UPPER ELKHORN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
May 26, 2026 – 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 Trevor Gotschall. 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	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:
Matt Beckman

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
Grant Mathis – Water Resources Technician
Brett Sholes – Agronomy Resources Technician

GUESTS PRESENT:
Brandon Peterson – NRCS Office, O'Neill
Marcus Blunck – BGMA
Amy Timmerman – Holt County Extension, O'Neill

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

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

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

PUBLIC FORUM-INPUT:

Krista A. Brown, UNMC-Public Health Nitrate Update: Krista attended the meeting via Zoom to give the Board an overview of the effects of nitrate-nitrogen in drinking water. There can be other contaminants in our drinking water but for this presentation the focus was on nitrates. Education is a major component in letting the public know about the concerns of drinking water containing nitrates. There are enhanced risk factors for pregnant women, fetus, infants and people with underlying health issues. Krista reviewed some of the studies done in Nebraska and the effects they have seen involving high nitrates in drinking water and the links to cancer they have noted. There are many variables with high nitrates in water as well as cancer diagnosis which are being studied. UNMC is developing educational materials to hand out and developing a video to help raise awareness of nitrates in water.

AGENCY & STAFF REPORTS:

NeDWEE Report: Chris Dierks reported that he attended the last meeting. He noted that there were some new members at the meeting and a basic review of the Commissions responsibilities were discussed. Chris reported that they will be receiving their funding which had been up in the air due to budget concerns. They should receive their allotment of $5.5 million and they have requests for approximately $6 million.

NRCS Report: Brandon Peterson's report was mailed out to the Directors. Brandon reported that EQIP applications have been ranked and they are waiting to see which ones get funded. CSP will have a cap of $300,000 per individual and $600,000 for joint operations. The Regenerative Pilot Program will also be available through the CSP program. Also, anyone affected by wildfires are encouraged to speak with FSA and NRCS for possible assistance. The office has also received its list of compliance checks for the Food Security Act and will begin conducting them. Brandon also reported that the Local Workgroup meeting is scheduled for June 25 at 10:00 AM at UENRD office. Everyone is welcome to attend.

RC&D Report:

North Central RC&D: Marv Fritz reported that they met on the 12th. The Springview Tire Amnesty event collected just under their allocation of 400,000 tons, so the remaining allocation may be used during the O'Neill Tire Amnesty event scheduled for June 9th and 10th. The RC&D is planning to have a lithium battery collection during the Sandhills Expo at their booth. This will be for the smaller lithium batteries. They have also acquired 2 recycled tire benches to give away this year. Marv is working to have one located in Holt County. He also noted that Carla Stagemeyer, Executive Director, for the North Central RC&D will be on the State Recycling Board. There will be no June meeting.

Loup Basin RC&D: No Report.

Northeast RC&D: Art Tanderup reported that they met April 28th. The group is still working on the by-laws and nonprofit status. They will be coordinating the Weed Board Grant which was for weed control along the rivers. The Northeast RC&D held a grant writing workshop which was very well attended; are looking into alternate funding for an electronics recycling; and, are starting a quarterly newsletter.

Information & Education Report: Beth Walsh's report was mailed out in the Directors packets. Right now Beth is busy with the Chemigation program. As of the meeting, there are still over 1200 Chemigation Permits from last years renewals to be submitted.

Water Resources and Other Department Reports: Joslynn VanDerslice's report was mailed out in the Directors packets. Joslynn reported that the nitrogen certification cards and water sample reminder letters were sent out as well as the nitrogen certification noncompliance letter. A noncompliance letter for Phase II reports went out April 14th and multiple producers have reached out to get this resolved. The UENRD will also be participating in the producer panels during the Sandhills Expo. One of the sessions will focus on nitrate issues and include Rock County nitrate data from all 4 NRDS. Since the packets went out, there has been 1

additional R/O request for costshare which is being processed. So far we have had 17 landowners qualify for costshare out of 33 requests. The WRWS Committee has continued to review the rules and regulations. Joslynn reported that with in the next month or so there should be a draft for the board to review so watch for it in your email. The two summer interns have started with the district and we are gearing up for the annual water sampling program. Joslynn also informed the Directors of the BGMA field day July 17. More information to follow.

Bazile Management Area: Marcus Blunck, Project Coordinator's, report was mailed out in the Director's packets. Marcus reviewed the events that he has attended this past month. He has also been helping out in the Pierce office certifying cover crops, meeting with producers and helping with a couple of natural resources/ag festivals. He also worked on the Wausa rain garden clearing debris and getting it cleaned up for the season. The field day at Junior Pfanstiel's was discussed and Marcus' conversation with the Village of Orchard and their administrative order from NeDWEE. Orchard has hired an engineering firm and they are working through them.

- **UNL-Memorandum of Understanding (Extension Coordinator Agreement):** Dennis Schueth distributed a copy of the MOU regarding the UNL Extension Educator in the BGMA. This agreement is 5 years old and UNL would like to update and adopt the MOU. Dennis explained that the agreement hasn't changed just needs to be updated. ⇨**It was moved by John Vogel and seconded by Gene Kelly to adopt the Memorandum of Understanding between the Bazile Groundwater Management Area NRDs and UNL. AYE: Anderson, Blair, Dierks, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Beckman. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman T. Gotschall not voting.**

UNL Holt County Extension: Amy Timmerman, UNL Extension Educator, discussed the topics and presenters for the producer panels being held Wednesday, June 17 at the Sandhills Ranch Expo. She also reported that Market Journal will be attending the Expo this year for the first time ever. There will be another regenerative ag field day July 18th just north of Atkinson. This will be a family friendly event with stuff for the kids while producers learn about the regenerative efforts taking place at Poessnecker's. Amy also reported that she is looking for funding for the event to help defer some of the costs. ⇨**It was moved by Chris Dierks and seconded by Tony Sanderson to allocate $300 for the UNL Regenerative Ag Field Day. AYE: Anderson, Blair, Dierks, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Beckman. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman T. Gotschall not voting.** Tony Sanderson asked if Amy could briefly discuss the hay issue in Holt County and she discussed what she knew about the situation.

EXCUSED ABSENCES:

⇨**It was moved by John Vogel and seconded by Chris Dierks to excuse the absence of Matt Beckman. AYE: Anderson, Blair, Dierks, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Beckman. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman T. Gotschall 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. Marv also noted that there were 4 R/O and 2 WWD costshare payments this month.

1. **Action on Current Bills and Cost Share Requests:** The Committee reviewed the current bills. ⇨**It was moved by Marv Fritz and seconded by Bruce Anderson to approve the current bills for payment. AYE: Anderson, Blair, Dierks, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Beckman. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman T. Gotschall not voting.**

Water Resources and Watershed Committee: The Committee met prior to the board meeting. They discussed the aerial flyover and the GWMP rules and regulation updates.

1. **Groundwater Irrigated Acre Expansion for 2026 and Groundwater Acre Transfers:** None
2. **Update on Groundwater Rules and Regulations:** The Committee is getting close to a draft for the full board to review.
3. **Village of Orchard Administrative Order-Proposed new public well:** The Village of Orchard administration has hired an engineering firm and the UENRD has been working with them to provide groundwater information.

Personnel, Equipment, Promotion and Education Committee: The Committee will need to schedule a meeting to review the equipment needs for next year; and, meet with staff for salary negotiations.

CORNERSTONE AERIAL FLIGHT PATTERN – ROCK COUNTY & UPPER ELKHORN NRD:

Dennis Schueth reported that he has been contacted by Cornerstone to find out if the NRD is planning to do the aerial flight pattern this year. Since Rock County is also planning to fly their county this year, if both parties do the flight pattern the cost of Rock County could be shared. There was discussion regarding how the data will be used regarding acre certification, how discrepancies would be handled, that the UENRD needs a base starting point and improved data for our current interlocal agreements. It was also noted that one reason we did not get grant funding for this project was because it should have already been completed. ⇨**It was moved by Curtis Gotschall and seconded by Tony Sanderson to proceed with the Cornerstone Aerial Flight Pattern. AYE: Dierks, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith & Tanderup. NAY: Anderson, Blair & Vogel. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Beckman. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman T. Gotschall not voting.**

COALITION/TASK FORCE UPDATE:

- **Niobrara River Basin Alliance:** No Report
- **Lower Platte River Basin Water Management Plan Coalition:** No Report.
- **Nebraska Habitat Conservation Coalition (Piping Plover):** The minutes of the last meeting were included in the Director packets.
- **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 reported that there could be some issues with the tree program since not all landowners follow all the guidelines for the tree program. Since it has been dry, if they did not water or maintain their newly planted trees survivability will be questionable. He also updated the board on the NiRIA and Nitrogen Use Efficiency programs.

The next board meeting will be held June 22, 2026 at 7:00 PM.

⇨It was moved by Gene Kelly and seconded by Art Tanderup to adjourn the board meeting at 9:02 PM. AYE: Anderson, Blair, Dierks, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Beckman. 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 May 26, 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.

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Gene Kelly, Secretary/Treasure