UPPER ELKHORN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
August 24, 2026 -- 7:00 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 7:03 P.M. by Chairman Trevor Gotschall.

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	John Vogel

DIRECTORS ABSENT:
None

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

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

AGENDA:
The Agenda was reviewed by the Directors. ⇨**It was moved by Chris Dierks and seconded by Bruce Anderson to adopt the Agenda. AYE: Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Dierks, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman T. Gotschall not voting.**

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

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

PUBLIC FORUM-INPUT:
None

AGENCY & STAFF REPORTS:
NARD Report: The NARD Fall Conference is scheduled for September 28 & 29 in Kearney. The NARD board will be meeting following the NARD Annual Conference. The Ron Bishop Memorial Golf Tournament will be held on Sunday as well as the Shootout. Directors received the golf information last month and the Shootout information was just recently emailed out by Mike Murphy, MNNRD, and was also sent out to the Directors.

- **NARD Fall Conference Voting Delegates - September 28-29, 2026: ⇨It was moved by Chris Dierks and seconded by Art Tanderup to appoint Gene Kelly Voting Delegate and John Vogel Alternate for the NARD Annual Conference. AYE: Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Dierks, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith & Tanderup. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: Kelly & Vogel. ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman T. Gotschall not voting.**

NeDWEE Report: No Report. Chris Dierks noted that they will meet following the NARD Annual Conference.

NRCS Report: Brandon Peterson's report was mailed out to the Directors. Brandon reviewed his report and the breakdown of practices contracted this year for EQIP and CSP. Right now they are in the process of writing Grassland CRP contracts but having difficulty since the computer program for this is not working. Brandon has received word that the DC's will be attending the fall and legislative conferences. NRCS is also going through a reorganization which should have no effect on the field offices. The Spencer DC position is going to be advertised in house for a week to see if there is any interest.

RC&D Report:

- **North Central RC&D:** Marv Fritz reported that they met on the 19th and reviewed the battery collection which was very popular; and, held the drawing for the recycled tire benches which were won by Spencer and Valentine. They have submitted another tire amnesty grant for Brown County and should hear back in December if they will be awarded the grant. An electronics recycling event is being planned for the fall with the details still being addressed. The North Central RC&D will also be administering a weed grant for the area to combat noxious weeds.
- **Loup Basin RC&D:** No report.
- **Northeast RC&D:** Art Tanderup reported that they also have a weed grant that they are administering which is helping to combat Yellow Flag Iris. After one year of the weed grant, the Lower Elkhorn NRD has approved their support. The RC&D is also looking into hazardous waste and recycling grants. They have received and distributed battery recycling boxes in their counties, are planning for a future AI workshop, finished their first newsletter, working with local schools for the "Adopt a Highway" program and planning another cemetery tour for September. The next meeting of the Northeast RC&D will be on August 25.

Information & Education Report: Beth Walsh's report was mailed out in the Directors packets. Beth reported that there was an updated draft agenda in the Director's folders and showed them the auction item that we will be taking to conference.

Water Resources Report: Joslynn VanDerslice's report was mailed out in the Directors packets. Joslynn reported that up until the recent rain events the staff and cooperators were sending in approximately 100-200 nitrate samples per week. That has since slowed down. Joslynn then reviewed the static water levels report which was sent out in the Directors packet. She also reported that the infrared flyover has been completed and we should be receiving the first of our information in the next 45 days.

Bazile Groundwater Management Report: Marcus Blunck-BGMA Coordinator's report was included in the Directors packets; and, Pablo Duarte Hernandez's, UNL Extension Educator, report was also included in the Directors packet. Dennis Schueth noted that the 4 BGMA NRDs are working on updating the PIP plan.

EXCUSED ABSENCES:

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Legislative, Budget and Finance:

- **Action on Current Bills and Cost Share Requests:** The Legislative, Finance and Planning Committee met prior to the Board meeting and reviewed the bills, receipts, accounts receivable and bank statements. There were two additional bills which were received after the committee information was printed which were reviewed. The Committee also discussed one of the Tire Amnesty bills which did not belong to the UENRD so this was removed from the bills to be paid. ⇨**It was moved by Marv Fritz and seconded by Tony Sanderson to approve the current bills and the additional bills for Special T's and Switzer Welding for payment. AYE: Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Dierks, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman T. Gotschall not voting.** Marv also brought up the issue with the costshare that was reallocated by Governor Pillon to help balance the state's budget.
- **Budget Workshop-Update:** Dennis Schueth discussed the budget workshop which was attended by 10 out of 15 Directors. The tree program is a vital part of the UENRD budget and this year due to the Governor's cuts, the UENRD was left with a $81,000 deficit in costshare for the tree program. These are landowners who planted trees during the spring expecting costshare. These funds are now being held up due to a lawsuit alleging that the costshare funds cannot be used to balance budget. This suit may take some time to sort through so while it is being fought in the courts the funding is unavailable. Staff were instructed to contact the district attorney to see if it was possible to develop a contract between the cooperators and the district regarding the payment of their costshare. The NRD would pay the costshare to the landowner now and the landowner would agree to pay back the NRD once the state's funds are released and sent to the landowner. If the UENRD decides to pay off the current costshare funds for $81,000, this amount would need to be added to the FY 26-27 budget. ⇨**It was moved by Art Tanderup and seconded by Marv Fritz to approve adding $81,000 to the FY 26-27 budget to pay out the current costshare funds for the tree program if the cooperator will agree to a contract of repayment to the NRD when they receive the funds from the state. AYE: Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith & Tanderup. NAY: Dierks, Kelly, Rice & Vogel. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman T. Gotschall not voting.** There was also discussion regarding whether or not it was right to use tax dollars to reimburse these landowners. However, these landowners entered into the program with good faith that they would receive their costshare. Also, reviewed was the additional 1% taxing authority. ⇨**It was moved by Curtis Gotschall and seconded by Art Tanderup to approve the additional 1% taxing authority for FY 26-27. AYE: Frank, C. Gotschall, Kelly, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Dierks, Fritz & Rice. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: None. MOTION FAILED. Chairman T. Gotschall not voting.** Dennis reviewed the unused budget authority chart showing what the 1% additional tax would mean to the district. These funds cannot be taxed without a vote by the board.
    - ⇨**It was moved by Gene Kelly and seconded by Matt Beckman to proceed with the publication of the Upper Elkhorn NRD FY 26-27 budget and set the hearings for September 21, 2026. AYE: Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Dierks, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: Sanderson. ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman T. Gotschall not voting.**

Water Resources & Watershed Committee: John Vogel reported that the Committee met prior to the board meeting. Discussion items included the Flyover, Static Water Levels, Acre Expansion and ONE RED program.

- **Groundwater Rules Regulations Update & Prepare for Hearing:** Joslynn VanDerslice reported that the Rules and Regulations were sent out to the Directors via email. If you would like a hard copy please contact the office. The Committee has continued discussions and made some minor changes/comments. Joslynn will make these updates and encourages all board members to review the document and let her know if there are any questions or comments on the current version. She would like the board to act on the draft GWMP Rules and Regulations at the next board meeting so we can begin the process of setting the public hearing.
- **Static Water Level Update & October 2026 Acre Expansion Action:** The Committee discussed this issue and could not come to a consensus regarding the holding of a groundwater irrigated acre expansion. ⇨**It was moved by Curtis Gotschall and seconded by Aaron Rice to not hold a Groundwater Irrigated Acre Expansion this year. AYE: Anderson, Fritz, C. Gotschall, Rice & Tanderup. NAY: Beckman, Blair, Dierks, Frank, Kelly, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith & Vogel. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: None. MOTION FAILED. Chairman T. Gotschall not voting.** The full board discussed the groundwater irrigated acre expansion as it is related to the current weather patterns, static water levels and how it may relate to certified irrigated acres based on the infrared flyover. ⇨**It was moved by Kevin Blair and seconded by Chris Dierks to hold an Expansion of Groundwater Irrigated Acres sign-up during the month of October 2026 for up to 150 new groundwater irrigated acres with the focus on pies to finish pivots but not excluding other potential forms of expansion using the same criteria as last year. AYE: Beckman, Blair, Dierks, Frank, Kelly, Schueth & Smith. NAY: Anderson, Frank, C. Gotschall, Rice, Sanderson, Tanderup & Vogel. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED. Due to a tie, T. Gotschall voted Aye.**
- **ONE RED Application (NeDWEE) Update:** Dennis Schueth passed out the proposed application to participate in the ONE RED program through the NeDWEE. ⇨**It was moved by Aaron Rice and seconded by John Vogel to participate in the ONE RED program through the Nebraska Department of Water, Energy & Environment. AYE: Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Dierks, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: None. 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 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 Schueth reported that all items have been covered under the other agenda items.

The next board meeting will be held September 21, 2026 at 7:00 pm at the UENRD office.

⇨**It was moved by Aaron Rice and seconded by Gene Kelly to adjourn at 8:57 PM. AYE: Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Dierks, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman T. Gotschall not voting.**

I, the undersigned Director 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 August 24, 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