

**UPPER ELKHORN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
January 20, 2026 -- 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 2:30 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	

DIRECTORS ABSENT:

John Vogel

STAFF PRESENT:

Dennis Schueth, General Manager	Joslynn VanDerslice, Water Resources Manager
Beth Walsh, Information & Education Coordinator	Grant Mathis, Water Resources Technician
Wayne Frederick, Water Resources Technician	Brett Sholes, Agronomy Resources Technician
Jeff Langan, Administrative Secretary	

GUESTS PRESENT:

Brandon Peterson – NRCS – O'Neill, NE	Mary Zakrzewski – O'Neill, NE
Brittney Bartak – Ainsworth, NE	Amy Timmerman - UNL Extension – Holt County
Pablo Duarte – UNL Extension Educator – Norfolk, NE	Marcus Blunck – BGMA Coordinator – Norfolk, NE
Andy Frey – Tilden, NE	

ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

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

ELECTION OF UENRD BOARD OFFICERS & REPRESENTATIVES:

Election of Chairman: Gene Kelly nominated Trevor Gotschall for Chairman. There being no further nominations, ⇒ It was moved by Allen Schueth and seconded by Bruce Anderson elect Trevor Gotschall as Chairman of the Board. **AYE:** Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith & Tanderup. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** T. Gotschall. **ABSENT:** Vogel. **MOTION CARRIED.** Chairman Dierks not voting. The gavel was passed to Trevor Gotschall and he took over running the meeting. It was noted by Chairman Gotschall that he would not be voting unless there was a tie vote of the Board.

Election of Vice-Chairman: Gene Kelly nominated Cameron Smith for Vice-Chairman. There being no further nominations, ⇒ It was moved by Gene Kelly and seconded by Chris Dierks to elect Cameron Smith for Vice Chairman. **AYE:** Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Dierks, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth & Tanderup. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** Smith. **ABSENT:** Vogel. **MOTION CARRIED.** Chairman T. Gotschall not voting.

Remaining UENRD Board Officers and Representatives: ⇒ It was moved by Chris Dierks and seconded by Matt Beckman to keep the remaining officers and UENRD representatives the same as in 2025. **AYE:** Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Dierks, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth & Smith. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** Kelly & Tanderup. **ABSENT:** Vogel. **MOTION CARRIED.** Chairman T. Gotschall not voting.

2026 Upper Elkhorn NRD Board Officers and Representatives:

Chairman: Trevor Gotschall	
Vice Chairman: Camerson Smith	
Secretary/Treasurer: Gene Kelly	Alternate: Marv Fritz
NARD Rep: Gene Kelly	Alternate: Chris Dierks
Northeast RC&D Rep: Art Tanderup	Alternate: Kevin Blair
North Central RC&D Rep: Marv Fritz	Alternate: Curtis Gotschall
Loup Basin RC&D Rep: Chris Dierks	Alternate: Allen Schueth
Lower Platte River Basin Coalition:	Dennis Schueth & Joslynn VanDerslice Tony Sanderson & Curtis Gotschall
Niobrara River Basin Alliance:	Dennis Schueth & Joslynn VanDerslice Chris Dierks & Cameron Smith
Nebraska Habitat Conservation Coalition:	Dennis Schueth & Joslynn VanDerslice
Nebraska GW Management Coalition:	Dennis Schueth & Joslynn VanDerslice

Due to the retirement of Kelly Kloppenborg, the Board needs to appoint a staff member to be assigned as the secondary signature in Dennis Schueth absence. ⇒ It was moved by Chris Dierks and seconded by Curtis Gotschall to appoint Joslynn VanDerslice as the secondary signature for check signing for the Upper Elkhorn NRD. **AYE:** Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Dierks, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith & Tanderup. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **ABSENT:** Vogel. **MOTION CARRIED.** Chairman T. Gotschall not voting.

MINUTES:

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

TREASURERS REPORT:

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

PUBLIC FORUM-INPUT OR COMMENTS:

- **Brittney Bartak**, Agronomist, Yield Plus Agronomics – member of the Governors Water Quality & Water Quantity Task Force. Brittney attended the board meeting to offer an overview of her work on the Governor’s Task Force. She reviewed the make-up of the task force and the goals drafted by the Methods and Resources sub-committee. All the information from the Task Force is available online for review at <https://dnr.nebraska.gov/water-quality-and-quantity-task-force>.

- **Andy Frey, Tilden, NE:** Andy Frey attended the meeting to review his previous and proposed transfers/expansion plans on the SE 20-25-5. He would like board clarification on what constitutes as completing an irrigation distribution system/center pivot. The Water Resources and Watershed Committee is reviewing his request and wanted to hear his description of his plans before further review and recommendations on this issue. The WRWS Committee will continue to review the information in an effort to bring a recommendation to the full board.

AGENCY & STAFF REPORTS:

NARD Report: The NARD Legislative Conference is scheduled for January 27 & 28 at the Embassy Suites in Lincoln. Gene gave an overview of the breakout session scheduled during the conference. Dennis Schueth handed out the legislative update from Dean Edson, NARD Executive Director, and reviewed some of the legislative issues. Directors attending the conference will receive further legislative updates during the conference. There will be a scheduled dinner with the Senators from the LENRD, UENRD, LCNRD and LNNRD following the NARD Senator Reception at the Embassy Suites. Dennis also gave an overview of his Zoom meeting earlier in the day discussing the Producer Connect program and the issues that are surrounding the program moving forward between the developers and NARD. It was noted that the NRDs working with the developers, Longitude 103, do not have any intention of discontinuing their individual contracts with the company if the issues with NARD and Longitude 103 contract cannot be resolved. A handout of the NARD Washington D.C. conference were distributed to the board for their consideration.

NeDWEE Report: Chris Dierks reported that their next quarterly meeting would be held in February.

NRCS Report: Brandon Peterson's report was mailed out to the Directors. Brandon reported that the EQIP deadline was January 15, 2026 but they are still operating on a continuous signup. The CSP deadline was also January 15 and they will no longer have a reenrollment option for CSP. They have completed all the CRP contracts except 1 which requires further information. There will be a number of burn workshops around the area and anyone interested should contact their local NRCS office. James Huntwork will be serving as the Acting State Conservations while Rob Lawson is detailed to the national office. Jerry Kovarik and Cammie Kerner will serve as the acting ASTC for the central area while Huntwork serves as acting state conservationist.

RC&D Report:

North Central RC&D: Marv Fritz reported that the Tire Amnesty grant was awarded and they are planning events in the Springview and O'Neill areas. The Springview tire event will be April 28 & 29 and the O'Neill event is scheduled for June 9 & 10. The Council is also discussing possibly moving the RC&D office to a more convenient location due to its members.

Loup Basin RC&D: No Report.

Northeast RC&D: Art Tanderup reported that they did not hold a December meeting and are planning to meet the week of January 26, 2026.

Information & Education Report: Beth Walsh's report was mailed out in the Directors packets. Beth reported that the Directors attending conference can find their hotel information and the Senator Dinner invite in their folders. A copy of the election filing form was also made available for those directors who are up for election.

Water Resources Report: Joslynn VanDerslice's report was mailed out in the Directors packets. Joslynn reported that Phase II reports were due December 31 and there is approximately 47% compliance. The staff has received several phone calls with questions on the new reporting method that they have been helping cooperators navigate. Some issues have been database issues and some have been helping the cooperators get signed up. Brett Sholes reported that the Phase III soil sampling is complete and he has received approximately 2/3 of the results from the lab.

As it stands now, there will be a lot more triggers this year than in past years due to weather and disease issues. Joslynn noted that Nitrogen Certification classes have been scheduled. She will also be emailing the GWMP Rules and Regulations prior to the policy issues meeting for the directors review. The Nitrogen Treatment flyer has gone out in the local media. So far we have received 8 requests for sampling with ½ of the samples qualifying to apply for the new cost share program.

Bazile Management Report: Marcus Blunk, newly hired Bazile Groundwater Management Area Coordinator, attended the meeting to introduce himself to the board. He is still in the learning stages of his position and is familiarizing himself with the projects and programs in the BGMA. He will be working out of the LENRD office. Pablo Dewarte, UNL Extension Educator working with the BGMA, attended the board meeting to introduce himself to the board. Pablo will be working out of the LENRD office and helping with the BGMA test plots and other projects for the BGMA. Amy Timmerman and Joslynn VanDerslice presented their Bazile Groundwater Management Area presentation to the UENRD board. The BGMA Presentation was developed to showcase the work in the BGMA. It walks through the nitrate problem in the BGMA with the history of the project, shows nitrate data, and then what the actions the BGMA project has taken to help with the nitrate issue.

Cody Frank left at 5:00 P.M.

UNL Extension: Amy Timmerman reported that the Nitrogen Certification, Chemigation and Pesticide training dates have been scheduled. There will be a meeting March 3 on the Northeast Nebraska on-farm research project in O'Neill will be reviewed. March 6 & 11, 2026 will be a Master Irrigator event.

EXCUSED ABSENCES:

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Legislative, Finance and Planning: The Committee met prior to the board meeting.

1. Action on Current bills and Cost Share Requests: The Committee reviewed the current bills and bank statements. Marv Fritz noted the some of the greater expenditures for this month including the heater for the back shop and new lawn mower. ⇒ **It was moved by Marv Fritz and seconded by Gene Kelly to approve the current bills for payment. AYE: Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Dierks, Fritz, C. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith & Tanderup. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Frank & Vogel. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman T. Gotschall not voting.** Marv Fritz noted that there was very little accounts receivable to be collected. The Committee reviewed one cost share application which did not meet the NRD policy regarding replacing existing windmill towers with solar panels.

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

1. Groundwater Irrigated Acre Certification and Groundwater Acre Transfers: Curtis Gotschall reported that the Committee reviewed Andy Frey's request for a transfer. The Committee wanted to wait to hear Andy's explanation before making a recommendation. The Committee will review this again in February.

2. Norfolk Master Irrigator, March 6 & 11, 2026: A flyer was included in the Director's packet. Board members are encouraged to participate.

POLICY ISSUES MEETING – SETTING DATE IN FEBRUARY: Dennis Schueth reported that a date needed to be set for the Policy Issues meeting. This meeting will be advertised so all board members are encouraged to attend.

⇒It was moved by Chris Dierks and seconded by Gene Kelly to hold the Policy Issues Meeting, February 12, 2026, at 1:30 PM. AYE: Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Dierks, Fritz, C. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith & Tanderup. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Frank & Vogel. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman T. Gotschall not voting. If anyone has specific item's they wish to have discussed, please contact the office so they can be placed on the agenda.

COALITIONS UPDATE:

- **Niobrara River Basin Alliance:** Dennis Schueth reported that the Alliance is discussing developing a basin wide water management plan. This would allow the Alliance to review the available water in the basin. Pat O'Brien and Kyle Temple have been researching this issue and would like to get a plan started. This would be in partnership with the 4 Alliance NRDs. There may also be an opportunity to acquire funding through the One Red program.
- **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. A copy is included with the official copy of the minutes in the office. Dennis reported that it appeared that the weather station at the Gotschall location was not reading precipitation. Apparently, there is a minimum that needs to be met before the weather station will report. There was also some wind damage at the site which is being repaired. The issue of tiling and the effects it could have on neighboring property was briefly discussed and it was noted that there is still no guidelines for this on the local or state level. A press release from the MNNRD was also shared with the directors regarding nitrat-nitrogen.

FEBRUARY BOARD MEETING: The next meeting of the UENRD Board will be February 23, 2026 at 2:30 PM at the Upper Elkhorn NRD office in O'Neill.

⇒It was moved by Chris Dierks and seconded by Gene Kelly to adjourn the meeting at 5:20 PM. AYE: Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Dierks, Fritz, C. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith & Tanderup. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Frank & Vogel. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman T. Gotschall 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 January 20, 2026 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