

**UPPER ELKHORN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
May 24, 2021 – 7:00 PM
O’Neill, Nebraska**

CALL TO ORDER, STATEMENT OF ADVERTISEMENT AND OPEN MEETING LAW NOTIFICATION:

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Vice Chairman Keith Heithoff. The meeting was advertised in the Holt County Independent, the official NRD newspaper, and a copy of the Open Meetings Act was posted for public review.

DIRECTORS PRESENT:

Gary Bartak	Kevin Blair	Chris Dierks	Cody Frank	Marv Fritz
Curtis Gotschall	Keith Heithoff	Jim Keller	Gene Kelly	Aaron Rice
Roy Stewart	Art Tanderup	Chip Whitaker		

DIRECTORS ABSENT:

Michael Moser John Vogel

STAFF PRESENT:

Dennis Schueth - General Manager
Joslynn Vanderslice - Water Resources Manager
Kelly Kloppenborg – Water Resources Technician
Wayne Frederick - Water Resources Technician
Beth Walsh - Information & Education Coordinator
Andrea Fisher - Administrative Secretary
Krissey McClintic – Administrative Secretary
Aron Lewis - Forestry, Wildlife & Resources Conservationist

GUESTS PRESENT:

Adam Nolan – NRCS – Neligh Office
Whitney Gappa – BGMA Coordinator – Norfolk, NE
Nancy Bitney – Neligh, NE

ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

⇒ It was moved by Curtis Gotschall and seconded by Jim Keller to adopt the agenda. **AYE:** Bartak, Blair, Dierks, Frank, Fritz, Gotschall, Heithoff, Keller, Kelly, Rice, Stewart, Tanderup & Whitaker. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **ABSENT:** Moser & Vogel. **MOTION CARRIED.**

MINUTES:

The minutes of the April Meeting were reviewed by the Directors. ⇒ It was moved by Gene Kelly and seconded by Dierks to approve the minutes of the April Meeting. **AYE:** Bartak, Blair, Dierks, Frank, Fritz, Gotschall, Heithoff, Keller, Kelly, Rice, Stewart & Tanderup. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** Whitaker. **ABSENT:** Moser & Vogel. **MOTION CARRIED.**

TREASURERS REPORT:

The April treasurers report was reviewed by the Directors. ⇨ **It was moved by Roy Stewart and seconded by Gene Kelly to approve the April Treasurers Report. AYE: Bartak, Blair, Dierks, Frank, Fritz, Gotschall, Heithoff, Keller, Kelly, Rice, Stewart, Tanderup & Whitaker. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Moser & Vogel. MOTION CARRIED.**

PUBLIC FORUM-INPUT:

Nancy Bitney addressed the Board regarding her Groundwater Irrigated Acre Expansion application for the SW 20-26-6. When filling out the criteria ranking sheet they chose to use an existing well to gain 10 points which now they would like to change to applying for a new well since they do not need the 10 points to meet the minimum score. When applying they were not aware of the number of acres which had been applied for or how many points they would need to qualify for the Expansion acres. They did score enough over the minimum of 140 that they would now like a variance to put in a new well instead of using the existing well. ⇨ **It was moved by Aaron Rice and seconded by Gene Kelly to uphold the Groundwater Irrigated Acre Criteria Ranking Sheet for the SW 20-26-6 as submitted during the October 2020 signup. AYE: Bartak, Blair, Dierks, Fritz, Gotschall, Heithoff, Keller, Kelly, Rice, Stewart, Tanderup & Whitaker. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: Frank. ABSENT: Moser & Vogel. MOTION CARRIED.** Applicants are responsible for completing the application they submitted prior to the deadline for the corresponding growing season. Once the application has been completed the applicant may request a well permit. It was the consensus of the Board that it is not in the best interest of the program to allow landowners to make changes based on the outcome of applications after the October 31 signup deadline.

AGENCY & STAFF REPORTS:

NARD Report: Gene Kelly reported that the next meeting is June 6 which is being held in conjunction with the Basin Tour.

DNR Report: Garry Anderson's report was handed out at the board meeting.

NRCS Report: Brandon Peterson's report was mailed out to the Directors. Adam Nolan, NRCS Neligh, attended the meeting. Adam gave an update on the EQIP program and reported that they have 56 applications pre-approved for 2.2 million dollars. The CSP program was highly competitive this year and they were only able to fund 1 contract. CSP is currently on hold until the new program rules are received. There will be a new program available, EQPI-CIC, which is a combination of EQIP and CSP. These will be 5 year contracts and allow landowners to choose which fields they would like to enter. NRCS is currently at 50% capacity and the doors will remain locked for the foreseeable future. Cooperators can contact the office for information and appointments. Adam also reported that NRCS Secretary, Caitlin Smith, gave birth to twin boys and everyone is doing well.

RC&D Report:

North Central RC&D: Jim Keller reported that the electronics recycling was a big success.

Loup Basin RC&D: No Report.

Northeast RC&D: No Report.

Information & Education Report: Beth Walsh's report was mailed out in the Directors packets. Right now Beth is busy with the Chemigation program. Renewal Chemigation applications are due June 1.

Water Resources Report: Joslynn Vanderslice's report was mailed out in the Directors packets. Joslynn reported that we are at 87% of Phase II compliance. The WRWS committee held a mid-month meeting to go over potential rule changes to the GWMP Rules and Regulations. If the committee is pleased with the draft of

the rules and regs, it will be shared with the full board at the May meeting for further comments. Static water level measurements have been compiled and a copy of the results were reviewed with the Directors. Most of the sub-district results noted a decrease. There will be a meeting for the UENRD Voluntary IMP June 24.

Bazile Management Area: Whitney Gappa, BGMA Program Coordinator's report; and, Jeremy Milander's report was mailed out in the Directors packets. Whitney Gappa, new BGMA Program Coordinator, attended the meeting and introduced herself to the Board. Whitney reported that she has been working on the PIP plan, spring incentive payments and meeting with cooperators. She also announced that the BGMA Field Day will be held September 9.

Holt County Extension: No Report.

EXCUSED ABSENCES:

⇒ It was moved by Jim Keller and seconded by Gene Kelly to excuse the absence of Michael Moser and John Vogel. **AYE:** Bartak, Blair, Dierks, Frank, Fritz, Gotschall, Heithoff, Keller, Kelly, Rice, Stewart, Tanderup & Whitaker. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **ABSENT:** Moser & Vogel. **MOTION CARRIED.**

COMMITTEE REPORTS & RECOMENDATIONS:

Legislative, Finance and Planning Committee: The Committee met prior to the board meeting and reviewed the list of current bills to be paid, accounts receivable, bank statements and cost share requests.

1. **Action of Current Bills and Cost Share Requests:** The Committee reviewed the current bills. ⇒ It was moved by Roy Stewart and seconded by Jim Keller to approve the current bills for payment. **AYE:** Bartak, Blair, Dierks, Frank, Fritz, Gotschall, Heithoff, Keller, Kelly, Rice, Stewart, Tanderup & Whitaker. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **ABSENT:** Moser & Vogel. **MOTION CARRIED.** Roy Stewart noted that the accounts receivable look good as well as the bank statements. The committee also reviewed the costshare and are waiting on the status of some of the applications.

Water Resources and Watershed Committee: The Committee met prior to the board meeting.

1. **Groundwater Acre Expansion-Transfer Application Request or Issues:** This was covered earlier.
2. **Groundwater Management Plan Rules and Regulations Review:** Joslynn Vanderslice handed out a draft of the proposed changes to the GWMP Rules and Regulations as well as the overview list of the changes. Joslynn went through the overview of changes from Don Blankenau and the mid-month committee meeting. The Directors should review the proposed changes and contact Joslynn with any questions or concerns. The board will need to act on the changes at the July board meeting in order to have the changes become effective by October 1.
3. **4 R Proposal:** Dennis Schueth distributed a handout regarding a new Soil Health Concept. There has been increasing discussion regarding the 4 R's – right source, right rate, right time and right place. These are aspects that the NRDs are already promoting through their conservation practices. The NARD is working on a plan to streamline communication regarding these issues in an effort to make sure we are all working toward the same goal and not developing a new initiative that already exists.

Personnel, Equipment, Promotion & Education Committee: The Committee met prior to the board meeting to discuss a website update.

1. **UENRD Website Upgrading-Update:** Last month the committee narrowed it down to a couple of different companies both of which had various options. After reviewing the cost of each company one was found to be more cost efficient than the other. ⇒ It was moved by Curtis Gotschall and seconded by Art Tanderup to approve up to \$7,000 to work with Hollman Media to update the UENRD website. **AYE:** Bartak, Blair, Dierks, Frank, Fritz, Gotschall, Heithoff, Keller, Kelly, Rice, Stewart, Tanderup & Whitaker. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **ABSENT:** Moser & Vogel. **MOTION CARRIED.**

REGIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (RCPP) PROPOSAL-FIRE & WATER; NORTH CENTRAL – NORTHEAST NEBRASKA: Dennis Schueth distributed a handout regarding this proposal. Nebraska Game and Parks would be the lead agency and is asking other agencies to partner on the project. The Fire and Water RCPP project is seeking to integrate grassland and cropland conservation practices to increase the demand for larger scale prescribed burning and cover crops. They are asking for in-kind services, funding and/or a letter of support for the project. This would include Antelope County and a portion of Holt County in the UENRD. ⇒ **It was moved by Aaron Rice and seconded by Roy Stewart not to support or participate in this proposal. AYE: Bartak, Blair, Dierks, Frank, Fritz, Gotschall, Keller, Rice, Stewart & Tanderup. NAY: Heithoff & Whitaker. ABSTAIN: Kelly. ABSENT: Moser & Vogel. MOTION CARRIED.**

COALITION/TASK FORCE UPDATE:

- a) **Niobrara River Basin Alliance:** Dennis Schueth reported that the Alliance met with NPPD and NG&P. The group is hopeful that an official document can be completed in July to submit to NeDNR. NPPD will be applying for the decommissioning of the facility.
- b) **Lower Platte River Basin Water Management Plan Coalition:** The Coalition met on April 27 and all parties are working on their portion of the annual report.
- c) **Nebraska Habitat Conservation Coalition (Piping Plover):** No Report.
- d) **Nebraska Ground Water Management Coalition:** No Report.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT:

Dennis Schueth's report was mailed out in the Director's packets and a copy is kept on file in the NRD office. Dennis handed out information from Miller and Associates regarding the Newport flooding/drainage issues. There may be extenuating issues also contributing to the flooding which will also be addressed. The new Administrative Secretary, Krissy McClintic was introduced to the board.

The next board meeting will be held June 28, 2021 at 7:00 PM.

⇒ **It was moved by Jim Keller and seconded by Gene Kelly to adjourn the board meeting at 8:30 PM. AYE: Bartak, Blair, Dierks, Frank, Fritz, Gotschall, Heithoff, Keller, Kelly, Rice, Stewart, Tanderup & Whitaker. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Moser & Vogel. MOTION CARRIED.**

I, the undersigned Secretary/Treasurer of the Upper Elkhorn Natural Resources District hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the proceedings had and done by the Board of Directors on May 24, 2021 that all of the subjects included in the foregoing proceedings were contained in the agenda for at least twenty-four hours prior to said meeting, the minutes of the Chairman and the Board were in written form and available for public inspection within ten working days and prior to the next convened meeting of said body, that all news media requesting notification of the time and place of said meeting and the subjects to be discussed at said meeting.

Gene Kelly, Secretary/Treasurer