

LOWER BIG BLUE NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
July 13, 2023, 7:00 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 east wall of the meeting room for public viewing.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Ryan Birkett at 7:00 p.m.

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

Staff Present: Scott Sobotka, Manager; Tyler Weishahn, Assistant Manager; Adam Kimmerling, Office Administrator; Nick Schroeder, GIS/IT/Technical Specialist, Brandy Scholl, NRD Secretary.

Directors Absent: Brent Katz, Darrell Rains, Jason Sand

Others Present: Carl Jacobson, Summit Pork, Nathan Jacobson, Hayden Otto, Dean Otto, Darrell Bruns, Jacob Fritton, The Nature Conservancy.

CONSIDERATION OF EXCUSED ABSENCES

Brent Katz, Darrell Rains and Jason Sand have requested to be excused from the July 13th board meeting.

MOTION #1 was made by Doug Stokebrand, seconded by Larry Barta, to excuse Brent Katz, Darrell Rains and Jason Sand from the July 13th board meeting.

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

APPROVAL OF JULY 13, 2023, CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION #2 was made by Doug Stokebrand, seconded by Dean Roehr, to adopt the Consent Agenda for the July 13, 2023, board meeting which includes: adoption of the agenda as submitted, approval of the June 5, 2023, meeting minutes, financial status report dated June 30, 2023, June 2023 bills payable, June 2023 revenues, monthly bank account summary and Beatrice West and Wymore Rural Water Financials. Motion carried.

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

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

WATER COMMITTEE REPORT

Doug reviewed the minutes of the water committee meeting held July 12, 2023. Committee members reviewed the final sub area maps provided by Olsson with the consensus being that these boundaries are adequate. The committee also discussed phase two triggers,

management options, baseline water levels, the well ranking system and certification of irrigated acres. The committee minutes are attached to these minutes.

Tyler summarized the recent AEM flights. Over 400 line miles were flown over three days. Jared Abraham from AGF will be at the August board meeting to present the information from the survey.

Scott stated that several staff and a director had attended an E Log demonstration in the Nemaha NRD near Cook on Wednesday, July 12th. Rod Skleba commented that AEM data available for the area was a very informative supplement to the test hole data. Current AEM projects in the Lower Big Blue will be a great tool for future management.

WATER PERMITS

Tyler presented four replacement wells which all meet the requirements for approval.

Tyler presented a conveyance permit for Darrell Bruns. Darrell would like to pump his well, located in the NE ¼ Section 20-2N 8E, into Wildcat Creek where he has an existing surface water permit. If the well produces as expected, he will pipe the water directly to his pivot. Discussion of the permit was held with the consensus being that a temporary permit to conduct water into Wildcat Creek should be issued.

MOTION #3 was made by Dean Roehr, seconded by Jason Pohlmann, to issue a temporary permit to Darrell Bruns to conduct water from a well in NE ¼ Section 20-2N-8E into Wildcat Creek. The permit shall expire on October 31, 2026. Motion carried.

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

Tyler presented a permit for low-capacity wells in a series. Otto Acres has requested a permit for two 20 gpm wells to serve a 6,250 head hog confinement. These barns require two wells so that there is always a backup water source.

MOTION #4 was made by Larry Barta, seconded by Chad Weichel, to approve the well permit for Otto Acres. Motion carried.

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

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

Tyler spoke about a proposed partnership with The Nature Conservancy. Their goal is to work in conjunction with NRDs to distribute cost share dollars directly to farmers in the area. A three-year agreement would provide funds to the NRD for staff time and expenses as well as cost share for producers in the amount of \$42,900/year. The Nature Conservancy receives grant funding as well as money from corporate donors.

Jacob Fritton with the Nature Conservancy spoke about past projects with several NRDs across the state including Central Platte and Upper Big Blue. Jacob stated that the NRDs provide the local knowledge and expertise to spend cost share dollars where they will be most effective.

MOTION #5 was made by Dean Roehr, seconded by Doug Stokebrand, to approve the signing of a sub awardee agreement between the Lower Big Blue NRD and The Nature Conservancy. Motion carried.

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

HAY BIDS

Adam presented a summary of the hay bids. Seventy-five bid packets were mailed directly to interested parties and notice was also published in the Beatrice Daily Sun. This year, nine areas were bid for maintenance purposes. Regular haying keeps trees down around NRD structures. Bids for 8 of the nine areas were received with the high bids totaling \$26,386.06.

MOTION #6 was made by Jason Pohlmann, seconded by Rodney Skleba, to approve high hay bids on each area. Motion carried.

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

BUILDING COMMITTEE REPORT

Dean reviewed the minutes of building committee meetings held June 22nd and 29th. A list of revisions to the 50% plan set was discussed at the June 22nd meeting.

At the June 29th meeting Skyline construction presented options to improve the exterior of the current building that was damaged during the June 2022 hailstorm.

Staff have also been working with service providers to add features to the new office building 50% plans with technical, security and infrastructure needs in mind. Building Committee members toured the new Beatrice Fire Station. Directors with comments on the current plans should submit those by Friday July 21st.

APPROVE FY 2024 URBAN CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Scott reviewed the 2024 urban conservation assistance program applications. \$69,466.66 in applications are recommended for approval this year. Beatrice has requested that their project for \$25,000 be carried over due to bids coming in higher than expected. That brings the total FY 2024 program budget to \$94,466.66.

MOTION #7 was made by Doug Stokebrand, seconded by Dean Roehr, to approve the FY 2024 urban conservation program in the amount of \$94,466.66 Motion carried.

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

NRD ACTIVITIES

A picture of a recent winner of the NARD's recreation exploration promotion was shared. Dylan of Diller caught a largemouth bass at Big Indian recreation area. He will receive a gift card from the NARD.

Scott reviewed NARD Hall of Fame nominations with the board.

Scott reviewed progress on the Turkey Creek NWQI project. The planning phase runs out in September. An additional contract employee may be hired to help with the land treatment portion of the project.

Adam shared pictures of the I&E meeting he attended this week in Ord.

FY 2024 BUDGET DISCUSSION

Scott reviewed items which have been updated in the FY 2024 budget.

Scott recommended that the Budget Hearing be set for September 21st at 8:00 A.M., with the Levy and Property Tax Request Hearing immediately following the Budget Hearing.

MOTION #8 was made by Jason Pohlmann, seconded by Dean Roehr, that the district hold a public hearing for the proposed FY 2024 budget with a public hearing for the 2024 Levy and Property Tax Request immediately following on September 21st at 8:00 A.M. at the LBBNRD office, with the NRD board meeting to follow and that legal notices for said public hearings be published once on or before September 14, 2022 in the Beatrice Daily Sun, Crete News, Fairbury Journal News and Pawnee Republican. Motion carried.

AGENCY REPORTS

NRCS

Brandy updated the board on activities of the Gage County NRCS. She stated that NRCS may have additional funds for practices in Turkey Creek.

EXTENSION OFFICE

Scott reported that Nathan Muller is covering several additional counties and positions this summer.

NARD

Steve reported that the NARD representatives have not met since the last meeting.

NRC

Steve reported that he is on the committee for the Water Sustainability Fund Applications. He has been working to rank the applications before the NRC meeting on July 19th.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

July 19th	NRC Meeting, Kearney
August 24th	NRD Board Meeting
August 28th – 30th	Manager’s Meeting
September 4th	Labor Day
September 21st	NRD Board Meeting

Being no further business, Chairperson Ryan Birkett adjourned the meeting at 8:54 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 July 13, 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 Lower Big Blue NRD Board of Directors Meeting July 13, 2023 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.