

**UPPER ELKHORN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
July 28, 2025 -- 7:00 P.M.  
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. The statement of advertisement and the open meetings law posting were noted at 7:05 P.M. by Chairman Chris Dierks.

**DIRECTORS PRESENT:**

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

**DIRECTORS ABSENT:**

None

**STAFF PRESENT:**

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

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Brandon Peterson – NRCS, O’Neill Office  
Bryan Cornett – Antelope County Weed Dept  
William Babutzke – Holt County Weed Dept  
Carla Stagemeyer – North Central RC&D

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA:**

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

**MINUTES:**

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

**TREASURERS REPORT:**

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

## **PUBLIC FORUM-INPUT OR COMMENTS:**

**Northeast Weed Management Area:** Bryan Cornett and William Babutzke attended the meeting to discuss the Upper Elkhorn NRD supporting an NET Grant for weed management across Northeast Nebraska. They are requesting \$6,000 per year for three years if the grant is approved. Other NRDs being contacted include Lower Niobrara NRD, Lewis & Clark NRD and Lower Elkhorn NRD. This item will be discussed during the budget workshop in August.

## **AGENCY & STAFF REPORTS:**

**NARD Report:** Gene Kelly reported that the board has not met since June. The NARD fall conference is scheduled for September 29 & 30 in Kearney, Nebraska. The NARD Board will meet following the conference.

**NeDWEE - Natural Resources Commission:** Chris Dierks reported that the Commission met July 23. The Scoring Committee met prior to that to rank the applications. It was noted that there is a discrepancy between what the funding would be for the Water Sustainability Fund due to legislative actions. The WSF only received \$1.5 million dollars and was only able to fund 2 projects less than \$250,000 and 2 projects greater than \$250,000. All the grant applications scored well; however, the Upper Elkhorn NRD grants did not score high enough to be approved. It was noted that some Commission members were surprised that the UENRD had not done an aerial flyover to date. The next meeting is scheduled following the NARD Fall Conference. It was also reported that some of the Upper Elkhorn NRD Directors and Staff met with members of the Department of Water, Environment and Energy to discuss the district's VIMP plan July 16 in O'Neill. The plan was reviewed and no changes have been recommended at this time.

**NRCS Report:** Brandon Peterson's report was mailed out to the Directors. Brandon reported that they are finishing up writing and obligating EQIP funds. There were 19 contracts worth over \$1.9 million on just over 10,000 acres. They were able to fund 4 CSP contracts worth \$303,448 on 15,973 acres. They did have a CRP sign-up and received 65 offers between the 2 offices. Brandon also reported that due to the current travel restrictions most NRCS personnel will not be attending the NARD Fall Conference. The latest news and updates can be found at [Farmers.gov](http://Farmers.gov).

## **RC&D Report:**

**North Central RC&D:** Marv Fritz reported that they met on July 9. Carla Stagemeyer, new Executive Director, attended the meeting to discuss the Upper Elkhorn NRD participating in another Tire Amnesty grant for the O'Neill area in 2026. They would need the NRD to again pay the upfront costs of the project and then be reimbursed by the grant. This grant would be for 700 ton and a cost of \$160,000. Carla also distributed their recycling guide which is a work in progress so if anyone has comments please let her know. Carla will proceed with completing the grant proposal and get it submitted by the August 20 deadline. This expense would be an in and out for the NRD but would need to be included in the FY 25-26 budget. ⇒ **It was moved by Marv Fritz and seconded by John Vogel to approve \$160,000 for the Tire Amnesty Grant for 2026. AYE: Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman Dierks not voting.**

**Loup Basin RC&D:** No Report.

**Northeast RC&D:** Art Tanderup reported that they met June 24. They are working on an electronics recycling grant and are discussing the possibility of raising their dues.

**Information & Education Report:** Beth Walsh's report was mailed out in the Directors packets. Beth reported that the NARD Annual Conference in Kearney is scheduled for September 29-30. There was a tentative agenda and golf registration in the director's folders. Beth passed around a sign-up sheet for the event.

**Water Resources Report:** Joslynn VanDerslice's report was mailed out in the Directors packets. Joslynn reported that there are still 88 Phase II noncompliant fields. We have received the transducer/telemetry equipment and are working to get it deployed. Water sampling has started but there have been some issues with the rains we are receiving and getting samples. Hopefully we are able to begin rolling out Longitude 103 this fall. Joslynn helped Amy Timmerman, UNL, with the Edible Aquifer program during O'Neill's Summerfest festivities in the park. They had approximately 75 kids and adults stop by the booth and learn more about our aquifer system in Nebraska. Information was handed out to the Directors regarding 2 bus tours sponsored by the Bow Creek Rural Water Project and Bazile Groundwater Management Area. Joslynn also handed out information regarding the 2025 Great Plains Water Conference which is a regional water conference being held in Omaha this September. There will be four local presentations regarding the Bazile Groundwater Management Area given by Joslynn, Amy Timmerman (UNL), Lisa Lauver (BGMA) and Connie McCarthy (LNNRD).

**Bazile Management Report:** Lisa Lauver-BGMA Coordinator's report was mailed out in the Directors packets.

**UNL Extension:** No Report.

**EXCUSED ABSENCES:** None

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS & RECOMMENDATIONS:**

##### **Legislative, Finance and Planning Committee:**

- 1. Action on Current Bills and Cost share Requests:** The committee met prior to the board meeting and reviewed the current bills, accounts receivable, bank statements and cost share applications. ⇒ **It was moved by Marv Fritz and seconded by Gene Kelly to approve the current bills for payment. AYE: Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman Dierks not voting.** They also reviewed two costshare applications. ⇒ **It was moved by Marv Fritz and seconded by Curtis Gotschall to approve the cost share applications for Dicke and Beelaert at 75% up to \$7,000 pending funding. AYE: Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman Dierks not voting.**
- 2. 2025-2026 Budget Workshop – week of August 18:** Dennis Schueth will review the calendar and contact the Directors for a date the week of August 18.

**Water Resources & 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:** The Committee reviewed a complaint from Dan Brummels regarding the status of his Chemigation applications. Dan contacted Chris Dierks because he was not happy that he was charged with New Chemigation application fees for turning his applications in the day after the deadline. Dierks stated his opinion regarding the fact that the board could discuss a variance for such circumstances. It was noted by WRWS Committee members that the reason for the fee increase in 2023 was to discourage landowners from letting their applications lapse. Applications were mailed out in February allowing landowners ample time to return them before the deadline. Notices were also sent out to the newspapers and radio reminding cooperators of the deadline. Dierks asked if this was an issue that the Board would like to put on an upcoming agenda but it did not receive support to move forward. John Vogel reported that the Committee reviewed the Chemigation issue; the status of the weather station and monitoring wells; and, Groundwater Management Plan Rules and Regulations. Some of the updates to the rules and regulations are fairly straightforward; however, some will take longer to update for public hearing. Aaron Rice noted that they are working on Rule 16, transfer rules, acre

certification and surface to groundwater uses. Any Director who has a concern should contact someone on the WRWS Committee.

**Personnel, Equipment, Promotion & Education Committee:** The Committee met on July 21 to review salary information; meet with staff; and budgeting considerations for expenditures associated with the FY 25-26 fiscal budget regarding equipment. Art Tanderup reported that the Committee discussed salaries and current and future equipment needs for the maintenance and improvement of District programs.

**1. FY 25-26 Budget: Salary Recommendations & Equipment List:** ⇒ It was moved by Art Tanderup and seconded by Cody Frank to go into executive session at 8:38 PM to discuss job performances of the Upper Elkhorn NRD Staff and to protect the public interests and reputation of those from any undue harm and the impact it may have on the FY 25-26 salaries and excuse all guests and staff except for the General Manager from the executive session. AYE: Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman Dierks not voting. ⇒ It was moved by Art Tanderup and seconded by Trevor Gotschall to come out of executive session at 9:01 PM. AYE: Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman Dierks not voting. ⇒ It was moved by Art Tanderup and seconded by Cody Frank to approve the salary recommendations of the Committee for the Fiscal Year 25-26. AYE: Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman Dierks not voting. Dennis Schueth reviewed the equipment list previously discussed by the PEPE Committee and will bring it forward for discussion during the budget workshop.

#### **COALITION/TASK FORCE UPDATE:**

**Niobrara River Basin Coalition:** The Alliance held an in-person/zoom meeting on July 17<sup>th</sup> to discuss Legislative Resolution 158 regarding the Niobrara Scenic River Designation held by the National Park Service. This resolution would turn the designation over to the State or willing partners such as the NGPC, NRDs, Niobrara Council, counties etc. A public hearing on this resolution has been scheduled for September 19. Between now and that date, a lot of information needs to be collected and summarized if this Niobrara Scenic River oversight would occur.

**Lower Platte River Basin Water Management Plan Coalition:** No Report.

**Nebraska Habitat Conservation Coalition (Piping Plover):** No Report.

**Nebraska Groundwater 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 will look to schedule the budget workshop the week of August 18 and encourage's the Directors to attend.

#### **AUGUST BOARD MEETING:**

The next regular meeting date for the UENRD would be August 25, 2025 at 7:00 PM.

⇒ It was moved by Gene Kelly and seconded by Matt Beckman to adjourn at 9:12 PM. AYE: Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman Dierks not voting.

I, the undersigned Secretary 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 July 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.

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Gene Kelly, Secretary