UPPER ELKHORN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
June 22, 2026
O'Neill, Nebraska

CALL TO ORDER:
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	Matt Beckman	Kevin Blair	Chris Dierks	Cody Frank
Curtis Gotschall	Trevor Gotschall	Gene Kelly	Aaron Rice	Tony Sanderson
Allen Schueth	Cameron Smith	Art Tanderup		

DIRECTORS ABSENT:
Marv Fritz John Vogel

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

GUESTS:
Brandon Peterson – NRCS, O'Neill, NE

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

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

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

PUBLIC FORUM-INPUT:
None

NARD – Gene Kelly: Gene Kelly reported that he attended the Association meeting June 8 in North Platte in conjunction with the NARD Basin Tour of the South Platte NRD basin. Gene reported that the Association is ending the fiscal year in good shape and are hoping to pay off the building loan in December. The NARD budget and Foundation budget for 2026-2027 were approved. The NARD Board approved the Hall of Fame ballots; sponsorship requests for N.E.T. Big Red Wrap-up, NARD annual meeting auction and raffle; Corn Growers Open; and Nebraska Farm Bureau Ag in the classroom. The Board approved the in-plan Roth Amendment to the 457 deferred compensation plan with the forms being sent out to the NRDs for their approval. This plan would not cost the NRDs any further funding. ⇨**It was moved by Gene Kelly and seconded by Art Tanderup to adopt the amended agenda. AYE: Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Dierks, Frank, C. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith & Tanderup. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Fritz & Vogel. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman T. Gotschall not voting.** Dean Edson reviewed the Producer Connect subscription fee to the districts that was worked out at the managers meeting. Gene gave a summary of the legislative report regarding the spending limitations for taxing authorities; NARD will be updating the policy manual in September; and, the deadline for resolutions for the fall meeting will be August 21st. One resolution which may be drafted will be for the Chemigation program which will transfer all authority of the program to the NRDs. The LPSNRD would also like to clarify the public reporting of salaries. At the I&E Committee meeting they discussed promoting job openings; the new NARD website; the Recreation Exploration program; State Fair; Husker Harvest Days; conservation award winners; and, upcoming event dates. The Risk Pool also met and discussed the reinsurance with Optum for 2026-2027 with a December 15 contract date. Gene also noted that there will be no premium increases for the medical and dental rates. Gene also attended the NARD Basin Tour which covered the South Platte River System and the Perkins Canal project. Approximately 100 NRD Directors and Staff attended the tour and Gene gave an overview of the points of interest included in the tour.

NeDWEE – Chris Dierks, NRC Elkhorn River Basin Representative: Chris Dierks reported on their last meeting held in April. Chief Water Officer Manning noted there are 14 recommendations in the report; and the report creates a road map for the state's water policy going forward. The One Red Program will implement some of the goals of the Task Force. Commissioner Mountford gave a brief update on the Sand Creek Environmental Restoration Project (Lake Wanahoo). The Lower Platte North NRD (LPNNRD) operates a borrow pit on the northeast part of the property, and contracts with local producers to hay portions of the property for management of native grasslands and cedar tree encroachment. Since RDF funding was used for land rights purchase; a portion of the revenue is returned to this fund in an amount equal to the cost share percentage used to fund this project. The Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund has been terminated by the legislature. The rest of the funds were reported as business as usual. Chris also mentioned the Santee Sioux Nation's water system upgrade project which will move water from Avon, South Dakota to Santee, Nebraska.

- **1 Red Funding-Position Creation:** Dennis Schueth also reviewed the One Red program which allocates funding to each NRD for the support of the Governor's water quality and quantity task force recommendations. Dennis will be looking into further options to use the funding in the UENRD.

NRCS Report: Brandon Peterson, O'Neill NRCS office, mailed his report out to the Directors. Brandon reported that NRCS received some last minute funding and are finishing up writing and obligating EQIP contracts. They ended up with 3 CSP applications that have been ranked; however, the CSP deadline is not until the 29th. Grassland CRP goes until the end of the month and then they will find out which applications will be funded so they can begin writing contracts. Staff updates include Colton Buckley as the new NRCS Chief and Brandon reported that Adam Nolan will be leaving the Spencer NRCS office. This will mean that Brandon will oversee both the O'Neill office and the Spencer office.

- **Local Workgroup-June 25, 10:00 AM:** The Local Workgroup meeting will be held at the Upper Elkhorn NRD office Thursday, June 25 at 10:00 am. Anyone is welcome to attend.

- **Proposed Shared Position:** NRCS would like to partner with NRDs to hire a staff member which would be shared on a 50/50 split. This person would be housed at the NRCS office.

RC&D Report:

North Central RC&D: In Marv Fritz's absence, a written report from Marv was handed out to the board. members.

Loup Basin RC&D: No report.

Northeast RC&D: Art is planning to attend the June 23rd meeting.

Information & Education Report: Beth Walsh's report was mailed out in the Directors packets. Beth reported that some of the NRDs promotional items were available for the board members to see. These are the items that we take to the Farm & Home Show and Expo's. They list our phone number and website to promote our contact information. Dennis Schueth noted the Cyber Security portion of Beth's report. This included information on cyber safety and the quote from our IT provider for the upcoming year. Beth explained that cyber security has really come to the forefront with all the hackers in the world. This proposal would provide security upgrades to our equipment, offer some training opportunities and provide the information we would need if we needed to submit a claim to our insurance company.

Water Resources Report: Joslynn VanDerslice's report was mailed out in the Directors packets. Joslynn reported on the nitrate data for Rock County which was presented during the Sandhills Ranch Expo. Water sampling has begun, Grant is out surveying elevations and staff went out to the Gotschall monitoring well site to set up the telemetry. The annual V-IMP meeting with NeDWEE will be July 16 at the NRD office at 1:00 pm.

Bazile Management Report: Marcus Blunck's report was mailed out in the Directors packets. A flyer for the Regenerative Ag Field Day sponsored by the BGMA was also included. The registration deadline is July 6, 2026.

UNL - Holt County Extension Agent: Joslynn VanDerslice handed out a flyer for 2026 Regenesis Acres Field Day. This event is being coordinated by the Extension and will be held July 18, 2026 beginning at the Atkinson Community Center.

EXCUSED ABSENCES:

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

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 and bank statements.

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

Water Resources and Watershed Committee: The Committee met prior to the board meeting. Curtis Gotschall reported that the committee is still working on the Rules and Regulations and should have a draft to present to the board very soon.

Personnel, Equipment, Promotion and Education Committee: The Committee on June 16 to discuss salaries and equipment needs for fiscal year 2026-2027.

1. **Salary Recommendations & Equipment for FY 26-27:** Art Tanderup reviewed the equipment list which included the replacement of the Monitoring well pickup, potential flatbed for the pickup, replacing the 2002 Case tractor with funds from the tree program, rain gutters for the back shop and additional concrete for the back shops.
   - ⇨**It was moved by Bruce Anderson and seconded by Tony Sanderson to include the equipment discussed above in the draft budget. AYE: Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Dierks, Frank, C. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith & Tanderup. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Fritz & Vogel. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman T. Gotschall not voting.**
   - Art also explained that the Committee met with some of the staff and discussed salary recommendations for FY 26-27.⇨**It was moved by Art Tanderup and seconded by Matt Beckman to go into Executive Session at 8:20 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 26-27 salaries and excuse all staff except for the General Manager from the Executive Session. AYE: Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Dierks, Frank, C. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith & Tanderup. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Fritz & Vogel. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman T. Gotschall not voting.**
   - ⇨**It was moved by Art Tanderup and seconded by Matt Beckman to come out of Executive Session at 9:26 PM. AYE: Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Dierks, Frank, C. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith & Tanderup. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Fritz & Vogel. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman T. Gotschall not voting.**
   - ⇨**It was moved by Art Tanderup and seconded by Tony Sanderson to approve the salaries for FY 26-27 as recommended by the Personnel, Equipment, Promotion & Education Committee. AYE: Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Dierks, Frank, C. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Smith & Tanderup. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: Schueth. ABSENT: Fritz & Vogel. 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): 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.

JULY BOARD MEETING:
The next regular board meeting will be held at 7:00 PM on July 27, 2026, at the NRD office in O'Neill.

⇨**It was moved by Aaron Rice and seconded by Gene Kelly to adjourn at 9:29 PM. AYE: Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Dierks, Frank, C. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith & Tanderup. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Fritz & 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 June 22, 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/Treasurer