

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

August 11, 2016

The regular meeting of the North Platte Natural Resources District (NRD) Board of Directors was called to order at 3:00 p.m. MDT, August 11, 2016, 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 August 4, 2016, 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, Gary Darnall, Dave Deines, Gerald Dillman, Roger Eirich, Chuck Henkel, Dave Ostdiek, Pete Lapaseotes, and Dan Weinreis. Others present: John Berge, Barb Cross, Dave Wolf, Tracy Zayac, Elizabeth Miller, Lydia Hanson, Todd Filipi, and Amanda Shepperd, NPNRD staff; Steve Peterson, P.G., USGS; and Thad Kuntz, Adaptive Resources, Inc.

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

1. Meeting Notice
2. Agenda
3. Treasurer's Report

4. Minutes, North Platte Natural Resources District, Board of Directors Meeting, July 14, 2016.

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, July 14, 2016.
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Manager's Report
5. Water Sustainability Fund Grant Program Contract between the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources and the North Platte Natural Resources District (Sponsor).
6. USGS Overview and Summary of Optimization Model Study and Final Report, Presentation by Steven Peterson, P.G., Lead Hydrologist, Nebraska Water Science Center.
7. Western Water Use Management Modeling, Platte Basin Coalition Conservation Measures Analysis Ground Water Modeling Results, High and Low Irrigation Efficiency, by Thad Kuntz P.G. Principal Hydrogeologist with Adaptive Resources Inc.
8. Conservation Measures Study, Platte Basin Water Project Coalition: Evaluation of Conservation Measure Impacts, July 2016 Project Update.
9. Conservation Measures Study, Impact of Soil and Conservation Measures, Surface Water Model Progress Update, Kara Sobieski, Wilson Water Group, July 25, 2016.
10. Presentation on Greenhouse Proposal and Estimated Costs for New Project.

11. NARD's Fall Annual Conference Agenda for September 25-27, in Kearney NE.

12. NARD Invitation to NRD Managers, NARD Board of Directors and Conservation Partners, regarding 2016 Annual Conference, dated July 20, 2016.

3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings

The Board reviewed the minutes of the July 14, 2016, regular Board meeting.

Moved by Eirich, seconded by Henkel, to approve the minutes of the July 14, 2016, regular Board meeting. Motion passed.

Ayes: Andreas, Darnall, Deines, Eirich, Lapaseotes, Ostdiek

Nay: None

Abstain: Dillman, Henkel, Weinreis

Absent: None

4. Treasurer's Report and Accounts Payable

Dave Ostdiek reviewed the Treasurer's report with the Board. Moved by Darnall, seconded by Weinreis, to accept the Treasurer's report and pay the bills as listed. Motion passed.

Ayes: Andreas, Darnall, Deines, Dillman, Eirich, Henkel, Lapaseotes, Ostdiek

Weinreis

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

5. Comments from the Public

There were no comments from the public.

6. Manager's Report

Berge reported on the FY 2017 budget. During our September Board Meeting, the full board will consider the Budget Committee approved Budget. There will be only one major modification related to a report that you heard last month with regard to the Yensen Drain and repairs that may be needed in the coming year. We added \$200,000 for possible repair work to that drain, but we are hopeful that costs will be lower. Our initial contractor for the sidewalk project was unable to complete the job, so we have now contracted with Infiniti Construction to complete the sidewalk portion of the job and Simon Contractors will be in shortly thereafter to resurface the entire parking lot.

We recently finalized our grant agreement with the Department of Natural Resources regarding our existing Water Sustainability Fund grant designed to address the reduction of consumptive use by reducing groundwater irrigated acres in certain geographic locations of the district advantageous to our obligations under the Integrated Management Plan. We have since identified 130 acres thus far that meet the criteria set forth in the grant and would be eligible for reimbursement for the first two years of funding. We are working on drafting agreements and conservation easement language for those two landowners. We applied for a small fund (study) grant from the Water Sustainability Fund to study soil properties and weather conditions at various locations within the overappropriated area to allow the District to better refine evapotranspiration

(ET) assumptions built into the Western Water Use Management Model to refine our consumptive use assumptions for the local area crop mix.

Berge noted that the District is supporting an application from the University of Nebraska that will continue to build the information system developed by Dr. Munoz-Arriola and provide additional avenues for water users to obtain data to make better water management decisions. Our support is also an extension of partnership utilizing \$40,000 in telemetry acquisition costs.

We and the rest of the Platte Basin Coalition (PBC) recently agreed to contract with HDR Engineering to complete a fine tuning of a recent study completed by HDR to determine the difference between over and fully appropriated. The outcomes are promised by the end of August. We are continuing to await contract finalization with PBC on the Cow Camp, Tighe and Hardt reimbursements. These agreements are in their final stages with the Department of Natural Resources. The ball is solidly in the City of Oshkosh's court with regard to the mitigation plan for their new wellfield north of town. They have drafted an agreement with a groundwater irrigator in the vicinity to mitigate the effects of their pumping, and we await those signed documents to ensure mitigation has been met before we act to approve the permits.

Phase I of the telemetry install is complete with the exception of 22 units that could not yet be installed because of access issues with the landowners. We are anticipating that they will be installed in the next several weeks. The second order of units have been placed, and we are expecting delivery the first week of September.

These units will be installed shortly thereafter. This will be the first expenditure of the NET funds. We will then have a large order/shipment and install later in the spring (March). That install coupled with the initial installs will put our unit total near 800 units in the field. We will have a larger update at a future meeting.

We are discussing a few different projects with Ducks Unlimited including a surface water lease, an infiltration project in a wetland, and a recreational property south of Oshkosh. We have held a number of meetings with them as recently as this week in reference to their proposals. I have signed off on a letter to be signed by Rick Preston of the Gering Valley Flood Control Permanent Maintenance Committee (PMC) to Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) expressing the PMC's interest in the project moving forward with proposed mitigation that NPPD provided to the Corps of Engineers. Jackie, Kyle Ann and I met with the project managers for Beehive to discuss pending in-scope and out-of-scope activities under our current agreement. We are awaiting a new list of activities which Beehive would consider out-of-scope along with cost estimates for each so that we might complete those activities as we can afford to.

On August 15, I spoke to the NSIA Water Leaders Academy to discuss our ongoing management efforts in the NPNRD. Our work was well received, and we had lots of questions from around the state. Kyle Ann Hopkins of our staff is a class member this year in the academy. On August 19, I will be speaking to the Leadership Nebraska Group at the Lake McConaughy Water Interpretive Center about

groundwater management in the Panhandle of Nebraska. This is an annual outreach opportunity. The Chamber Water Tour was a huge success again with 52 people attending, including several from our staff and Gary Darnall from the board. I have subsequently discussed with a number of board members that have asked that we might put together a small tour for board members that is not right in the middle of irrigation season. We are looking at that for future years. On October 19-20, I will be speaking at the Nebraska Water Center Symposium on Platte Basin issues at the University of Nebraska.

7. Basin Wide Planning Process Update

Berge updated that there was nothing new to report on the Basin Wide Planning process. He has invited the stakeholders to the board meeting to hear a presentation on the Platte Basin Coalition Conservation Measures Study. The next meeting will be September 21st.

8. Report on Water Sustainability Fund Agreement

Berge provided the grant agreement for the Water Sustainability Fund (WSF) in the board packet for their Board to view. Our legal counsel has reviewed and approved the agreement. Staff has already identified 130 of the 1000 acres for retirement that will use WSF funding.

9. Presentation from USGS on Optimization Model Report

Steve Peterson from the United States Geological Survey (USGS) presented to the Board on the USGS' optimization model. The purpose of the model was to see what

water management options would best increase the streamflow leaving the area. The model was finished last year, and Peterson is here to present the results. The optimization model mapped 350 miles of the canal system to provide potential recharge sites. The model did show reduction in groundwater withdrawals for eight zones or application of intentional recharge across 21 potential sites would benefit streamflow passing Bridgeport.

10. Presentation from ARI on the Platte Basin Coalition Conservation Measures Study

Thad Kuntz from Adaptive Resources Inc. provided a review of the Western Water Use Management Model and the Platte Basin Coalition Conservation Measures Study for the Board and Basin Wide Plan stakeholders. The conservation measures study is designed to study the changes in groundwater and surface water irrigation efficiencies and tillage practices have changed the water system. The preliminary findings of the study were as efficiency in irrigation has increased with the development groundwater pivots, surface water pivots, surface water delivery systems, tillage practices. Etc. The impacts to the river have noticed. Efficiency in our water system necessarily impacts the amount of water that is returning to the river.

11. Presentation of Greenhouse Proposal

Barb Cross provided an update on her greenhouse proposal. She has received bids for the building and construction, and she has put together a preliminary budget. She also provided pictures of two greenhouses that will be constructed similar to the NRD's greenhouse for reference. Cross will present the plan to the Airport Authority's board

meeting later on in the month.

12. Presentation on NARD Fall Conference

The NRD still has one more slot available for the Nebraska Association of Resources District’s Annual Conference. Berge provided an agenda in the board packet, and if anyone is interested, they are to contact Berge.

13. Consideration of Membership in the North Platte Valley Water Association

Kent Andreas will step down from the board of the North Platte Valley Water Association, and he would like to appoint a staff member to take his place on the board. Moved by Deines, seconded by Eirich to authorize General Manager John Berge to appoint a member of the North Platte Natural Resources District staff to the North Platte Valley Water Association. Motion passed.

Ayes: Andreas, Darnall, Deines, Dillman, Eirich, Henkel, Lapaseotes, Ostdiek, Weinreis

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

14. Staff Spotlight – Elizabeth Miller

Elizabeth Miller has been a Policy Analysis for a month and a half. She has spent her time learning about the different aspects of water law and NRD policies. She also has been working the drought tournament. She is originally from north of Crawford, and is currently working on her masters in Anthropology and will be adding in Resource

Management. She also spent time in East Africa drilling water and agricultural wells.

15. Adjourn

Moved by Dillman, seconded by Henkel, to adjourn at 4:36 p.m., MDT. Motion passed.

Ayes: Andreas, Darnall, Deines, Dillman, Eirich, Henkel, Lapaseotes, Ostdiek,

Weinreis

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None