

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

**April 13, 2017**

The regular meeting of the North Platte Natural Resources District (NRD) Board of Directors was called to order at 3:00 p.m. MDT, April 13, 2017 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 April 6, 2017, 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, Roger Eirich, Chuck Henkel, and Dan Weinreis. Absent: Gerald Dillman, Pete Lapaseotes, and Dave Ostdiek. Others present: John Berge, Barb Cross, Tracy Zayac, Dave Wolf, Lydia Hanson, Elizabeth Miller, Jody Fiscus, Carolyn Hudson, Dave Christian, Travis Preston, and Scott Schaneman, NPNRD staff; Thad Kuntz, Adaptive Resources, Inc; Amy Seiler, Nebraska Forest Service; Sarah Gray, NRCS District Conservationist; John Heaston, Aquamart; and Doug Kizzire and Bill Pierce, public.

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, March 9, 2017.
4. Minutes, North Platte Natural Resources District Board of Directors Special Meeting, March 2, 2017.
5. Treasurer's Report

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, March 9, 2017.
3. Minutes, North Platte Natural Resources District, Board of Directors Special Meeting, March 2, 2017.
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Manager's Report
6. Aquamart PowerPoint Presentation
7. Presentation on Tree Inventory Project
8. Minutes, North Platte Natural Resources, Water Resources Committee Meeting, Thursday, April 6, 2017.

9. Presentation on Conjunctive Management Analysis Tool, June 8, 2016.
10. Presentation on NCF Envirothon Nebraska 2020 Proposal from Nebraska Association of Resources Districts.
11. Memo from Dean Edson, Nebraska Association of Resources Districts, to NARD Board & NRD Managers, dated March 27, 2017, regarding the 2020 North American Envirothon-Nebraska Budget.
12. Perspective Articles, regarding National Envirothon.

### **3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings**

The Board reviewed the minutes of the March 9, 2017, regular Board meeting. Moved by Henkel, seconded by Darnall , to approve the minutes of the March 9, 2017, regular Board meeting. Motion passed.

Ayes: Andreas, Darnall, Deines, Eirich, Henkel, Weinreis

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Dillman, Lapaseotes, Ostdiek

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

John Berge reviewed the Treasurer's report. Moved by Weinries, seconded by Henkel, to accept the Treasurer's report and pay the bills as listed. Motion passed.

Ayes: Andreas, Darnall, Deines, Eirich, Henkel, Weinreis

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Dillman, Lapaseotes, Ostdiek

## **5. Comments from the Public**

No comments from the public.

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

Berge reported the Department Managers are working with Jackie Bishop, Paula Kihlthau, Barb Cross and Berge in proposing their FY 18 Budgets. Berge has given the directive that he would like to see about \$1 million in cuts proposed. This is intended to serve a few purposes. 1) It would signal a shift in expenditures from retirement and temporary leasing incentives toward technology improvements; 2) It will allow us to use a glide-path instead of a cliff when talking about diminishing valuations; and 3) it will allow us to provide some local property tax relief to property owners in our District. The District has asked Colonial Life to present to staff at an upcoming staff meeting about some additional choices when it comes to supplemental insurance. To be balanced, we've also asked Aflac to come in and present as well.

Berge has held lunches with the majority of Department Managers to discuss upcoming plans for projects, budgets and staffing. He intended to complete those in the next month.

The first shipment of trees has come in the past couple of weeks and are anticipating a ramping up additional stock coming in over the next month. Two temporary, seasonal staff have been added to come in to assist with tree planting this spring. The tractor was delivered yesterday. The District has had both Paul Reed and Simon Contractors look at the Yensen Drain repair project, and have requested work plans/estimates for phase one of those repairs yet this year. It will be necessary to scale down the repairs this spring, given the late date that we received the engineering plans for repair work on the Drain. Staff is hoping to get the phase one work done in the coming weeks in anticipation that the final repairs can be done next fiscal year.

The District has signed excess flow agreements with eleven surface water districts so that we can lease excess flows if it is necessary to reduce pressure on the river to avoid flooding this year, much the same as was done last year. The leasing of this water provides to us a significant credit, and allows the NRD to remunerate the ditches for their efforts as well. The District is about to reach the one year anniversary of the Basin Wide Planning effort. Much of the talk has stalled to date as stakeholders continue to work on the definition of fully appropriated, come to terms with the various needs on the river and gain a better understanding of the statutory requirements of this planning effort.

Staff is working very diligently on a mitigation plan for the City of Oshkosh

new well field north of town to ensure timely construction of the project. Staff will keep the board updated as that work progresses. Several staff and Berge, along with representatives from Ducks Unlimited recently toured several properties associated with Blue Creek, Hooper and Paisley ditches to determine whether there might be some options for surface water leases with the secondary benefit of habitat improvement for water fowl in that area. Ducks is very interested in becoming a funding partner, and that leveraging of resources may ultimately help the District move forward in gaining some surface water credit for our IMP obligations. Staff anticipates some follow up meetings in the coming weeks.

The District approved nearly \$81,000 of EPIC contracts for acre inches in the 97%+URF zones of the District. These purchases range from one to fourteen inches on various sizes of tracts. Staff is working with DNR to modify their proposed reimbursement agreement for Cow Camp to accommodate excess flow agreements from 2017 as well as those possibly upcoming from 2018. In the initial agreement, the District was planning for more reimbursement for project construction that is likely no longer needed. Those excess funds will be repurposed to excess flows.

In 2012, the Board of Directors approved our most recent Master Plan – a document that sorely needs updating and cleaned up. Staff will be working with each of the Districts Committees to start that process so that the plan more appropriately

reflects the needs and values of this District. Staff is continuing to finalize details on a possible tour for State Senators in July of this year. Berge recently attended the second session of the Water Leaders Academy in Kearney and will be attending a session in Valentine in May. He also presented to the Nebraska LEAD class two weeks ago as they were in the area learning about watersheds in the panhandle.

David Wolf and Seth Popp presented to the NWRA Water Roundtable Series on our Telemetry Project on April 12. Tracy Zayac and Barb Cross attended and participated in the Water for Food Conference in Lincoln April 10 through 12. The District will be hosting the state-wide I&E Meeting April 25-27, hosting Wolf's counterparts from around the state. Wolf and Amanda Sheppard will be visiting 114 classrooms and presenting to 2,127 students between April 6-May 19. The District will host State Envirothon at the Wildcat Hills on April 26. Berge will be out of the office May 17 for Basin Wide Planning, May 18-19 for Water Leaders Academy, and May 20-30 for my family's vacation to the Grand Canyon.

## **7. Legislative Update-**

Berge reported LB 98, which extends the three-cent levy option to help offset the costs of water management activities by providing an additional \$244,000. This additional revenue option allows the District to provide a wide range of consumptive use reduction and incentive programs instead of applying more draconian measures such as cutting

allocations. The Board discussed other options such as an occupation tax or more regulation (lowering the allocation) to reduce consumptive use.

**8. Excess Flows Concerns: Doug Kizzire, Farmers Irrigation; Bill Pierce, Alliance Irrigation; and Byron Miller, Nile-Mile Irrigation**

Doug Kizzire explained to the Board that last year, his alfalfa was very stressed due to the dry conditions. Water was running through the canal, but he was told he could not use the water. He wondered why he could not use the water. Berge explained that the NRD paid certain irrigation districts to divert excess flows to help alleviate high river flows for aquifer recharge. If the water was used for irrigation of crops, consumptive use would occur, and the District would not have received any credit towards its obligations to their Integrated Management Plan. The decision on whether to participate in diverting excess flows and when to start delivering irrigation water is made by the irrigation district, not the NRD.

Bill Pierce of Nine Mile Irrigation District wanted to know why his district was not allowed to participate. Their district draws from Red Willow Creek, not the North Platte River. Allowing their District to divert during excess flows would achieve the goals of alleviating the North Platte River of high water flows and aquifer recharge. Berge replied last year with the Flood Emergency declaration, the NRD could not divert from non-main stem tributaries of the North Platte River. He was open to looking at the possibility of an

agreement this year.

## **9. Presentation on Aquamart**

John Heaston presented information on his company Aquamart. The company helps promote producer driven outcomes, technology uses to help conserve water, and results that could have monetary impact for producers. He is interested in any partnerships that could be formed with the District.

## **10. Drought Planning Update**

Tracy Zayac and Elizabeth Miller presented on the progress of the drought planning process. They have had six sector (small group) meetings. They were pleased with great discussion they had with each group. Each group had similar issues and ideas on what could be focused on. Next, they will have one big meeting, which will include state agencies, and discuss what they can offer related to drought, and Zayac will give a crash course in the District's water system.

## **11. Presentation on Tree Inventory Project**

Amanda Sheppard presented on the tree inventory project she is currently conducting in the City of Scottsbluff. She explained the database that was used, the data she is collecting, and how cities can use the data to help improve their urban canopy. The project is a partnership between the city, the Nebraska Forest Service, and the District.

## **12. Report from the Water Resources Committee**

The committee discussed the City of Oshkosh's variance request, and staff believes they have another option that would be a better alternative to the request. Because of the new option, the committee voted unanimously to recommend rejecting the variance request.

**a. Consider of Approval of Field Net Flowmeters**

The NRD has had a piloted Field Net meter in the field for two years, and they want to know if they can be placed. They have addressed the issues the Water Resources Committee had with their product, specifically they have integrated a battery backup, so NRD staff do not have to turn on the pivot to read the electrical meter. Staff have recommend approving the meter. The committee voted unanimously to recommend approval. Moved by Eirich, seconded by Deines, to approve Field Net Flowmeters for the North Platte NRD's approved flow meter list. Motion passed.

Ayes: Andreas, Darnall, Deines, Eirich, Henkel, Weinreis

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Dillman, Lapaseotes, Ostdiek

**b. Consideration of Change in Schedule of Meter Maintenance**

The water department would like to extend the time for executing meter

maintenance from every three years to five years. With all the new responsibilities they have taken on over the past couple of years, plus the installation of new meters in the fully appropriated portion of the District, it will be impossible for staff to get to them all on the three year time schedule. It was discussed by the committee members and there were no objections.

Moved by Henkel, seconded by Darnall, to approve the change in meter maintenance schedule from three to five years. Motion passed.

Ayes: Andreas, Darnall, Deines, Eirich, Henkel, Weinreis

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Dillman, Lapaseotes, Ostdiek

### **13. Consideration of Conjunctive Management Analysis Tool (CMAT)**

The tool was developed by Olson Associates and the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources and is used for water analysis. The District currently uses Adaptive Resources Inc for their analysis. Moved by Darnall, seconded by Eirich, to not use the Conjunctive Management Analysis Tool. Motion passed.

Ayes: Andreas, Darnall, Deines, Eirich, Henkel, Weinreis

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Dillman, Lapaseotes, Ostdiek

#### **14. Consideration of Budgeting Expenditures for 2020 National Envirothon**

The Nebraska Association of Resources Districts' Board of Directors has developed a primary operating budget around \$150,000, and they are asking individual NRDs to contribute. They have requested \$3542 per year for the next three years from the North Platte NRD. Moved by Deines, seconded Darnall, to contribute \$2500 per year for the next three years to the 2020 National Envirothon, with the rest being raised through private funds. Motion passed.

Ayes: Andreas, Darnall, Deines, Eirich, Henkel, Weinreis

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Dillman, Lapaseotes, Ostdiek

#### **15. Adjourn**

Moved by Henkel, seconded by Eirich, to adjourn at 4:13 p.m., MDT. Motion passed.

Ayes: Andreas, Darnall, Deines, Eirich, Henkel, Weinreis

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Dillman, Lapaseotes, Ostdiek