UPPER ELKHORN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
October 27, 2025 -- 7:00 P.M.
O'Neill, NE

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 in the Holt County Independent and the open meetings law posting were all noted at 7:00 P.M. by Chairman Chris Dierks.

DIRECTORS PRESENT:

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:
Bruce Anderson Matt Beckman

STAFF PRESENT:
Dennis Schueth, General Manager
Joslynn VanDerslice, Water Resources Manager
Kelly Kloppenborg, Water Resources Technician
Jeff Langan, Administrative Secretary
Beth Walsh, Information & Education/Chemigation Coordinator

GUESTS PRESENT:
Nate & Misty Osentowski – Rose, NE

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

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

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

PUBLIC FORUM – INPUT / COMMENTS:
Nate & Missy Osentowski – Transfer of Irrigated Acres: The Osentowski's attended the board meeting to discuss the potential of transferring groundwater irrigated acres from the Upper Elkhorn NRD to the Lower Loup NRD. They would like to transfer within Rock County from SE 28-28-19 to the SW SW 33-25-19. They have 141.55 certified acres on the SE 28-28-19 and are only asking for 65 acres to be transferred but have agreed to relinquish the remaining 76.55 acres if allowed to transfer.

If the UENRD would agree to this transfer, it would fall under the Lower Loup NRD guidelines and they may require a ratio of acres to complete the transfer. ⇨**It was moved by Aaron Rice and seconded by John Vogel to support the transfer of groundwater irrigated acres all within Rock County from the Upper Elkhorn NRD to the Lower Loup NRD if it is supported by the Lower Loup NRD for a total of 141.55 certified groundwater irrigated acres. AYE: Blair, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Anderson & Beckman. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman Dierks not voting.**

AGENCY & STAFF REPORTS:

NARD Report: Gene gave an overview of the annual conference and noted that the breakout sessions were very interesting. There were no resolutions submitted for this year's conference. Following the conference, the NARD Board met as well as the Risk Pool. Gene reported that Marcy Luth, AMGL Accounting, reviewed the audits for the NARD and Risk Pool. There were no deficiencies found and everything appeared to be accurate. The general operating account showed a net income of $69,631, the Foundation account showed a net income of $134,665 and the Risk Pool account showed a net income of $628,583 with a total equity in the Risk Pool of $8,905,000. Based on the total equity the NARD board approved an additional payment of $15,000 from the Risk Pool, $15,000 from the General Operating account and $100,000 from the Foundation for the building. This will still leave plenty of reserves in each account. As of August 31, 2025 the office loan balance was $210,335, so this payment will significantly reduce the debt balance. The building note will reprice on December 30th and if nothing changes the new interest rate will be 5.1%. The NARD board approved $1,000 from the foundation for the LEAD program and a general operating fund sponsorship for $500 for the prescribed fire conference. Executive Travel is reviewing the agreement to cost share tree seedlings for 2026 but the Association has not heard back from them. Also, the Risk Pool telehealth fees for 2026 will be changing to .38 cents per member per month. Upcoming events include: October 22 – State Land Judging; November 9-10 NARD board meeting; January 27-28, 2026 – Legislative Conference; March 2-3, 2026 – Water Conference; and, March 28-April1, 2026 NARD Washington D.C. conference.

a) **NARD Fall Conference Update:** No additional comments were made.

DNR Report: Chris Dierks, Elkhorn River Basin Representative: Dierks reported that they met following the NARD Annual Conference. There is currently $37 million within the Water Sustainability Fund; however, there may not be any funding for next year. Chris discussed why the UENRD Water Sustainability Fund applications did not rank very high during the scoring process. It was noted that the members of the Commission couldn't understand why we haven't already done the infrared flyover and why we did not take advantage of the statewide R/O program. Chris also reported that he attended the LENRD board meeting and noted how different their board meetings were compared to the UENRD.

NRCS Report: There was no NRCS report due to the government shutdown.

RC&D Report:

North Central RC&D: Marv Fritz reported that they met on October 8. He reported on the Tire Amnesty event and upcoming shredding event. The RC&D has been discussing holding an electronic collection and are looking into battery recycling. Marv also reported that they should know by the December meeting if they have received the new tire amnesty grant.

Loup Basin RC&D: No Report.

Northeast RC&D: Art Tanderup that they are discussing coordinating an electronics and battery recycling event. He also reported on the ghost town tour and witching for graves during their fall tour.

Information & Education Report: Beth Walsh's report was mailed out in the Director's packets. Beth reported that there have been 6 Expansion of Irrigated Acre applications for approximately 65 acres. The deadline for expansion is October 31, so a full report will be available in November.

Water Resources and Other Department Reports: Joslynn VanDerslice's report was mailed out in the Director's packets. Joslynn reported that since the government shutdown, Mary Zak and Denise Napier have been working in our office and helping out. The Phase II mailing has gone out for the 2025 season. Producer Connect trainings have been scheduled and will also be accepted as a nitrogen recertification option. These training sessions are to sign up producers for Producer Connect and help educate them on the website. Phase II reports are due December 31, 2025 and will only be accepted through the Producer Connect portal. Joslynn also reported that water sampling is done for the season and Kelly, Brett and Wayne have been working on the telemetry set up for the monitoring wells. Grant Mathis will be starting the first week in November.

Bazile Management Area: Joslynn VanDerslice reported that Pablo Duarte has started. Joslynn, Connor Baldwin, Connie McCarthy and Amy Timmerman have been presenting information regarding the Bazile Groundwater Management Area. These presentations have been well accepted and they have been requested to present at other conferences.

Holt County Extension Agent – Amy Timmerman: No Report.

EXCUSED ABSENCES:

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Legislative, Budget and Finance Committee: The Legislative, Finance and Planning Committee met prior to the Board meeting and reviewed the bills, accounts receivable, bank statements and cost share applications. The Great Plains Meter bill was questioned and it was noted that it was for the new flowmeter. There was a question on the bill from Two Rivers Irrigation in Neligh for equipment to upgrade the monitoring wells for the telemetry. Cody Frank asked that the bill be held so he could review it before payment.

1. **Action of Current Bills and Cost Share: ⇨It was moved by Marv Fritz and seconded by Gene Kelly to approve the current bills for payment except for the Two Rivers bill. AYE: Blair, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Anderson & Beckman. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman Dierks not voting.** The Accounts Receivable was up due to water sampling from cooperators.

Water Resources & Watershed Committee: The WRWS Committee met prior to the board meeting. John Vogel reported that the committee received an update on the irrigated expansion program. They also spent a good deal of time discussing the new Reverse Osmosis Cost Share program. A survey was sent out to all the Directors asking their opinion regarding the setup of the program. Only 6 Directors responded and these responses were combined for the WRWS Committee's review. Some of the recommendations from the WRWS Committee included offering 90% cost share, have a $2,000 limit and allow producers to select their own plumber/company for installation. An updated version of what the committee discussed will be sent out prior to the next board meeting for Directors to review before any action is taken. Ken Quandt with McCrometer, would like to come to a board meeting and discuss flowmeters with the board and the possibility of applying for a grant. Ken would not be available for November 24th but could come the week before on November 17th. It was also reported that the NRD has contracted with a well driller to install the monitoring wells at the new weather station in Holt County.

1. **Groundwater Irrigated Acre Certification and Groundwater Acre Transfers:** None
2. **Nate and Missy Osentowski Transfer of Irrigated Acres:** This item was covered earlier in the meeting.

2. **Nitrogen Reduction Incentive Program:** Dennis Schueth reported that the NiRIA is up and running again for the 2026 growing season. The state deadline for this year's program is November 15. The Cornboard has offered another funding opportunity to promote nitrogen efficiency. Guidelines still being developed.

COALITION/TASK FORCE UPDATE:

Niobrara River Basin Alliance: The LR 158 interim study hearing has not been scheduled.
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 to the directors prior to the board meeting in their packets. A copy is included with the official copy of the minutes in the office. Dennis reported that the UENRD will not be contracting with LNNRD next year to plant their trees and lay their fabric. The additional time spent on the LNNRD program is delaying the start of UENRD programs and field work. Dennis also reported that the Risk Pool will be updating the vision component of the insurance, the programs lasers have been reduced, and this is the third year without a rate increase.

NOVEMBER BOARD MEETING:

The next regular board meeting of the Upper Elkhorn NRD is scheduled for November 24, 2025, at 2:30 PM at the O'Neill office. Ken Quandt, McCrometer, would like to address the board but he is only available if the meeting was held November 17. ⇨**It was moved by Gene Kelly and seconded by Cody Frank to hold the next board meeting on November 17, 2025, at 2:30 PM. AYE: Blair, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Anderson & Beckman. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman Dierks not voting.**

⇨**It was moved by Allen Schueth and seconded by Gene Kelly to adjourn the Board meeting at 8:29 PM. AYE: Blair, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Anderson & Beckman. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman Dierks not voting.**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:29 P.M.

I, the undersigned Chairman 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 October 27, 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/Treasurer