

**LOWER BIG BLUE NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING  
February 08, 2024  
1:30 PM**

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, Fairbury Journal-News and Wymore Arbor State. 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 Larry Barta 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; Adam Kimmerling, Office Administrator; Ryan Thomas, Resources Specialist, Scott Theis, Operations Supervisor; Nick Schroeder, GIS/IT/Data Specialist. Brandy Scholl, Gage County NRD Secretary, Jarrett Koch, Operations Assistant.

Others Present: Darin Weers, Michael Haake, Derrick Haake

APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 8, 2024 CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION #1 was made by Steve Kelley, seconded by Duane Parde, to adopt the Consent Agenda for the February 8, 2024, board meeting which includes: adoption of the agenda as submitted, approval of the January 11, 2024, meeting minutes, financial status report dated January 31, 2024, January 2024 bills payable, January 2024 revenues, monthly bank account summary and Beatrice West and Wymore Rural Water Financials. Motion carried.

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

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENTS

Scott Sobotka reported that he and Adam are working with Security First Bank on a new pooled method to guarantee NRD funds.

Darin Weers addressed the Board with his concerns over groundwater supplies. Darin asked that the Board consider taking action to better manage groundwater use across the District.

Scott Sobotka shared that Tyler and Beth Weishahn welcomed a baby girl on February 1<sup>st</sup>.

WATER COMMITTEE REPORT

Chad Weichel reviewed the minutes from the February 6<sup>th</sup> Water Committee meeting. Discussion on how to best manage groundwater supplies and how to be prepared district wide if drought conditions, declining groundwater levels, and well interference occur were also discussed. The water committee is seeking a recommendation from the full board on how to proceed with flowmeters district wide so that they can continue the revising of the rules and regulations.

Scott mentioned that the Little Blue NRD board meeting is February 13<sup>th</sup>. Attendance at this meeting may provide insight into the management options used by another NRD.

MOTION #2 was made by Jason Pohlmann, seconded by Doug Stokebrand, to require the installation of flow meters by subarea approach using the best data available to determine the need for flow meters.

**YEA:** Katz, Kelley, Lorenz, Pohlmann, Rains, Sand, Stokebrand, Weichel. **NAY:** Birkett, Parde, Skleba, Barta. **ABSTAIN:** Roehr.

#### WELL PERMITS, IRRIGATION AGREEMENTS

Ryan reported that three variances have been received. Two were not complete at the time of the meeting and will not be considered. Ryan presented a complete variance for Michael and Derrick Haake. They wish to expand irrigated acres in section 11-T4N-R1E. A new pivot would add approximately 24 acres to the 53.79 acres currently irrigated. The Haakes' were present to answer questions from the Board regarding the variance. The variance was discussed. Scott stated that the Board has 60 days to act on any complete variance. No action was taken on the variance this month.

Scott provided an update on the Blue Basin Model.

#### LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Scott reported that 10 Directors attended the legislative conference this year. Directors were provided an update on legislative bills of interest. He also reviewed the Groundwater Coalition meeting that was held at the conference. 17 NRD's are currently members and two others have asked to join this year.

#### NARD WASHINGTON D.C. ANNUAL MEETING

Scott asked that Directors who may be interested in attending, March 16-20<sup>th</sup> let him know as soon as possible. District policy allows for two directors, the NARD representative and staff to attend.

#### LITTLE INDIAN WFPO-ADDENDUM TO JEO AGREEMENT

Scott reported that work originally designated for the second phase of the project was completed in the initial phase based on the requests from NRCS during plan development. JEO has prepared an amendment to the original contract in the amount of \$45,000.

MOTION #3 was made by Doug Stokebrand, seconded by Chad Weichel, to approve the contract amendment with JEO.

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

#### BUILDING COMMITTEE REPORT

Dean reviewed the progress on the building. Directors were given a final set of drawings to review for changes. A building committee meeting with Fakler Architects to review the plans is scheduled for February 27<sup>th</sup>.

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

Scott reported that the plan was submitted on February 2<sup>nd</sup>. Hazard mitigation plans are required to be updated every five years.

## NRD ACTIVITIES

Scott updated the Board on the deliverables from the first AEM flight as well as the progress on a WSF grant application for a subsequent flight. Jerod Abraham with AuqaGeo Frameworks will be at the March board meeting to review results from the first flight.

Scott shared that he met with officials from Nebraska Game and Parks recently to discuss aquatic habitat projects.

Scott mentioned that Nathan Mueller and Ryan Thomas will hold a final nitrogen management training on February 13<sup>th</sup>, followed by a chemigation certification meeting.

## PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Scott Theis reviewed the bids received for equipment for FY2024. The District is trading a 2017 and a 2021 Z970R mower and a 2013 John Deere 625i UTV and will be purchasing two mowers, a UTV and a tire machine.

MOTION #4 was made by Steve Kelley, seconded by Duane Parde, to approve the purchase of a 2024 Kubota RTVXG 850 from Roehrs Machinery for the low bid of \$13,900. Motion carried.

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

Scott Theis noted that two dealers bid rear discharge mowers in addition to the standard side discharge. The rear discharge adds about \$850. The personnel and equipment committee recommended trying one rear discharge for use around camper pads and public areas.

MOTION #5 was made by Rodney Skleba, seconded by Jason Sand, to approve the purchase of a 2024 Z970R Rear Discharge mower with trade of the 2021 Z970R for the bid of \$5,451. Motion carried.

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

MOTION #6 was made by Duane Parde, seconded by Rodney Skleba, to approve the purchase of a 2023 Z970R mower with trade of the 2017 Z970R for the low bid of \$9,100. Motion carried.

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

Scott Theis reviewed the bids for tire machines in new, rebuilt and refurbished condition.

MOTION #7 was made by Jason Sand, seconded by Jason Pohlmann, to approve the purchase of a Coats MAX 80 Air tire machine from Hamilton Sales and Service for a bid of \$9,573. Motion carried.

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

Scott Sobotka discussed employee performance reviews and merit raises, noting that the reviews have been a valuable tool for feedback between the Manager and employees. He also reported that he plans to meet with NRCS on February 27<sup>th</sup> regarding a possible employee partnership.

AGENCY REPORTS

NRCS

Brandy stated that field staff are still finishing jobs, weather permitting. They are also currently gathering information needed to process EQIP and CSP contracts. There is also a CRP signup going on.

EXTENSION

No report

NRC

Steve reported that they are scheduled to meet March 1<sup>st</sup>.

NARD

Steve reviewed financials of the NARD Risk Pool.

Announcements, Upcoming Meetings & Activities

- Feb. 13<sup>th</sup> - Chemigation Certification – Gage County Extension – 9:00 a.m.
- Feb. 10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> - NACD Annual Meeting – San Diego, CA
- Feb. 19<sup>th</sup> - Presidents Day – Office Closed
- March 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> - Water Conference - Kearney
- March 5<sup>th</sup> - Envirothon – SCC Beatrice
- March 14<sup>th</sup> - NRD Board Meeting 1:30 p.m.
- March 16<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>st</sup> - NARD Annual Washington D.C Meeting

Being no further business, Chairperson Larry Barta adjourned the meeting at 3:46 p.m.

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*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 January 11, 2024, 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.

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