

**NORTH PLATTE NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

March 14, 2024
3:00 P.M.

1. Call Meeting to Order

This meeting was called to order at 3:00p.m. by Roger Eirich. Notice of the meeting was given to the public by publishing a legal notice on March 7, 2024, in the Scottsbluff Star Herald.

2. Inform Public of Open Meetings Act

Eirich informed the meeting attendees that this meeting would be conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, which is posted by the door for public inspection.

Attendance

Board Members Present: Kent Andreas, Roger Eirich, Pete Lapaseotes, Ryan Reuter, Mark Westphal, Chuck Henkel, Lane Darnall

Board Members Absent: Dave Deines, Danny Weinreis

Others Present:

North Platte NRD Staff: Scott Schaneman, Danielle Madden, Lydia Hendrickson, Travis Preston, Craig Uhrig,

Adaptive Resources, Inc. (ARI): Thad Kuntz

Simmons Olsen Law Firm: Megan Dockery

NRCS: Georgette Jordening

Documentation Provided

The following documents were made available at the meeting for the Board of Directors and public review:

1. Agenda
2. Minutes of the February 08, 2024, Board of Directors meeting
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Manager's Report
5. NARD Legislative Update

4. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Board reviewed the minutes of the February 8, 2024, regular monthly meeting.

A motion was made by Andreas, seconded by Westphal, to approve the minutes of the February 8, 2024, regular monthly meeting. Motion passed.

Aye: Andreas, Darnall, Eirich, Henkel, Lapaseotes, Reuter, Westphal

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Deines, Weinreis

5. Treasurer's Report and Accounts Payable

Ryan Reuter reviewed the monthly expenses from the Treasurer's Report with the Board.

A motion was made by Henkel, seconded by Darnall, to accept the Treasurer's Report. Motion passed.

Aye: Andreas, Darnall, Eirich, Henkel, Lapaseotes, Reuter, Westphal
Nay: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Deines, Weinreis

6. Comments from the Public

Georgette Jordening informed the board that NRCS is wrapping up IRA contracts through equip and CSP. Starting ranking of EQIP. Planning all approved NSWCPs. Hired a new tech between Bridgeport and Oshkosh and housing in Oshkosh. Local working group meeting was last week. Offices are still not complete. Furniture for the NRCS office should be delivered the 22nd.

7. Manager's Report

Scott Schaneman highlighted the following topics from his Manager's Report:

On March 7th at 1:30, the 2024 NRCS working group meeting was held here at the NPNRD. The meeting was held to discuss and rank areas of priority for NRCS producer programs. As an example, in the past, emphasis was given to ground water exemption acres that were making a transition from flood irrigation to a more efficient irrigation method such as pivot irrigation or sub-surface drip. The meeting is arranged to gather input for program priorities from NRD staff, Board members and other conservation partners. Once all priorities have been ranked by NRCS, results of the ranking will be provided to NRD staff, which in turn will be shared with the Board of Directors.

Last Wednesday Travis and I attended a managers meeting in Lincoln. The agenda was light but highlighted a few very important items. The managers had an opportunity to discuss in detail the 414-retirement plan, and several bills in the legislature regarding taxing authorities for political sub-divisions. The trip also provided Travis and I a chance to meet with several other managers to discuss a variety of other issues.

On April 4th, Travis and I will be attending in North Platte the POAC and PBC meeting. We have no financial requests currently for the PBC to consider but will have updates for the group regarding potential projects going forward.

Many of you may or may not know that Renay has decided to have knee replacement surgery. Renay will be out recovering for several weeks to come. In her absence, I have asked Charmaine Uhrig to fill in for Renay to help Susie cover all the responsibilities and duties of the front office staff.

I had an opportunity to provide a presentation to the Leadership Scottsbluff group on February 21st at 21st Century Equipment's Scottsbluff location. The February session for Leadership Scottsbluff is an agriculture session in which I presented information related to natural resources and production agriculture. This was the third time I have had the pleasure of presenting to this group, and I thoroughly enjoy each time I get the opportunity to be in front of this group.

The Resource Conservation Department has been meeting and discussing potential tree planting projects with many landowners across the District. Todd and Ken have also been working closely with those landowners that were affected by wildfire in the Wildcat Hills, to help them revitalize their properties by re-planting trees through a Nebraska Forest Service reforestation program. Tree orders

continue to come in daily and at the time of this writing, Todd expects to see his first shipment of seedlings in just a few days.

The Water Resources Conservation Department has steadily been increasing their late Winter workload by beginning annual battery replacements of Seametrics, and Senninger flow meters. On the 15th of March, Lynn and Keelie will start the 2024 Spring static water measurements. The water measurement and battery changes should wrap up by April 1st in which the staff will move right into Spring water quality sampling. The water department has recently finished some monitoring well maintenance and are currently working on the NUlabs project cooperatively shared with the University of Nebraska.

I have had the opportunity for the past several years to ride along with the Nebraska Lead group and provide insight to this group regarding groundwater management in the NPNRD. I again have this opportunity on April 8th in which I will ride along with the group as they tour Lake Minatare and hear about management of surface water, as well as UNL Extension on the history of the North Platte Project.

As a reminder to the Water Resources Committee. A meeting of this committee will be held on March 26th at 3:00. Currently the agenda consists of a variance request by Gary Wiedeman as well as continued discussion regarding future nutrient management rules and regulations.

On February 20th the Staff Ranked and Scored all NSWCP applications received since last February. 70 applications were received, and the results of the ranking are as follows:

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| NC-14 Planned Grazing Systems | 22 Applications | \$101,563.73 |
| NC-17 Irrigation Water Management | 37 Applications | \$112,688.95 |
| NC-10 Pasture Planting | 8 Applications | \$25,953.33 |
| NC-11 Critical Area Planting | 3 Applications | \$6,800.74 |
| Total | 70 Applications | \$247,006.75 |

Since adopting the new billing and collection procedures for the Harrisburg Water System, I would like to give an update as to the progress. February billing and collections were a very tedious process, but I am pleased to announce all patrons are paid current on their February water usage. On February 11th there were 12 residents that had not paid their bill. The Water Department Staff posted notice and followed up with in-person and phone call visits with those customers and by turn off day all patrons had cleared their monthly balances. The March billing is showing even more progress with only 6 patrons with unpaid balances as of the 11th. In-person visits by Staff and door postings have already occurred.

8. Legislative Update

Scott Schaneman covered referenced the NARD legislative update.

9. Robust Review Presentation -- NDNR

Jennifer Schellpeper presented on behalf of NEDNR.

Statute on Water Review Board. Scott Schaneman questioned what either entity would do with the others authority.

There was a spike in the groundwater only irrigated acres in 2014. Discussion between Schaneman, Schellpeper, and Kuntz was about possibilities for the spike.

Pathfinder Irrigation recharge was not included in the excess flow slide. Should add 7,000 af to the 2011 levels.

Jennifer Schellpeper explained the economic viability and what the districts will be judged on in the future. The decisions of what all of the water use is and where it goes is evaluated over time. Schaneman feels these numbers have come up in a divisive way. Jennifer acknowledged that the law does not define what fully appropriated is. Schaneman feels these numbers create a barrier between stakeholders and NRDs. Schaneman asked how we get past the piece of what all of the groundwater depletions have been since the beginning of use. Feels this is what stands in the way. Schellpeper stated we have to know all of the uses of groundwater development. Schaneman explained the price this district has paid to get what it has back to the stream. Another issue is the ability of this district to have breathing room. Schellpeper stated this NRD has gone above and beyond. Feels this NRD is already in the area of fully appropriated. Other NRDs have not reached that level.

Lapaseotes asked who determines when we are fully appropriated. Schellpeper stated it will need to go through the stakeholder group.

Andreas asked if there is data back to 1953. Kuntz explained the existence of aerial photos and the model going back to 1953.

Westphal asked if there was a moratorium on wells downstream. There is through Central Platte.

Megan Dockery asked why we are tracking this use. It is for understanding the water balance.

Dockery asked if this NRD is backed into a corner for overachieving.

Andreas explained it is like a carrot being dangled in front of us. Schellpeper does not have the answer to what fully appropriated is.

Darnall asked where we are in the quest to determine fully appropriated. Lapaseotes expressed the frustration of having to wait for a fully appropriated status.

Schaneman expressed there are farms that are not going to make the allocation, one of which that will lose water use for the next 15 years. Eirich feels we are holding ourselves back by cutting off our ability to progress.

DNR is hopeful that NPPD and CNPPID can work out their issues before the next Robust Review.

10. Adjourn

There being no further business, Eirich called for a motion to adjourn.

A motion was made by Reuter, seconded by Henkel, to adjourn at 4:06p.m. Motion passed.

Aye: Andreas, Darnall, Eirich, Henkel, Lapaseotes, Reuter, Westphal

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Deines, Weinreis