,000 acres were treated, which is about one-third of our irrigated acres groundwater total.

## WATER RESOURCES COMMITTEE

### GWQMA – 2025 By the Numbers

Nitsch reported that the Committee reviewed groundwater quality management area data from 2025. He added that they reviewed the irrigation trends and the nitrogen levels in Areas 28, 29, and 30. Nitrogen continues to go up in dry years. They also looked at the nitrogen use efficiency, adding that potatoes are managing nitrogen tighter than other irrigated crops. He added that irrigation totals varied quite a bit over those areas with 27½" in Area 28; 20" in Area 29; and 5.2" in Area 30.

### 2026 Spring Statics & Drought Status

Nitsch reported that most of the District is seeing stable to improved static water levels. He added that they are seeing declines in southern Buffalo County, South Loup area, and by Columbus, adding that they are currently in "Moderate" drought and that a lot of pre-watering is taking place. He added that staff is not recommending any management changes at this time.

Naprstek went over the static water levels and drought monitoring status. Most of our area is in the "Moderate" drought status. He said Areas 20 and 11 are down to a "Watch" area and Area 18 is in "Severe" status. Naprstek reported that 68% of our static water level readings were up from last year, mostly due to the in-season precipitation and lack of irrigation that we experienced last year.

Naprstek presented the drought map and spring static water levels showing that the drought has progressed to "Severe" through the center of the District and showed the comparison to last year as well as progression for the last 4 months, mentioning that it is our groundwater levels that are carrying us forward at this point in time.

Naprstek showed the local groundwater status. Area 18 had some readings that were lower than ever recorded before and more wells were reported as pumping this year than in the previous year. He also showed the comparison to last year for Areas 18, 19 & 20, and the long-term drought forecast.

Naprstek discussed stream flows and stated that the Middle Loup River is below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile, so it is lower than expected. He added that he thinks it's due to irrigation districts diverting early, stating there is a lot of water being pulled out of the Middle Loup right now.

Naprstek discussed instream flow status. We've been notified that our instream flows have been met and stated that junior water rights are getting shut down according to the State of Nebraska. Podolak asked how they are notified. Naprstek stated they get a written notice from the state about when they must stop and when they can start again.

Naprstek stated that if people think there is a problem with a well, or possibly a neighbor's well, the NRD is the best place to check so that we can investigate it and act if necessary. He stated that we can look at the wells and see if the well screens and casings are okay.

Naprstek also showed the regional drought status and stated that the drought has not gone away, even as far back as 2024, but has tempered some, showing status as of May, 2025, and May, 2024, for comparison. Podolak asked about static water levels and how they are affected if the well is pumping already. Naprstek stated that we note that it has been pumped and would explain any major differences.

#### NUE – Corn Board Program

Nitsch reported that there were 15 applications submitted and that May 15<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for the program. He said that outreach has been done with mailings and on the radio. Callan added that there have been discussions with the Corn Board and they are wanting to get the funds obligated this year. Naprstek added that Neal Fulton, Agronomist, and Brandon Esch, Water Quality Technician, reached out to those that were close to an NUE reading of 1.0 or less and sent out information on what can be done to meet the program requirements.

#### Groundwater Management Plan – Stakeholder Meeting #3

It was reported that the next meeting will be June 23<sup>rd</sup> at 4:30 p.m. and that cost-share funding will be part of the discussion.

#### Irrigation Violations Update

Nitsch reported that all the irrigation violations have been resolved.

#### City of Fullerton – Well Decommissioning Project

Nitsch reported that 6 of the 15 wells planned to be decommissioned are completed and that a monitoring well has been added in the wellhead protection area. He also added that Fullerton has found one well site without selenium contamination.

## Vadose Sampling Update

Nitsch reported that Jason Moudry, Water Programs Specialist, gave the Committee information on the 29 fields involved in the vadose project and probe depths. Data is being compiled and shared with USGS. He added that Callan and Moudry met with Aaron Daigh of UNL to discuss the physical properties of the vadose zone. We have been working with Chris Hobza and Campbell Scientific on moisture probes.

## PROGRAMS/PROJECTS COMMITTEE

### Fullerton Dam Removal

Kruse reported that Patty Noble, City Administrator from the City of Fullerton, was present at the Committee meeting and the city has agreed to the 50/50 split for the design phase of the study.

Kevin Gustafson, District Engineer, added that he attended the City of Fullerton meeting and they are wanting the ability to pay the NRD back over time but are ready to move forward. He added that EA is ready to start as soon as possible before vegetation on the trees grows because of some of their surveying. EA is hoping to have the design ready to go before the end of 2026.

**Kruse motioned, seconded by Knutson, to proceed with the Fullerton Dam Project contingent on the City of Fullerton's approval of 50% contribution and LLNRD 50% contribution for design costs. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.**

### St. Paul Middle Loup Agency

Kruse reported that the St. Paul Middle Loup Agency has requested a support letter for their project looking at the Loup River where it meets the Highway south of St. Paul. He added that there is concern about erosion near the highway and railroad where water is swirling and deteriorating the edge of the river. He added that the study will look at how to prevent this from happening further.

Gustafson added that the letter of support is for congressional money from Senator Deb Fischer.

Knutson stated he was not at the Committee meeting, but he thinks that the State of Nebraska and the railroad should be big players in the project and that it should not fully be up to the City and County.

Jim Eschliman asked if it was outside city limits. Knutson stated it is. King asked if the request is for just the support letter or funding as well. Kruse replied that they are just requesting a letter at this time.

**Kruse motioned, seconded by Shadle, to approve the St. Paul Erosion Project letter of support. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.**

### Kamp Kaleo Playground Project

Kruse reported that Kamp Kaleo, where ACE Camp is held, is asking for \$10,000 for playground equipment.

Petersen said he has been close to the camp since its beginning and stated it has previously been a religious camp and is now operated by a corporate board called Kaleo on the River. He stated that there are still church camps that take place; however, other events are allowed as well. He added that they offer a fishing area, lodge, welcome center, and discovery center.

**Petersen motioned, seconded by Smith, to approve a \$10,000 contribution to the Kamp Kaleo Playground Project. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.**

### Village of Spalding Pool Project

Kruse reported that this was Spalding's second time in front of the Committee. He stated that this fall they will be starting to refurbish the pool and buildings and they are asking for a \$20,000 contribution. The total cost of the project is expected to be \$1,100,000

Brian Kolar, Projects Technician, stated that they are using the existing pool concrete with a new liner and that the kiddie pool and pool house will be new. He added that they have close to \$700,000 raised from fundraising efforts.

**Jeremy Eschliman motioned, seconded by Jim Eschliman, to approve a \$20,000 contribution to the Village of Spalding Pool Project. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.**

### Loup City Dewatering Well Discussions

Kruse reported that Loup City is in a very high-water-level area and they have been running high-capacity wells to move water. The NRD is looking at ways to recapture some of the water being moved. He added that staff will continue to work with the City and that Callan stated there may be funding sources available for this type of project, such as Google, etc.

### Broken Bow Flood Risk Reduction Plan

Kruse stated that Gustafson would provide an update.

### Mud Creek WFPO

Kruse stated that Gustafson would provide an update.

### Mira Creek WFPO

Kruse stated that NRCS has indicated that we would be receiving WFPO dollars for this project when funding is available.

### Pibel Wetland 319 Grant

Kruse stated that Gustafson would provide an update.

### NRD Recreation DRAFT Rules

It was reported that there are updates needed to the Recreation Rules and a hearing would need to be set to adopt the changes.

**Kruse motioned, seconded by Smith, to set a hearing for the Recreation Rules changes for May 28<sup>th</sup>. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.**

### Monroe Area Recharge Project

Kruse reported that Olsson is working on the design for the project.

### Sargent Flood Project

Kruse reported that Callan, Thoene, and Petersen have been working through land right negotiations and may look to a third party for assistance.

### Columbus Recharge SCADA Update

Kruse reported that there are SCADA updates needed for the Columbus Recharge Project. Kolar provided the Committee with a quote of \$36,040 to be paid out of project funds to complete the upgrade. He added that the current system must be manually turned on and shut off and there is no monitoring system. He added that Electric Pump does the pumps for the sanitary system in Columbus.

**Kruse motioned, seconded by R. Vlach, to approve the Electric Pump quote of \$36,040 to complete the Columbus Recharge Project SCADA updates. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.**

## ENGINEER'S REPORT

### Mud Creek WFPO

Kevin Gustafson, District Engineer, reported that Mud Creek WFPO received funding from NRCS and we have a signed agreement with NRCS. The agreement has been forwarded to NRCS-Lincoln and once it is signed, funds will be obligated. He added that JEO is ready to start immediately and the design is scheduled to be completed by April, 2028.

Callan reminded the Board that this phase, and eventually construction, is 100% paid for by the WFPO grant, and that the NRD is in charge of land rights and permitting.

King asked if there would be public access. Gustafson replied that it will remain privately owned.

Callan stated that these will be dry structures and will only have water during flooding events.

### Broken Bow Flood Risk Reduction Plan

Gustafson reported that JEO has been hired to conduct the Broken Bow Flood Risk Reduction study and a kickoff meeting was held last week. He added that the Nebraska Department of Water, Energy & Environment (DWEE) revised the flood maps for the city and they will be looking at existing structures for flood risk assessments and look at alternatives to address those. They will have the plan completed by February, 2027. He added that there is no request for funding at this time; we are just consulting and will continue to stay involved with the project. A map was shown of the updated flood boundaries.

Podolak asked if there are other communities that have this kind of flood exposure on a 100-year flood. Callan stated there are others such as Ansley, North Loup, Dannebrog, Sargent, Broken Bow, St. Edward, etc.

### Pibel Wetland 319 Grant

Gustafson reported that the NRD received a 319 Grant from DWEE that will be a 60/40 split. He added that we are looking at potential partners for the project, i.e., Nebraska Game and Parks, Ducks Unlimited, Sandhills Task Force, Google, etc. Gustafson stated that there will be an onsite meeting held May 7, 2026.

## VARIANCE COMMITTEE

### Troy Nichols Variance Request

Kruse asked to have the variance process explained.

Naprstek stated that each variance is looked at on a case-by-case basis and gave a breakdown of the process.

Naprstek explained that this variance was a former violation, where the end gun was running and irrigating more than it should have. The producer came and asked how he could expand. Naprstek added that the land is adjacent to the South Loup River and explained how staff looks at the requirement to grow crops, the Net Irrigation Requirement (NIR), and recharge difference.

Naprstek added that the producer is wanting to pipe water to add acres and expand his end gun for an additional 6 acres in total. Naprstek explained that staff puts the information into a spreadsheet and looks at the conversion, difference between dryland and irrigated pivot, and the recharge that we get back.

Callan summarized that the NIR is the consumptive use of the crop that he already has, not what is pumped, but what is consumed, and take that number and divide it out over all the acres. He added that the consumption would still be the same or less, it is just limiting the deficit to the irrigation system with no depletion to the river.

There have been discussions with Jesse Bradley, Director of DWEE, and there are other areas that could benefit from this method since it allows for additional crop production without adding to net depletion of the river.

Callan stated that every section in the District has a different number that works. Kruse added that some can do less watering and some more by spreading it out differently. Thoene stated that maybe it should be encouraged more to see how it works.

Dell Harris, Water Resources Specialist, added that there is no carryover, it's annual, and without doing it this way, he can put it all on one piece of land.

King asked if there is any ability to pull it back or if it is permanent. Callan stated that we would have an agreement and if the producer follows it, he doesn't know why we wouldn't want to stick to it, adding that if he violates the agreement he would be out and back to his original acres with limits and penalties that would be up to the Board. Callan also added that right now we require producers to set aside two times as many acres the next year.

Kruse added that if the producer finds out it is not going to work for him, he can go back to how he is operating now.

James Eschliman asked if the new acres would be irrigated acres. Callan replied that the agreement covers them, but the assessor determines how they are treated, adding that for use it is allowed to be irrigated but not allowed to be certified acres.

Jeremy Eschliman asked how many other special situations like this have been granted in the past. Callan stated the Variance Committee wants to vet these requests as we go and not make it a program, adding that the concept could be a program, but we are not ready to do that.

**Smith motioned, seconded by Knutson, to approve the Troy Nichols variance of an additional 24 acres set at 9 inches. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.**

#### Dean & Kathy Eickhoff Variance Request

Naprstek gave a brief explanation of the variance request by Dean & Kathy Eickhoff, stating that they have a full pivot and a corner and want to leverage an additional 55 acres.

**Smith motioned, seconded by Kruse, to approve the Dean & Kathy Eickhoff variance of 6.5 inches per acre of allocation for both fields. Motion carried by electronic vote. Directors voting yes: Amsberry, Bauer, James Eschliman, Jeremy Eschliman, King, Kruse, Nitsch, Petersen, Podolak, Shadle, Smith, Thoene, Vlach. Director not present for vote: Knutson. Directors absent: Bartak, DeBower, Kauk, Mohrman, A. Vlach.**

## MANAGER'S REPORT

### Add Security First to LLNRD Official Bank Designations

Callan informed the Board that First Interstate Bank has sold the Ord branch location to Security First Bank and the new bank needs to be added to the list of approved banks.

**King motioned, seconded by Knutson, to approve the addition of Security First Bank to the NRD list of official banks. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.**

### Water Strategies

Callan stated that there is a report included in the Supplemental Agenda that talks about the Twin Loups title transfer process that Twin Loups Irrigation District is going through right now and how the recreation area is part of that process. Also, there is some discussion going on in Washington, DC, and the Bureau of Reclamation may be looking at changing some of those rules.

### Litigation

Callan reported that DWEE has not acted on the Platte Republican Transfer.

### New Hires

Callan reported that Dexter Goodner, James Kroupa, and Steve Hornickel are tree planters this year and that the NRCS interns will be starting soon.

### Non-action Reports

None heard.

## SUBDISTRICT 1 VACANCY REQUEST

Clifford Sterner was present and had submitted a letter of interest in filling the Subdistrict 1 vacancy.

**James Eschliman motioned, seconded by Amsberry, to appoint Clifford Sterner to fill the Subdistrict 1 vacancy. Motion carried by electronic vote, all present voting yes.**

## NARD REPORT

Thoene stated there was a meeting March 9<sup>th</sup> but he was unable to attend. He added that Deb VanMatre was appointed as Chairman at the meeting and that the group discussed health insurance. There will be no increase in premiums for the upcoming year. Thoene also mentioned LB979 that would allow for a 2% budget increase limit for NRDs. Callan added that it has not passed. James Eschliman asked about the building being paid off. Thoene stated it will be paid off by the end of the year.

Kruse asked about the 2% bill. Callan stated there was talk of limiting budget increases to 2%; however, after talking to the NRDs, it was found that with a 2% increase every year, budgets would be more than they are. Thoene stated that they were going to set the base on the current annual levy and it would set some less than needed because they have a lower budget year this year.

Callan stated that there had also been discussion on basing the amount of budget increases to the “growth” factor which shows on tax statements and translates to “new” construction or “new” businesses or “new” houses, etc.

## NRC REPORT

Amsberry reported that the next meeting will be held April 29<sup>th</sup> in Kearney.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS / FUTURE MEETING TOPICS

It was announced that the Lower Platte South Coalition meeting was held last week in Wahoo and Callan and Naprstek presented. Thoene and R. Vlach were in attendance.

## ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Board, Chairman Thoene declared the meeting adjourned at 7:04 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 28, 2026, at 5:00 p.m., at the Headquarters Office in Ord, Nebraska.

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Henry Thoene  
Chairman