

**North Platte Natural Resources
District Board of Directors Meeting**

June 11, 2020

The regular meeting of the North Platte Natural Resources District (NRD) Board of Directors was called to order at 3:00 p.m. MDT, June 11, 2020, by Kent Andreas at the North Platte NRD Conference room, 100547 Airport Road, Scottsbluff, Nebraska (Agenda item #1). Notice of the meeting was given to the public by publishing a legal notice in the June 4, 2020, 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 (Agenda item #2).

Board members present: Kent Andreas, Gary Darnall, Dave Deines, Roger Eirich, Pete Lapaseotes, and Ryan Reuter. Board members absent: Chuck Henkel, Dan Weinreis, and Mark Westphal. Others present: John Berge, Barb Cross, Danielle Schafer, and Scott Schaneman, of NPNRD staff; Thad Kuntz, Adaptive Resources, Inc; Megan Dockery, Simmons Olson Law Firm.

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

1. Meeting Notice
2. Agenda
3. Minutes, North Platte Natural Resources District, May 14, 2020
4. Preliminary Treasurers Report
5. Manager's Report
6. Consideration of Reopening Without Appointment Memos

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

1. Agenda

2. Minutes, North Platte Natural Resources District, District Board of Director's Meeting, May 14, 2020.
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Manager's Report
5. Consideration of Reopening Without Appointment Memos

3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Board reviewed the minutes of the May 14, 2020, regular Board meeting.

Moved by Eirich, seconded by Reuter, to approve the minutes of the May 14, 2020 regular Board meeting. Motion passed.

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

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Henkel, Weinreis, Westphal

4. Treasurer's Report and Accounts Payable

Ryan Reuter reviewed the Treasurer's report with the Board. Motion made by Darnall, seconded by Eirich, to accept the Treasurer's report and pay the bills as listed. Motion passed.

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

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Henkel, Weinreis, Westphal

5. Comments from the Public

None

6. Manager's Report

General Manager John Berge highlighted his report as follows:

Administrative:

*Benefits Changes - At their April 30th meeting, the NARD Risk Pool Benefits Committee, made up of staff members and Board members, recommended an increase of 7.5% in premium rates and no change to dental or vision benefits. This would increase costs for health insurance 7.5% for the NRD share of costs and for the employee's share of costs. This is based on the financials of the risk pool, with a high number of claims going on in the last fiscal year. This is a significant impact to both our employees and the District.

*Insurance Changes – Without warning, reason or cause, the League Association of Risk Management (LARM) – our property and liability insurance carrier, voted to drop coverages of all NRDs across the state at the end of each of their respective contracts. Last year, we chose to renew for three years, so we still have two years left of coverage at a locked-in rate. We have been very pleased with the coverages, customer service and inexpensive premiums with LARM, but will be looking for a new insurance carrier over the next 18 months.

*Budget Process for FY 2021 – A Report from the Budget and Personnel Committee is on your agenda this month, and they will provide to you a summary of their discussions from their meeting earlier today. The purpose of this item is to remind you of our general timeline to complete our Budget by mid-September:

By July 15, the Committee will meet again to finalize the budget request with staff.

By August 30, staff will make adjustments based on property valuations received by counties.

Projects and Programs:

*Bridgeport Ethanol – for much of the past several months, our attorneys and the attorneys for Bridgeport Ethanol have been working on a mitigation plan for the plant to offset overages of pumping that have occurred contrary to the transfer permit that was issued by the NPNRD in 2009 – these overages have averaged 119.7 acre-feet annually. This streamflow purchase agreement allows Bridgeport Ethanol to purchase credits gained by this NRD in the area from regulatory and incentive actions to increase their allowed pumping from 268.9 AF to 418.9 AF annually – an increase of 150 AF. For that increase, Bridgeport Ethanol will pay the NRD \$405,000 in 15 equal installments of \$27,000. This is a very good deal for the plant and for the District.

*Schaneman Recharge Project – Construction at the Schaneman Recharge facility west of Scottsbluff is winding down, requiring now only a modification to the delivery gate to the farm, which we are working with Enterprise Irrigation District on. Thad and I are working with the permitting section of DNR to ensure that our permits, once submitted, meet no hurdles on their way to approval.

*OA/FA Grand Plan Discussion – The Executive Committee of the Board met earlier today with the Department of Natural Resources for a briefing on the OA/FA Grand Plan discussions that have been taking place with the Upper Platte NRDs, representatives of the Central Nebraska Public Power District (CNPPID) and Nebraska Public Power (NPPD) for the past several months. EC members asked several questions about the plan and staff/EC members will give a full update to the Board in coming months. It was a productive meeting.

*Chemigation Inspections – Renewal applications ended on June 1; Inspections of systems will number approximately 350 and will continue until August or September. We have sent out approximately 700 permits so far this year and anticipate another 25 new applications.

7. Report from Budget Committee on Budget Process for FY 2021

No quorum was present. An informal discussion was held with Reuter, Andreas, and Berge. Staff is hesitant to set the levy until the valuations come back. The budget has been cut over \$2,000,000.00 in the last two years. Revenues and expenses are pretty well set. They are \$200,000.00 down from FY20. Berge has wanted to put more money in reserve, and to determine the amount of reserve. Given scheduling difficulties with the committee members, we would like to look at adding more alternates to the committee's so that a quorum can be maintained.

8. Consideration of Reopening Without Appointment

There were two memos in the board packet. The first memo outlines the current regulations in place for staff and public access to the office. The second memo requests guidance from the Board of Directors on reopening. The office is still operating under the Governors orders to maintain social distancing and appointments. Berge recommends that the office maintain the situation with the current level of service.

Motion made by Darnall, seconded by Eirich, to continue office operations with the office closed, by appointment only, with staff on a staggered schedule. Policy will be reevaluated in 30 days.

Ayes: Andreas, Darnall, Deines, Eirich, Lapascotes, Reuter

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Henkel, Weinreis, Westphal

9. Adjourn

There being no further business, the Chairman called for a motion to adjourn.

Motion made by Reuter, seconded by Eirich to adjourn at 3:35 p.m., MDT. Motion passed.

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

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Henkel, Weinreis, Westphal