

**UPPER ELKHORN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
May 19, 2025 – 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 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.

DIRECTORS PRESENT:

Bruce Anderson	Matt Beckman	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:

Cody Frank

STAFF PRESENT:

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

GUESTS PRESENT:

Aaron Romesser – NRCS Office, O’Neill
Amy Timmerman – Holt County Extension, O’Neill

ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

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

MINUTES:

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

TREASURERS REPORT:

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

PUBLIC FORUM-INPUT: HDR-JOHN ENGEL, LOWER PLATTE RIVER BASIN COALITION PLAN AND

METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW: John Engel from HDR Engineering attended the board meeting via Zoom to update the Directors on the Lower Platte River Basin Water Management Plan Coalition basin wide plan. Members of the Coalition are the Lower Loup NRD, Lower Platte North NRD, Lower Platte South NRD, Lower Elkhorn NRD, Papio-Missouri NRD, Upper Loup NRD, Upper Elkhorn NRD and the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources. John reviewed the purpose of the plan and its goals. He reviewed the first 5-year increment and benefits; and, the 2nd increment activities. They are now discussing the timeline for the next review and updates. A copy of John's presentation was provided to the board members.

AGENCY & STAFF REPORTS:

NARD Report: Gene Kelly reported that the Governor signed the bill merging the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Environment and Energy. Dennis Schueth sent out information showing where the Governor is planning to divert funds from in an effort to balance the budget. A lot seems to be coming from the Environmental Trust and this has upset some individuals because that was not the purpose of the funds in the trust.

DNR Report: The Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Environment and Energy have been merged and Jesse Bradley has been named Director.

NRCS Report: Brandon Peterson's report was mailed out to the Directors. Aaron Romesser attended the meeting and reported that they are finishing up writing and obligating EQIP contracts. They were able to rank 4 CSP applications and it does look like there will be a CRP signup with limited acres available. Staff are also in the process of completing compliance reviews for the Food Security Act of the Farm Bill. He also reminded the Board that they can get the latest news and updates on Farmers.gov.

RC&D Report:

North Central RC&D: Marv Fritz reported that they have completed collecting tires for the tire amnesty recycling project and they were 50 tons over and had to shut down earlier than expected. They have also received another recycled tire bench and will be raffling that off to a North Central RC&D member who is current on their dues.

Loup Basin RC&D: No Report.

Northeast RC&D: Art Tanderup reported that they have not met since our last meeting.

Information & Education Report: Beth Walsh's report was mailed out in the Directors packets. Right now Beth is busy with the Chemigation program. Radio reminders are airing now until the June 1 deadline. She also reported that the newsletter has been completed and will be going out in all the local newspapers.

Water Resources and Other Department Reports: Joslynn VanDerslice's report was mailed out in the Directors packets. Joslynn reported that the annual meeting with Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for the Voluntary Integrated Management Plan (VIMP) has been scheduled for July 16 at 1:00 PM. Directors are invited to attend either in person here at the office or via Zoom. Joslynn reviewed the noncompliance list for Phase II reports. There are still 102 reports to be completed. The static water level results were reviewed. This year was the year that the newly sampled wells beginning in 2015 were added in to the results. This caused some discussion since the newly added sampled wells created controversial results regarding the averages. The NRD uses level depth to water when taking static water measurements and discussion was held regarding the effects of elevation. Joslynn will continue to work on the data for the next meeting.

Bazile Management Area: Lisa Lauver, Project Coordinator's, report was mailed out in the Director's packets. It was reported that 11 more applications have been received for the Extension Educator position and are in the process of being ranked. Amy Timmerman, UNL Extension Educator, noted the upcoming Regenerative Ag field day scheduled for July 8 and reviewed the agenda.

UNL Holt County Extension: Amy Timmerman, UNL Extension Educator, reported that she is working with 2 on farm research projects dealing with pivot bio. She is also working with the Middle Niobrara NRD on the Resilient Soil Health & Water Management producer panel for the Sandhills Expo June 18 at the Rock County Community Center. The MNNRD also has a one tower pivot set up at their office location where they are planning to showcase cover crops and soil health. Amy has also received a request from a rancher to discuss irrigation water management and may look into some irrigation 101 discussions and possible 2-3 minute video clips.

EXCUSED ABSENCES:

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

UENRD WEATHER STATION (MESONET) UPDATE:

Dennis Schueth reported that we are having issues with setting up an agreement with the UNL regarding the NRD's funding of the project and some of the equipment. UNL views this funding as a contribution and the UENRD views the funding as an equipment purchase which would revert back to the NRD if the project ended.

⇒ It was moved by John Vogel and seconded by Aaron Rice to work with UNL Mesonet and request the Upper Elkhorn NRD check be returned and have the equipment purchase billed to the NRD for payment. **AYE:** Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **ABSENT:** Frank. **MOTION CARRIED.** Chairman 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 costshare. It was noted that the accounts receivable was quite large due to the tree and weed barrier programs. There was one costshare application to review for a solar well; and, one costshare application that was not completed by the deadline requesting an extension.

1. **Action of Current Bills and Cost Share Requests:** The Committee reviewed the current bills. ⇒ It was moved by Marv Fritz and seconded by Tony Sanderson to approve the current bills for payment. **AYE:** Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **ABSENT:** Frank. **MOTION CARRIED.** Chairman Dierks not voting. ⇒ It was moved by Marv Fritz and seconded by Tony Sanderson to approve the Brad Steffen solar well costshare request pending funding. **AYE:** Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Fritz, C. Gotschall, Kelly, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. **NAY:** T. Gotschall & Rice. **ABSTAIN:** None. **ABSENT:** Frank. **MOTION CARRIED.** Chairman Dierks not voting. ⇒ It was moved by Marv Fritz and seconded by Bruce Anderson to extend the Vogel costshare application until June 15. **AYE:** Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith & Tanderup. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** Vogel. **ABSENT:** Frank. **MOTION CARRIED.** Chairman Dierks not voting

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

1. **Groundwater Irrigated Acre Certification and Groundwater Acre Transfers:** None

2. Update on Groundwater Rules and Regulations: This was covered under the Water Resources Managers Report.

Personnel, Equipment, Promotion and Education Committee: The Committee met prior to the board meeting and reviewed the Water Resources Technician position resumes as of May 19 and the vehicle bids received.

1. Water Resources Technician Position-Update Resumes May 19, 2025:

2. Dennis Schueth and Wayne Frederick solicited bids to replace the Tahoe from Krotter's, Johnny Dodge and Galyens. Bids were due by May 12. The Committee reviewed the bids submitted. ⇨ **It was moved by Art Tanderup and seconded by Curtis Gotschall to accept the bid from Galyens for the Expedition with the 360° camera and adaptive cruise control. AYE: Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Sanderson, Schueth, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: Rice & Smith. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Frank. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman Dierks not voting.**

COALITION/TASK FORCE UPDATE:

- **Niobrara River Basin Alliance:** Dennis Schueth reported that the Interim Study for the Niobrara Scenic River to be transferred from the National Parks Service to the State of Nebraska was included in the Directors packets. The Alliance will be meeting May 20, 2025.
- **Lower Platte River Basin Water Management Plan Coalition:** No Report.
- **Nebraska Habitat Conservation Coalition (Piping Plover):** No Report.
- **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 noted a flyer included in the Directos packets for a Cedar Workshop on June 5, 2025.

The next board meeting will be held June 23, 2025 at 7:00 PM.

⇨ **It was moved by Tony Sanderson and seconded by Marv Fritz to adjourn the board meeting at 9:25 PM. AYE: Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: 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 May 28, 2024 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/Treasure