

**UPPER ELKHORN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
April 28, 2025
O'Neill, Nebraska**

CALL TO ORDER:

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Chairman Chris Dierks. 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.

DIRECTOR'S PRESENT:

Bruce Anderson	Kevin Blair	Chris Dierks	Marv Fritz	Curtis Gotschall
Trevor Gotschall	Gene Kelly	Aaron Rice	Tony Sanderson	Allen Schueth
Cameron Smith	Art Tanderup	John Vogel		

DIRECTORS ABSENT:

Matt Beckman Cody Frank

STAFF PRESENT:

Dennis Schueth - General Manager
Beth Walsh - Information & Education Coordinator
Joslynn VanDerslice - Water Resources Manager
Jeff Langan - Administrative Secretary

GUESTS PRESENT:

Brandon Peterson – NRCS – O'Neill, NE
Tevyn Pieper – Sandhills Task Force

ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

⇒ It was moved by Gene Kelly and seconded by Tony Sanderson to adopt the amended agenda. **AYE:** Anderson, Blair, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **ABSENT:** Beckman & Frank. **MOTION CARRIED.** Chairman Dierks not voting.

MINUTES:

The minutes of the March Meeting were reviewed by the Directors. ⇒ It was moved by Art Tanderup and seconded by Gene Kelly to approve the minutes of the March Meeting. **AYE:** Anderson, Blair, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** Rice. **ABSENT:** Beckman & Frank. **MOTION CARRIED.** Chairman Dierks not voting.

TREASURERS REPORT:

The March treasurers report was reviewed by the Directors. ⇒ It was moved by Gene Kelly and seconded by Marv Fritz to approve the March Treasurers Report. **AYE:** Anderson, Blair, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **ABSENT:** Beckman & Frank. **MOTION CARRIED.** Chairman Dierks not voting.

PUBLIC FORUM- INPUT:

None

SANDHILLS TASK FORCE: TEVYN PIEPER:

Tevyn Pieper from the Sandhills Task Force attended the meeting to give the Board an overview of the Sandhills Task Force and their activities. Tevyn began with the STF in October 2023 as the Stream and Wetland Project Coordinator. She highlighted the Bear & Gordon Creek restoration projects and mentioned that there may be a project on Dry Creek to bring the stream back up and move the water through the area slowly. Their goal is to partner with landowners, communities, organizations, and other agencies on projects to benefit the land.

AGENCY & STAFF REPORTS:

NARD Report: Gene Kelly reported that their next meeting will be held in Valentine in conjunction with the NRD Basin Tour highlighting the Middle and Lower Niobrara NRDs. Registration for the Basin Tour is due by May 9. Tour highlights include CSS Farms, Drip Irrigation, Ponderosa Pin trials, Fort Niobrara & Cub Creek Reservoir, Minor Ranch & Niobrara Valley Vineyards, LNNRD facilities, Watershed Management and Spencer Dam.

DNR Report: Chris Dierks reported that he attended the February 19 and April 9 Commission meetings in Kearney. At the April meeting he made committee assignments and had a presentation on water aging. The Commission is also still waiting to see what the Governor's budget is and how it will effect their program funding.

NRCS Report: Brandon Peterson's report was mailed out to the board members. Brandon reported that they are finishing up EQIP contracts and ranking CSP contracts. They may receive some additional EQIP funding through RCPP which would be an additional 3 contracts. It does not appear that there will be a CRP signup this year and there are only 1 million acres left nationwide. Brandon reminded the board that they can get news updates at farmers.gov. Sunday April 27, 2025, was the 90th anniversary for NRCS.

RC&D Report:

North Central RC&D: Marv Fritz reported that the Tire Amnesty event is scheduled for April 30 and May 1 in Valentine. The RC&D will be attending the Sandhills Expo and sponsoring the Lick Tub contest. They have also received another recycled tire bench and will be raffling that off to a North Central RC&D member who are current on their dues.

Loup Basin RC&D: No Report.

Northeast RC&D: Art Tanderup reported that he has attended the last two meetings. The Northeast RC&D is still trying to get organized. They are looking into projects that will help to build back some momentum for the organization. They are considering grant writing and e-recycling.

Information & Education Report: Beth Walsh's report was mailed out in the Directors packets. Beth has been busy processing Chemigation.

Water Resources Report: Joslynn VanDerslice's report was mailed out in the Directors packets. Joslynn handed out and reviewed the noncompliant list for the Phase II reports. There are 112 fields remaining and the certified letters have gone out to remind landowners and operators regarding Phase II compliance. The aerial flyover and reverse osmosis grants were submitted prior to the deadline. The Lower Platte River Basin Water Management Plan Coalition held its annual meeting April 16 at the Lower Platte North NRD. John Engel gave an overview of the coalition, and they extended the increments for another year. The transducer equipment has been ordered. Longitude 103 is still moving forward with Producer Connect and training for producers is being discussed. Static water level readings have been completed and data is now being compiled.

Bazile Groundwater Management Area-Report: Lisa Lauver, Bazile Groundwater Management Area Coordinator, report was mailed out in the Directors packets. Dennis Schueth gave an update on the Extension Educator for this area. They have received 3 resumes but none of the applicants were qualified.

Holt County Extension: No Report.

EXCUSED ABSENCES:

⇒ It was moved by Gene Kelly and seconded by Bruce Anderson to excuse the absence of Matt Beckman & Cody Frank. **AYE:** Anderson, Blair, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **ABSENT:** Beckman & Frank. **MOTION CARRIED.** Chair Dierks not voting.

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 on Current Bills and Cost Share Requests:** The Committee reviewed the current bills. Marv Fritz noted three larger bills that came due this month. They had to do with the transducer equipment, Phase II and data migration. The accounts receivable is up due to the tree program. ⇒ It was moved by Marv Fritz and seconded by Gene Kelly to approve the current bills for payment. **AYE:** Anderson, Blair, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **ABSENT:** Beckman & Frank. **MOTION CARRIED.** Chair Dierks not voting. There was one cost share application which met all the requirements for a solar well. As of now, the UENRD cost share funds are earmarked for the tree program and the new NSWCP allocation will be released in July. ⇒ It was moved by Marv Fritz and seconded by Tony Sanderson to approve the Tasler cost share application pending funding. **AYE:** Anderson, Blair, Fritz, C. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. **NAY:** T. Gotschall. **ABSTAIN:** None. **ABSENT:** Beckman & Frank. **MOTION CARRIED.** Chair Dierks not voting.

Water Resources and Watershed Committee: The Committee met prior to the board meeting. John Vogel reported that the committee reviewed a historical acre issue and that they are working on updates to the Groundwater Management Plan.

- 1. Groundwater Irrigated Acre Certification and Groundwater Acre Transfers:** A discrepancy was brought forward from the Kaczor historical acres discussed last month. One corner was missed when figuring the amount of historical acres. ⇒ It was moved by Curtis Gotschall and seconded by John Vogel to approve the missing 4.71 historically irrigated acres in the corner of the NE SE 22-25-9 at 95% for 4.47 acres. **AYE:** Anderson, Blair, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **ABSENT:** Beckman & Frank. **MOTION CARRIED.** Chair Dierks not voting.

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

- 1. UENRD Scholarship Award:** The Committee reviewed the Senior Scholarship applications for 2025 and discussed the applicants and the scholarship process. ⇒ It was moved by Art Tanderup and seconded by Curtis Gotschall to award Senior Scholarships to Gavin Whiting (Summerland Public Schools), Sydney Sybrant (Rock County High School), Loretta Scofield (O'Neill St. Mary's); and, Jameson Estill (Stuart High School) as the alternate. **AYE:** Anderson, Blair, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **ABSENT:** Beckman & Frank. **MOTION CARRIED.** Chairman Dierks not voting.

2. **Water Resources Technician Position:** Dennis Schueth met with the Committee to discuss the job opening coming up due to staff retiring. The Water Resources Technician job description has been updated, and Dennis would like to start advertising for the opening. This would allow some time to find a good applicant and allow them training time with the current employee. It was noted how difficult it is to find qualified individuals willing to work. ⇒ **It was moved by Art Tanderup and seconded by Trevor Gotschall to begin advertising for the Water Resources Technician. AYE: Anderson, Blair, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Beckman & Frank. MOTION CARRIED. Chair Dierks not voting.**
3. **Equipment – Vehicle:** Dennis Schueth updated the Committee on the vehicle and equipment funds obligated in this year’s fiscal budget. Due to the staff’s ability to shop cost effectively, the purchase of the tractor, trailer and other equipment has come in under the original budgeted price. The 2015 Tahoe has been on the vehicle replacement list and with the funds saved from the other equipment purchases, Dennis is proposing that the Board consider getting bids to replace the Tahoe this fiscal budget. ⇒ **It was moved by Art Tanderup and seconded by Trevor Gotschall to start the bidding process for a large SUV to replace the Tahoe and allocate up to \$75,000. AYE: Anderson, Blair, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: Rice. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Beckman & Frank. MOTION CARRIED. Chair Dierks not voting.**

COALITION/TASK FORCE UPDATE:

- **Niobrara River Basin Alliance:** No Report
- **Lower Platte River Basin Water Management Plan Coalition:** This was covered under the Water Resources Manager’s report.
- **Nebraska Habitat Conservation Coalition (Piping Plover) Alternate Representative:** The annual meeting was held April 14th at the Central Platte NRD in Grand Island. This meeting is held annually to keep the Coalition active. At this time, there are no new species being labelled and no new critical habitat being established.
- **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 at the NRD office. Dennis reported that tree crews have been out planting and should finish up in the next few days. There is approximately 30 miles of weed barrier to install which will begin as soon as the trees are planted. The district has been contacted regarding summer employment. A zoom meeting is scheduled for Friday with this individual.

MAY BOARD MEETING:

Due to the Memorial Day holiday in May, the next regular board meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 19, 2025, at 7:00 PM with committee meetings scheduled prior to the board meeting.

⇒ **It was moved by Aaron Rice and seconded by Tony Sanderson to adjourn at 8:15 PM. AYE: Anderson, Blair, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Beckman & Frank. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman Dierks not voting.**

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 April 28, 2025 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