

LOWER BIG BLUE NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING  
December 14, 2023  
1:30 P.M.

Notice of the meeting was published in accordance with Section 84-1411, Nebraska Statutes, in the Beatrice Daily Sun and the Wilber Republican. Notice was also sent to Radio Station KWBE, Crete News, and Fairbury Journal-News. In accordance with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act, the Open Meetings Act is posted on the north wall of the meeting room for public viewing.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Ryan Birkett at 1:30 P.M.

Directors Present: Larry Barta, Ryan Birkett, Brent Katz, Steve Kelley, Bob Lorenz, Duane Parde, Jason Pohlmann, Darrell Rains, Dean Roehr, Jason Sand, Rodney Skleba, Doug Stokebrand, Chad Weichel.

Staff Present: Scott Sobotka, Manager; Tyler Weishahn, Assistant Manager; Scott Theis, Operations Supervisor; Adam Kimmerling, Office Administrator; Nick Schroeder, GIS/IT/Data Specialist; Ryan Thomas, Resources Specialist; Brandy Scholl, Gage County NRD Secretary.

Others Present: Ryan Bruns, Dana F. Cole, Nathan Mueller, UNL Extension

APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 14, 2023, CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION #1 was made by Doug Stokebrand, seconded by Duane Parde, to adopt the Consent Agenda for the December 14, 2023, board meeting, which includes: adoption of the agenda as submitted, approval of the November 9, 2023, meeting minutes, financial status report dated November 30, 2023, November 2023 revenues, and expenditures; Beatrice West and Wymore Rural Water financials.

**YEA:** Barta, Birkett, Kelley, Katz, Lorenz, Parde, Pohlmann, Rains, Roehr, Sand, Skleba, Stokebrand, Weichel **NAY:** None **ABSTAIN:** None **NOT PRESENT:** None

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENTS

Scott told the board that Nick and his wife had a baby girl on November 22<sup>nd</sup>. Congratulations were shared with the new parents.

FY 2023 AUDIT REPORT

Ryan Bruns with Dana F. Cole presented the FY 2023 audit report. He reviewed the with the Board, the statement of net position and other financial statements.

MOTION #2 was made by Jason Sand, seconded by Dean Roehr, to approve the FY 2023 Audit report.

**YEA:** Barta, Birkett, Kelley, Katz, Lorenz, Parde, Pohlmann, Rains, Roehr, Sand, Skleba, Stokebrand, Weichel **NAY:** None **ABSTAIN:** None **NOT PRESENT:** None.

## WATER COMMITTEE REPORT

Doug summarized the water committee meeting minutes from December 12, 2023. He asked for input from the Board on the best way to move forward. Discussion of the current moratorium on the drilling of new wells and the expansion of irrigated acres was held. Allowing a certain percentage increase in irrigated acres was also a topic of discussion. Current rules allow for producers to submit variance requests to the moratorium through a process identified in Chapter 6. The attorneys have stated that this would be a legally sound way to approve or deny requests on a case-by-case basis.

MOTION #3 was made by Jason Pohlmann, seconded by Steve Kelley, That the increases of irrigated acres from an existing irrigation well shall hereby be allowed in the Lower Big Blue Natural Resources District only within the boundaries of a government survey section. The permanent moratorium on the drilling of new irrigation wells shall remain in effect.

Discussion of subareas and the best ways to manage groundwater withdrawals took place following the motion. After discussion on the motion, Pohlmann asked to withdraw motion #3. Birkett asked the board for unanimous consent to withdraw the motion. The motion was withdrawn following unanimous consent.

Ryan told the Board he hosted a follow-up meeting phase II meeting on November 28<sup>th</sup>. Four producers attended, leaving eight who have not received the required training. Ryan asked for direction from the board on how they wish to handle those who are out of Phase II compliance. Nathan Mueller stated that UNL is hosting a crop clinic on January 11<sup>th</sup> at the Holiday Inn in Beatrice. Registration for the day costs \$95 and would provide education for the eight producers who have not completed continuing education.

## WELL PERMITS, IRRIGATION AGREEMENTS

Ryan discussed a potential irrigation agreement with Ron Miller from Clatonia 4-A. Ron currently irrigates out of the structure and has purchased a neighboring property meaning he now owns 100% of the permanent pool.

## BEATRICE WEST RURAL WATER PROJECT

Adam reviewed proposed changes to the Beatrice West Rural Water Project Rules and Regulations which were originally approved at the November Board meeting. Changes include adding a definition for domestic purposes and identifying who may be served by the project. The proposed changes are needed due to service restrictions in the water purchase agreement with the City of Beatrice.

MOTION #4 was made by Jason Pohlmann, seconded by Chad Weichel, to approve the changes to the project rules and regulations.

**YEA:** Barta, Birkett, Katz, Kelley, Lorenz, Parde Pohlmann, Rains, Roehr, Sand, Skleba, Stokebrand, Weichel **NAY:** None **ABSTAIN:** None.

Jason Sand left the meeting at 2:48 P.M.

#### BUILDING COMMITTEE REPORT

Dean reviewed progress on the building repairs. The main building tin is finished, the shop has been painted and most of the interior touchups on the office are completed.

Adam stated he has been working to find replacement chairs for the board room. A sample Hon chair was shown for the directors to review. Adam stated that he has bid 15 additional chairs from two vendors. Adam estimated that the total cost of the chairs would be around \$8,500.00.

MOTION #5 was made by Larry Barta, seconded by Rodney Skleba, to approve the purchase of Hon chairs from the vendor submitting the low bid, not to exceed \$8,500.00.

**YEA:** Barta, Birkett, Katz, Kelley, Lorenz, Parde Pohlmann, Rains, Roehr, Skleba, Stokebrand, Weichel **NAY:** None **ABSTAIN:** None. **NOT PRESENT:** Sand.

#### COPY MACHINE LEASE

Adam reviewed a proposal from Eakes Office Solutions to upgrade the Districts copy machine. The new lease agreement would be \$255.27 for a period of 60 months and includes parts, labor, service, and consumables for 2,834 black and white pages per month and 2,701 color pages. Additional pages would be billed at \$.005 per page and \$.03 per page respectively. The NRD is responsible for supplying paper and staples.

MOTION #6 was made by Larry Barta, seconded by Dean Roehr, to approve the copy machine lease from Eakes Office Solutions.

**YEA:** Barta, Birkett, Katz, Kelley, Lorenz, Parde Pohlmann, Rains, Roehr, Skleba, Stokebrand, Weichel **NAY:** None **ABSTAIN:** None. **NOT PRESENT:** Sand.

#### LITTLE INDIAN WFPO AND NEW WFPO APPLICATIONS

Scott stated that the Little Indian project has been submitted to the NRCS national office. He also told the Board that he has received the PIFR for Plum Creek Watershed. NRCS has determined Plum Creek to be a viable potential WFPO project.

#### LOWER BIG BLUE AND LITTLE BLUE NRD NINE-COUNTY ALL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

Scott stated that proposals were sent to six firms. One proposal was received from JEO Consulting Group for \$229,750.00 to prepare the Lower Big Blue and Little Blue Nine County all Hazard Mitigation Plan for submittal and update the plan if funding is received.

MOTION #7 was made by Dean Roehr, seconded by Jason Pohlmann, to approve the proposal from JEO Consulting Group for \$229,750.00. to prepare the Lower Big Blue and Little Blue Nine County all Hazard Mitigation Plan for submittal and update the plan if funding is received.

**YEA:** Barta, Birkett, Katz, Kelley, Lorenz, Parde Pohlmann, Rains, Roehr, Skleba, Stokebrand, Weichel **NAY:** None **ABSTAIN:** None. **NOT PRESENT:** Sand.

#### NRD ACTIVITIES

Adam presented a summary of bufferstips for this year. 129 contracts were paid at the end of November to 103 individuals. The NRD receives \$40/contract for administration.

Scott mentioned that staff are continuing to work with NRCS for a possible source water protection employee partnership.

Scott will meet with NRCS and Houston Engineering on December 15<sup>th</sup> to review dam assessments on swan 31, Swan 20, and Big Indian 11-B.

Adam stated that the NRD has received a \$10,000 grant from NDEE to install secure sampling stations on the Wymore Rural Water Project.

#### AGENCY REPORTS

##### NRCS

Brandy reported that NRCS staff are still busy designing and staking fall jobs. She also reviewed the NRCS civil rights documents which the NRD must complete to partner with NRCS.

##### EXTENSION OFFICE

Nathan Mueller told the Board that a new nitrogen calculator is now live through UNL. He also said that recent budget cuts at the University have affected Extension funding. In order to compensate for lower operational funding, starting in 2024, field visits from an extension educator will have an associated cost.

##### NRC

Steve reported on the NRC meeting held November 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> in Grand Island.

##### NARD

Steve reported that the next meeting will be in January at the Legislative Conference.

#### NARD LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

Scott asked that any directors who want to attend let Adam know before they leave today.

#### ELECTION OF OFFICERS, AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Election certifications have been mailed to the Secretary of State. Scott also asked that anyone wishing to serve in an elected position on the Board let he or the Chairman know. Filing deadlines for the 2024 election are February 1<sup>st</sup> for incumbents and March 1<sup>st</sup> for non-incumbents.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> - NRD Board Meeting 1:30 p.m.
- Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> - Christmas Holiday – Office Closed
- Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> - New Years Day Holiday – Office Closed
- Jan. 3<sup>rd</sup> - 108<sup>th</sup> Legislative 60 Day Session Begins
- Jan. 11<sup>th</sup> - NRD Board Meeting 1:30 p.m./ UNL Crop Clinic, Beatrice
- Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup> - NRD Managers Meeting – Lincoln
- Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> - Legislative Conference – Lincoln
- Feb 13<sup>th</sup> - Chemigation Training-Beatrice

Being no further business, Chairperson Ryan Birkett adjourned the meeting at 3:28 P.M.

---

*Secretary, Jason Sand*

I, the undersigned, Secretary of the Lower Big Blue Natural Resources District, hereby certify that these are true and correct minutes of the meeting of the Board of Directors of the District held December 14, 2023, that all of the subjects discussed at the meeting were contained in the agenda for the meeting, kept continually current and readily available for public inspection at the principal office of the District during normal business hours, and except for items of an emergency nature, the agenda was not altered later than twenty-four (24) hours before the scheduled commencement of the meeting; that at least one copy of all reproducible material discussed at the meeting was available at the meeting for examination and copying by members of the public; that the minutes were in written form and available for public inspection within ten working days and prior to the next convened meeting for said body; and that all news media requesting notification of the meeting of said body were provided advance notification of the time and place of said meeting and the subjects to be discussed at said meeting.

:amk