

**UPPER ELKHORN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
December 22, 2025 – 2:30 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 all noted at 2:38 P.M. by Chairman Chris Dierks.

DIRECTORS PRESENT:

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

DIRECTORS ABSENT:

Bruce Anderson Tony Sanderson

STAFF PRESENT:

Dennis Schueth, General Manager
Joslynn VanDerslice, Water Resources Manager
Wayne Frederick, Water Resource Technician
Kelly Kloppenborg, Water Resources Technician
Grant Mathis, Water Resources Technician
Brett Sholes, Water Resources Technician
Beth Walsh, Information & Education Coordinator

GUESTS PRESENT:

Donita Pokorny, Dana F Cole – O’Neill, NE
Brandon Peterson, NRCS Office – O’Neill, NE

ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

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

MINUTES:

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

TREASURERS REPORT:

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

DANA F COLE – FY 2024-2025 AUDIT REPORT:

Donita Pokorny, Dana F Cole, attended the board meeting. Donita reviewed the audit report explaining the different aspects of the audit and answering questions from the board. She explained that they did note the segregation of duties which they do every year. This is because we are a small organization and do not have specific people for each aspect of the accounting process. She also reported that they did not find any deficiencies while conducting the audit. ⇒ **It was moved by Gene Kelly and seconded by Marv Fritz to approve the 2024-2025 Audit Report. AYE: Beckman, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Anderson & Sanderson. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman Dierks not voting.**

PUBLIC FORUM, INPUT OR COMMENTS:

Tom Thiele – Acre Expansion/Transfer: Tom Thiele did not attend the board meeting but an update regarding his acre certification issues was given by NRD Staff. Mr. Thiele did find additional historical irrigated acres in the NE SW 14-26-8 which were added to his certified irrigated acre totals. The Directors shared some of their opinions on this issue including that the NRDs purpose is not to hinder a cooperators livelihood; that the expansion/transfer process is may be too restrictive; if the rules and regulations are detrimental than they should be reviewed and changed; and, to determine where to draw the line between the cooperator and protecting the natural environment.

AGENCY & STAFF REPORTS:

NARD Report: Gene Kelly reported that the Legislative Conference is scheduled for January 27 & 28, 2026 at the Embassy Suites in Lincoln.

- The UENRD will need to appoint voting delegates for the NARD Legislative Conference. Upper Elkhorn NRD Directors attending include Matt Beckman, Chris Dierks, Marv Fritz, Curtis Gotschall, Gene Kelly and John Vogel. ⇒ **It was moved by Curtis Gotschall and seconded by Cody Frank to appoint Gene Kelly Voting Delegate and Matt Beckman Alternate for the NARD Legislative Conference. AYE: Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Rice, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: Beckman & Kelly. ABSENT: Anderson & Sanderson. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman Dierks not voting.** Dennis Schueth reported that there has been some issues with the Association signing the new contract with Longitude 103. The Executive Board, NARD and Longitude 103 are trying to work out the details of the contract so we can move forward with the updates.

NeDWEE: Chris Dierks that they have not met since his last report. Brittany Bartak Yield Plus Agronomics, LLC, who is on the Governor’s Water Quality/Quantity Task Force was not able to attend the meeting to give an update on the task force activities.

NRCS Report: Brandon Peterson’s report was mailed out to the Directors. Brandon did report that they now have a deadline for EQIP and CSP sign up which is January 15, 2026. Brandon also reported that they are getting caught up on producer payments and are working on CSP contracts.

RC&D Reports:

North Central RC&D: Marv Fritz reported that they have received word that they have been approved for the Tire Amnesty grants for O’Neill and Springview. The tentative date for the tire amnesty is April. They are also looking into battery recycling as a future grant opportunity.

Loup Basin RC&D: No Report.

Northeast RC&D: Art Tanderup reported that they are also waiting to hear if they have been awarded grants for hazardous waste and electronics collection. They are looking into sponsoring a paper shredding event and are participating in a noxious weed grant.

Information & Education Report: Beth Walsh's report was mailed out in the Directors packets. The NARD Legislative Conference is scheduled for January 27 & 28, 2026 at the Embassy Suites in Lincoln. Beth confirmed those who are planning to attend the conference. She will update the hotel reservations and send in the registration for conference.

Water Resources Report: Joslynn VanDerslice's report was mailed out in the Directors packets. Joslynn noted that Phase II reporting is taking up most of her time as well as Grant's time. They are both working with cooperators and getting them signed in for the new online reporting platform and addressing questions that are arising from the new process. Brett Sholes reported that Phase III soil sampling should be completed December 23. So far the results have shown 3 new sites triggering but no repeat sites from last year.

Bazile Management Area Report: Joslynn VanDerslice reported on the Northeast Nebraska Ag Conference held December 16 in Norfolk. Approximately 250 cooperators were in attendance and a copy of the program agenda was handed out. Joslynn & Amy Timmerman were planning to present their BGMA session this month but Amy had a conflict, so they will move it to the January board meeting. They are also planning to introduce the new Extension Educator for the area and hopefully the new BGMA Project Coordinator.

UNL Extension: No Report.

EXCUSED ABSENCES:

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Legislative, Finance and Planning Committee Report:

- **Action on Current bills and Cost Share Requests:** The Committee met prior to the Board meeting and reviewed the bills, accounts receivable and bank statements. Marv Fritz noted some of the larger bills for December including the new board room chairs, Land Judging Soil Pit digging, weather stations and the new propane cylinder for the shop. ⇒ It was moved by Marv Fritz and seconded by Aaron Rice to approve the current bills for payment. AYE: Beckman, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Anderson & Sanderson. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman Dierks not voting. There were no cost share applications to review.

Water Resources and Watershed Committee Report:

- **Groundwater Irrigated Acre Expansion for 2026 and Groundwater Acre Transfers:** The Committee met prior to the reviewed three Transfer requests. ⇒ It was moved by John Vogel and seconded by Curtis Gotschall to approve the transfer requests pending completion of all the requirements. AYE: Beckman, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Anderson & Sanderson. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman Dierks not voting.
- **Setting Program Guidelines for UENRD Water Treatment (Nitrogen) Program:** The Committee reviewed the Nitrate Treatment Costshare Guidance document as it was compiled from last months meeting. There was concern over individuals having to pay upfront before the costshare would be issued. It was the consensus to allow participants to submit the bill and the NRD would pay it's portion and the participant would be responsible for the balance, instead of the participant having to wait for their costshare payment. The NRD costshare will be 90% up to \$2,000.

⇒ It was moved by John Vogel and seconded by Marv Fritz to move forward with the Nitrate Treatment Costshare Program with discussed changes to the program. **AYE:** Beckman, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **ABSENT:** Anderson & Sanderson. **MOTION CARRIED.** Chairman Dierks not voting. The Committee also discussed getting the word out regarding the new costshare program. ⇒ It was moved by Curtis Gotschall and seconded by Art Tanderup to allocate up to \$6,500 for advertising in the area NRD newspapers. **AYE:** Beckman, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **ABSENT:** Anderson & Sanderson. **MOTION CARRIED.** Chairman Dierks not voting. Other avenues to publicize the new program were discussed and directors were encouraged to share this information with friends, family and on their social media; a postcard mailing was suggested; Facebook; and, specifically using The Shopper to advertise was also suggested. It was pointed out that The Shopper was included in the price quotes obtained by staff.

- Other items discussed included:
 - There were also 4 cooperators who signed up seven fields for the NiRIA program. This will amount to approximately 710 acres.
 - Joslynn handed out an email from Ken Quandt with McCrometer informing the Board of state grant opportunities that could apply for the NRD. These grants are more favorable with entities who are looking for aid to implement water resources guidelines.
 - Discussion was also held regarding rule issues in the GWMP, voluntary aspects of getting compliance and the infared flyover. It was suggested that these issues be put on the agenda for the next policy issues meeting.
 - Curtis Gotschall gave an update to the board regarding the weather station that was installed on his property. It didn't appear to him that the precipitation was reporting and they have not started to drill the monitoring wells yet.
 - The transducers have been deployed and the next step will be getting the telemetry up and running.
 - John Vogel reviewed a project that he would like to install on his land along the Elkhorn River which he believes would help with recharge. The engineer he met with doesn't believe that they could recommend the project as he would like to have it done.

COALITIONS UPDATE:

Niobrara River Basin Alliance: Dennis Schueth reported that there is a meeting scheduled for January 14, 2026.

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 prior to the board meeting. A copy is included with the official copy of the minutes in the office. Dennis reported that Don Blankenau is merging with another law firm and we will now have to sign a contract with him as our attorney moving forward. The working relationship and rates will remain the same, so is planning to sign the agreement when it is ready. The heater is being installed in the shop. We are just waiting for the propane tank to finish. It was also noted that the federal and state offices will be closed December 24 and 26 for the Christmas holiday. ⇒ It was moved by John Vogel and seconded by Trevor Gotschall to close the Upper Elkhorn NRD office December 24 and 26, 2025. **AYE:** Beckman, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **ABSENT:** Anderson & Sanderson. **MOTION CARRIED.** Chairman Dierks not voting.

JANUARY BOARD MEETING:

Due to the NARD Legislative Conference and Martin Luther King Jr Day in January, the regular board meeting of the UENRD will need to be changed. ⇨ **It was moved by Marv Fritz and seconded by Matt Beckman to move the January Board Meeting to January 20, 2026 at 2:30 PM. AYE: Beckman, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Anderson & Sanderson. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman Dierks not voting.** The January board meeting date will be Tuesday, January 21, 2025 at 2:30 PM with committee meetings being held prior to the board meeting.

At the end of the board meeting Dennis Schueth presented Kelly Kloppenborg with a retirement gift and noted his years of service and what a valuable employee he has been to the Upper Elkhorn NRD.

ADJOURNMENT:

⇨ **It was moved by Gene Kelly and seconded by Curtis Gotschall to adjourn at 4:25 PM. AYE: Beckman, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, T. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Anderson & Sanderson. 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 December 22, 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; and, 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