

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

July 9, 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, July 9, 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 July 2, 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, Pete Lapaseotes, Ryan Reuter, Dan Weinreis. Board members absent: Dave Deines, Roger Eirich, Chuck Henkel, and Mark Westphal. Others present: John Berge, Barb Cross, Danielle Schafer of NPNRD staff; Sarah Gray, NRCS District Conservationist; 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 - Draft
3. Minutes, North Platte Natural Resources District, June 11, 2020
4. Preliminary Treasurers Report
5. Manager's Report
6. FY 2021 Budget Overview
7. Memo – Consideration of Reopening Without Appointment

8. Memo - Consideration of Alternates to the Budget and Personnel Committee, Water Resources Committee and District Operations Committee.

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

1. Agenda - Final
2. Minutes, North Platte Natural Resources District, District Board of Director's Meeting, June 11, 2020.
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Manager's Report
5. FY 2021 Budget Overview
6. Memo – Consideration of Reopening Without Appointment
7. Memo - Consideration of Alternates to the Budget and Personnel Committee, Water Resources Committee and District Operations Committee.

3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Board reviewed the minutes of the June 11, 2020, regular Board meeting.

Moved by Reuter, seconded by Lapaseotes, to approve the minutes of the June 11, 2020 regular Board meeting. Motion passed.

Ayes: Andreas, Darnall, Lapaseotes, Reuter

Nay: none

Abstain: Weinreis

Absent: Deines, Eirich, Henkel, Westphal

4. Treasurer's Report and Accounts Payable

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

Ayes: Andreas, Darnall, Lapaseotes, Reuter, Weinreis

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Deines, Eirich, Henkel, Westphal

5. Comments from the Public

Sarah Gray, NRCS DC, gave an update on a new program entitled Conservation Agricultural Mentoring Program (CAMP). She also discussed the current USDA office reopening and they are in Phase 3, which includes a rotation of office employees who are physically in the office and assisting producers via phone. She is hoping to move to Phase 2 next week, which could include physical appointments for producers. USDA is in the fourth quarter of their fiscal year and is obligating EQIP funds right now. They had 6.8 million dollars in request and just shy of \$800,000 was received for distribution. They are working on the second round of three on the CSP program. CRP will have a general, grassland and CREP sign up every year with the new farm bill.

6. Manager's Report

General Manager John Berge highlighted his report as follows:

Administrative:

*Job Evaluations – We are working to complete evaluations of all employees that report to us by the end of July.

Projects and Programs:

*Drought Mitigation Plan – We are implementing our Drought Mitigation Plan given the extremely hot and dry conditions that our area is experiencing. This will include a phased approach of working with certain members of the Drought Planning Committee, producing outreach materials for urban and rural residents of the District, producing

water conservation curriculum for students of the District, developing web resources and naming members of the Drought Adaptation and Management Team (DAMT) to include BUREC, Irrigation Districts, Municipalities, and the NRD.

*Acreage Reserve Program – Steve Smith and I continue to negotiate on language contained in the Acreage Reserve Program (ARP). ARP is designed to protect water rights if an individual wants to sign a lease with the NRD or another entity for up to 30 years, and there is some sticky language currently in the draft that makes me uncomfortable related to carriage water and incidental underground storage, and it does not contemplate what happens to return flows when these lands are leased.

*Nutrient Management – I am working with Carolyn, Scott, Kyle Ann and Travis to put together the appropriate information for the Board to take action on naming additional nutrient management sub-areas based on the criteria that you set forth in the rule change last fall. This information will be coming to you in a future report.

*Master Planning Process – Barb and I held a conference call with Ryan Golten on the Master Planning process that stalled earlier this year due to COVID. We are going to modify our work plan a bit to include a survey of staff and individual contacts with Board members to gain some direction before we do a retreat after the public health crisis is over.

*Budget Finalization – I will give you an update later in the agenda on our budget request, and we still anticipate receiving our valuations mid-August which will require action by the Board at our September Board meeting. As Ryan and I reported to the full Board in June, we will be bringing the budget request directly to the Board as it has been extremely difficult to get a quorum of the Budget Committee together to vote on the

request, though all have seen it and have not raised any objections to the request as written.

*Bridgeport Golf Course – We are awaiting an analysis of the pumping and consumptive use of the Bridgeport Golf Course to determine whether we could bring them into line with every other golf course in our District by removing their allocation. As soon as that analysis is complete, I will take that action administratively.

*Bridgeport Ethanol – The agreement with Bridgeport Ethanol has been signed and we received our first payment toward the increase in baseline as I outlined at the June Board meeting.

*Expansion of Acres Legal Opinion – We have a landowner in Morrill County that is interested in converting a feedlot that was originally certified as irrigated farm ground back to irrigated farm ground. I have asked Steve for a legal opinion as to whether that would be counter to the acre expansion moratorium regardless of whether it would save consumptive use.

Outreach:

*Grand Plan Update – The Upper Platte principals will have another meeting on the “Grand Plan” on August 10. I will participate by zoom.

7. FY 2021 Budget Overview

Budget numbers are still fluid. Beginning balances are not final and we do not know what the valuations will be. Berge read through the memo that he distributed to the board. This budget allows more cushion in the long-term savings as he would like to have around \$500,000.00 in sinking funds. At the August board meeting, members will be given the line item budget.

8. Consideration of Reopening Without Appointment

Berge reviewed his memo to the board, containing updated information on current staff and board members conditions due to COVID-19. Berge would recommend that we stay on the current schedule of keeping the office closed to the public by appointment only, with staff in attendance on a rotational schedule. No complaints have been logged to staff or board members from the public. The board did not take any action and indicated that the current policy can stay in place and be reviewed and approved by Berge at any time.

9. Consideration of Alternates to the Budget and Personnel Committee, Water Resources Committee and District Operations Committee

Berge reviewed a suggested motion for the board to consider excused and unexcused absences for meetings. He discussed the problem of having a quorum present for committee meetings. If any of the alternates listed are required for a quorum, they will be notified. If they are NOT notified, they should not attend, to avoid a quorum of the entire Board.

Moved by Lapaseotes, seconded by Weinreis, In addition to the Board Chairman serving as an alternate to all committees when required for a quorum, I move to add the Vice Chairman to serve as an alternate to all committees when required for a quorum except those that he already sits on. In that case, the Secretary will serve as an alternate to all committees when required for a quorum except those that he already sits on. In that case, the Treasurer will serve as an alternate to all committees when required for a quorum except those that he already sits on.

Ayes: Andreas, Darnall, Lapaseotes, Reuter, Weinreis

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Deines, Eirich, Henkel, Westphal

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

Motion made by Reuter, seconded by Weinreis to adjourn at 3:43 p.m., MDT. Motion passed.

Ayes: Andreas, Darnall, Lapaseotes, Reuter, Weinreis

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Deines, Eirich, Henkel, Westphal