UPPER ELKHORN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
October 26, 2026 -- 7:00 P.M.
O'Neill, NE

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 in the Holt County Independent and the open meetings law posting were all noted at 7:04 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	

DIRECTORS ABSENT:
John Vogel

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

GUESTS PRESENT:
Brandon Peterson – NRCS – O'Neill, NE
Cole Kahnk – Avant Ag Tech
Kylen Hunt – Avant Ag Tech

AGENDA:
⇨**It was moved by Chris Dierks and seconded by Art Tanderup to approve the agenda. 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.**

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

Cody Frank Arrived at 7:06 PM

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

PUBLIC FORUM – INPUT / COMMENTS:

Avant Ag Tech: Kylen Hunt and Cole Kahnk from Avant Ag Tech attended the board meeting to review and discuss their soil probes and how to build a more profitable, more resilient, and more independent farm. Avant Agricultural Technologies help producers identify where profitability and performance are being lost, improve the natural function of the farm, and strategically reduce unnecessary dependency on expensive inputs. Every farm is different. They have different soils, different water, different management and different challenges. They like to determine where the farm is losing efficiency and profitability and build a plan. Farm for purpose and profit. They discussed their permanently installed soil probes which are buried following harvest and once calibrated remain in the soil so there is no need for annual calibration. The probes are wireless and have a 10 year warranty and transmit data via magnets within the probe. Avant is the only company with all wireless probes. These probes are more about soil management and soil health.

AGENCY & STAFF REPORTS:

NARD Report: Gene gave an overview of the happenings at the golf tournament and short review of the annual conference. There were 3 resolutions submitted for this year's conference and all three passed. Marcy Luth presented the fiscal year 25-26 audits for the general operating budget and foundation. The foundation Lead request has been increased $5,000 due to 5 new programs; and, the FFA sponsorship has also been increased to $10,000. The NACD meeting will be held February 6-10, 2027 in Las Vegas and several NRDs are planning to present at the conference. The Program and Planning Committee has received a request from NACD to find approximately 150 producers to voluntary participate in the Soil Health Assessment protocol and Evaluation Program. There was nothing new to report on the risk pool since the Department of Insurance is working through the 5 year audit. Hopefully this will be done in December. Gene also mentioned Dean Edson's resignation letter and that they have begun the search for a new Director.

NeDWEE: Chris Dierks, Elkhorn River Basin Representative: Dierks reported that they met following the NARD Annual Conference. Dierks reported that the Perkins County Canal project is moving forward. The lawsuit regarding the state's cost share funding is in the discovery phase until October 30, 2026. They are hoping for a decision in February 2027. Since the UENRD voted to budget $80,000 for the payment of allocated NSWCP funds that were lost to the reallocation in the Governor's budget, twenty-five of the 27 producers waiting on funding have signed an assignment which will allocated their state payments to the UENRD once the lawsuit is settled and the funds are released.

NRCS Report: Brandon Peterson's report was mailed out to the Directors. Brandon reported that they are reviewing EQIP applications for funding. The cutoff date for CSP was October 16 and they are also in the process of writing grassland CRP contracts. Brandon also reported that Evan Liable has been hired for the DC in the Spencer office.

RC&D Report:

North Central RC&D: Marv Fritz reported that they met on October 14th. He reported on the shredding event that was held and the battery collection which has been very popular. They are planning to hold an electronics recycling in the O'Neill area. He has received some containers from CVA to use for the electronics collection. This is still in the planning phase.

Loup Basin RC&D: No Report.

Northeast RC&D: Art Tanderup reported that they met on September 22nd. They have been working with the county weed boards on their grant and he reported that they have been spraying the yellow flag Iris. The RC&D has applied for a hazardous waste collection grant for 2027. They are also participating in the battery recycling. They are hoping to get a collection can in every town in the RC&D. The RC&D will also be hosting an AI marketing strategy workshop for small businesses, nonprofits, communities, economic development offices and chambers of commerce November 9, 2026 in Norfolk at the public library.

Information & Education Report: Beth Walsh's report was mailed out in the Director's packets. Beth reported that there have been 9 Expansion of Irrigated Acre applications for approximately 252 acres. The deadline for expansion is October 30, so a full report will be available in November. Cody Frank asked about the ONE RED program and Beth deferred to Grant Mathis who will be the UENRD contact for this program. Grant reported on the training and commented on how the program works. The NRDs are the agency which will complete all the signups this first year. Most of the data will come from the Phase II forms but there will be more involved in the initial signup. It will include the data bank, financial incentives and grant opportunities. This will probably be a learn as we go program to start until all the kinks are worked out. He also reviewed the qualifications to enroll in the program.

Water Resources and Other Department Reports: Joslynn VanDerslice's report was mailed out in the Director's packets. Joslynn reported that staff attended a HydroData training and ONE RED training at the Lower Elkhorn NRD October 21. Water sampling has been completed and the staff will be compiling the data for a nitrogen program update. October 15 & 16 Joslynn was involved in 3 presentations at the UNL Water Center Fall Conference in Lincoln. They focused on the BGMA, monitoring well transducer data and vadose zone work. Phase II and Phase III letters will be going out before the next board meeting. Joslynn also reported that Grant has completed surveying the active static water level sites and is planning to include a handful of the nonactive sites. He will be working on this data during the winter months. There have also been 3 new nitrogen treatment requests over the past month.

Bazile Management Area: The reports from Marcus Blunck, BGMA Coordinator, and Pablo Duarte Herande, UNL Extension Educator, were mailed out in the Director's packets. Marcus attended the meeting and handed out he flyer for the Northeast Nebraska Ag Conference scheduled for December 15th at Divots in Norfolk. He also highlighted his report for the Board.

Holt County Extension Agent – Amy Timmerman: No Report.

EXCUSED ABSENCES:

⇨It was moved by Chris Dierks and seconded by Gene Kelly to excuse the absence of John Vogel. 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.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Legislative, Budget and Finance Committee: The Legislative, Finance and Planning Committee met prior to the Board meeting and reviewed the bills, receipts, accounts receivable and bank statements. Marv also explained some of the more notable expenditures.

1. **Action of Current Bills and Cost Share: ⇨It was moved by Marv Fritz and seconded by Bruce Anderson to approve the current bills for payment. 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.**

Water Resources & Watershed Committee: The WRWS Committee met prior to the board meeting. The first order of business was an update on the public hearing for updates to the UENRD GWMA Rules and Regulations.

1. **Public Hearing was held on October 26, 2026 (4:00 PM) – UENRD Office, O'Neill – Report:** Curtis Gotschall reported that no one from the public attended the public hearing and there were 4 directors in attendance; Marv Fritz, Gene Kelly, Aaron Rice and Art Tanderup.

⇨**It was moved by Curtis Gotschall and seconded by Aaron Rice that the Upper Elkhorn NRD adopt the proposed changes to the UENRD Groundwater Rules & Regulations to implement the UENRD Groundwater Management Plan and issue an Order adopting the same with an effective date of January 1, 2027. 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.** Curtis Gotschall reported that there was an update on the acre expansion and the Committee discussed a new list of potential updates to the rules and regulations. Some of these update suggestions included transfers, the old rule 16 and water quantity. Curtis also encouraged the board to pass along any suggestions they may have for updates to the staff or committee. Since Grant Mathis has been surveying the statice water level sites, Rice thought it would be a good idea to see what this data says before diving into the quantity issues.

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 reported that Wayne has been getting bids for the equipment that was approved in the FY 26-27 budget. The managers are meeting tomorrow in Chadron and Dennis will join the meeting via zoom. He also discussed the permanently installed probe from the Avant group and wondered why they did not disclose the price of the probe.

NOVEMBER BOARD MEETING:
The next regular board meeting of the Upper Elkhorn NRD is scheduled for November 23, 2026, at 2:30 PM at the O'Neill office.

⇨**It was moved by Gene Kelly and seconded by Art Tanderup to adjourn the Board meeting at 8:50 PM. 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.**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 P.M.

I, the undersigned Chairman 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 October 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/Treasurer