

**NORTH PLATTE NATURAL RESOURCES  
DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

**May 9, 2019**

The regular meeting of the North Platte Natural Resources District (NRD) Board of Directors was called to order at 3:00 p.m. MDT, May 9, 2019, by Kent Andreas at the North Platte NRD conference room, 100547 Airport Road, Scottsbluff, Nebraska. Notice of the meeting was given to the public by publishing a legal notice in the May 2, 2019, Scottsbluff *Star-Herald*. Andreas informed meeting attendees that this meeting would be conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, a copy of which is posted in the meeting room for public inspection.

Board members present Kent Andreas, Dave Deines, Gary Darnall, Chuck Henkel, Pete Lapaseotes, Ryan Reuter, and Mark Westphal. Absent: Roger Eirich, and Dan Weinreis. Others present: NPNRD Staff Members: John Berge, Barb Cross, Dave Wolf, Danielle Schafer, Scott Schaneman, Carolyn Hudson, Travis Preston, Kyle Ann Hopkins, Sarah Munezero, and Amanda Sheppard; Megan Dockery, Simmons Olson Law Firm; Sarah Gray, Natural Resources Conservation Service; Joe Reedy, Adaptive Resources, Inc; and Dave Fisher.

The following items of informational material were made available to the Directors electronically prior to the Board Meeting:

1. Meeting Notice
2. Agenda
3. Minutes, North Platte Natural Resources District Board of Directors Meeting, April 11, 2019.
4. Treasurer's Report (Preliminary)

The following items were provided to the Directors at the Board Meeting:

1. Agenda

2. Minutes, North Platte Natural Resources District Board of Directors Meeting, April 11, 2019.
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Manager's Report
5. Email from Molly Brandt dated April 29, 2019, regarding the Summer Experiential Learning for Rwandan (CUSP) Scholars.
6. Resume from Sarah Munezero.
7. Letter from Craig Derickson with Natural Resources Conservation Service dated April 22, 2019, regarding requesting federal assistance under the provisions of Section 216 of the Flood Control Act to Restore damages sustained in Scotts Bluff County by storms over the course of several years but exacerbated by the recent storm on March 21 that resulted in a disaster declaration.
8. Memo to Platte Basin Committee Administrators, from John Berge, dated January 29, 2019, Regarding Enterprise Surface Water Leases and Schaneman Recharge Site Project Summary.
9. Memo to Platte Basin Committee Administrators, from John Berge, dated March 27, 2019, Regarding Request for 2019 Update to Expand our Existing Effective EPIC Program for allocation buy-down.
10. Memo to Platte Basin Administrators from John Berge, dated January 31, 2019, Regarding Water Resources Cash Funding Formula.
11. North Platte Natural Resources Nitrate Advisory Committee Report.
12. Resolution Supporting the Utilization and Management of Eastern Red Cedar in the North Platte Natural Resources District.
13. Minutes, North Platte Natural Resources District, Water Resources & District Operations Joint Committee, March 19, 2019.

14. 2019 Lease Rates for Permanent Retirements.

15. Sponsorship Letter from Nebraska Association of County Extension Boards dated April 26, 2019, Regarding Sponsorship to Provide Oversight for Local Extension Programs.

**3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The Board reviewed the minutes of the April 11, 2019, regular Board meeting. Ryan Reuter noticed that Mark Westphal was not in the minutes in the attendance section. Moved by Reuter, seconded by Henkel, to approve the amended minutes of the April 11, 2019 regular Board meeting. Motion passed.

Ayes: Andreas, Darnall, Deines Henkel, Lapaseotes, Reuter, Westphal

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Eirich, Weinreis

**4. Treasurer's Report and Accounts Payable**

Ryan Reuter reviewed the Treasurer's report with the Board. Moved by Deines, seconded by Westphal, to accept the Treasurer's report and pay the bills as listed. Motion passed.

Ayes: Andreas, Darnall, Deines Henkel, Reuter, Westphal

Nay: None

Abstain: Lapaseotes

Absent: Eirich, Weinreis

**5. Comments from the Public**

Dave Fisher provided two studies to the Board on evapotranspiration and how much water is lost and sent east. He also offered some suggestions for the Integrated Management

Plan.

Travis Preston also addressed some of the email problems Berge and some of the Directors have experienced. He suggested that any email out of the ordinary should be ignored.

## **6. Manager's Report**

John Berge provided the Manager's Report. Department heads have all submitted their budget requests and staff is currently adjusting those requests in the hopes that they can get the first cut DRAFT budget to the committee by the end of May. So far, staff has cut the budget by about \$500,000 in operating expenses. That number will likely go down as we adjust expenses, but Berge hopes to be down by about \$250,000 over the budget last year. That would be a five percent cut making a cumulative cut of twenty seven percent over four years.

The NRD is beginning the transition to a new accounting software, by migrating from SAGE 100 to QuickBooks in the coming weeks.

Sarah Munezero of Rwanda has joined the team through July 26 as an experiential intern. She is currently as sophomore at University of Nebraska - Lincoln in the CASNR Undergraduate Scholarship Program and is specializing in irrigation management. The NRD is going to sign an agreement with Paula Kihlthau to perform cleaning services for the District. She will do this as a contract employee.

The District has requested that Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff look at a few damaged areas in the Gering Valley Flood Control Project that were exacerbated by the recent storms. NRCS has Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program money that could help in repairing those issues, and staff anticipates their staff in the area in the coming weeks to inspect the requests.

The District's attorneys and staff are working on excess flow requests for the Department of Natural Resources if there are flood pool releases from Glendo or in the event of an early spring runoff, both of which staff anticipates. There have been obstacles to excess flow diversions the past few years because of "target flow" requirements downstream of Lake McConaughy. Berge hopes to avoid those issues this year.

The database rebuild continues, and recently Kyle Ann Hopkins met extensively with Heath Kuntz to discuss the status of this overhaul. Staff is budgeting contingency funds for the project in FY 2020.

Rod Horn of the South Platte NRD, Thad Kuntz of ARI, Inc. and Berge held their annual consultation agreement meeting this week and discussed costs for the next fiscal year. There will be no major changes to the agreement and costs should remain fairly static.

The District is finally coming to resolution on the Schaneman Recharge site for the leases that the District has on Enterprise Irrigation District. Engineering plans are done, and Steve Schaneman will be doing the work for pit construction to get this project operational. Steve Smith and Megan Dockery are working on an agreement with Schaneman for that work, and the District will be seeking sixty percent reimbursement on the project from WRCF, though the NRD budgeted the entire construction cost.

The Platte Basin Coalition Administrators approved a request for sixty percent reimbursement from WRCF for the EPIC contracts that the District is about to approve. This reimbursement will come in FY20 even though the outlay will occur in June. Berge was able to secure an additional \$500,000 per year for FY20 and FY21 from the Water Resources Cash Fund in budget authority for projects in those fiscal years.

Tomorrow will be the 150th Birthday Party for the University of Nebraska – held at the Panhandle Station – it begins at 1:30 p.m. Chancellor Green and Vice-Chancellor Boehm will be in attendance. Berge will be participating in the Director’s Advisory Committee Meeting that evening.

**7. Information and Education Presentation**

Dave Wolf and Amanda Shepperd presented on the duties and responsibilities for the Information and Education Department. Wolf spoke about the public relations, education outreach, and other aspects within the department, and Shepperd explained the NRD/Nebraska Forest Service partnership. Wolf also updated the Board on the number of students that have been visited during the 2018-2019 school year.

**8. Report from Staff on the Activities of the Nitrogen Advisory Group**

Berge reported the Nitrogen Advisory group met three times, with the last time directed by a facilitator. The group was then instructed to tell the District what they would do if they were on the Board of Directors regarding the water quality issues. They provided the Board with three options and will no longer meet unless asked to by the Board. The District Operations and Water Resources Committees will meet to review the options.

**9. Consideration of Resolution on Eastern Red Cedar**

Berge reported Eastern Red Cedars are considered an invasive species in the eastern part of the State, but they are considered a necessity out west. Staff has recommended a resolution expressing our desire to keep the cedar off invasive species list. Moved by Deines, seconded Henkel to approve the Resolution on Eastern Red Cedar. Motion passed.

Ayes: Andreas, Darnall, Deines Henkel, Lapaseotes, Reuter, Westphal

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Eirich, Weinreis

**10. Consideration of Lease Rates for 2019**

Berge reported the joint committee recommended the lease rates presented. The District has slowed down on leasing or retiring water rights, but if the right project comes along, staff wants to be able to take advantage of it. Berge also said that staff is looking for projects that will fit into the existing recharge projects where the water can be diverted to recharge pits already built to keep the timing of water returning to the river. Moved by Henkel, seconded by Reuter, to approve the Lease Rates for 2019. Motion passed.

Ayes: Andreas, Darnall, Deines Henkel, Lapaseotes, Reuter, Westphal

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Eirich, Weinreis

**11. Consideration of Sponsorship for Nebraska Association of County Extension Board's Panhandle Meeting**

Berge reported Nebraska Association of County Extension Board is seeking sponsorships for their panhandle meeting. The District has partnered the Extension on several different projects and programs. Moved by Darnall, seconded by Deines, to approve a \$50 sponsorship for the Nebraska Association of County Extension Board's panhandle meeting. Motion passed.

Ayes: Andreas, Darnall, Deines Henkel, Lapaseotes, Reuter, Westphal

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Eirich, Weinreis

## 12. Adjourn

Moved by Henkel, seconded by Lapaseotes, to adjourn at 4:00 p.m., MDT. Motion passed.

Ayes: Andreas, Darnall, Deines Henkel, Lapaseotes, Reuter, Westphal

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Eirich, Weinreis