

**North Platte Natural Resources  
District Board of Directors Meeting Held by Zoom**

**December 10, 2020**

The regular meeting of the North Platte Natural Resources District (NRD) Board of Directors was called to order via conference call at 3:00 p.m. MST, December 10, 2020, by Kent Andreas, via a zoom conference initiated from the North Platte NRD Offices (Agenda item #1). Notice of the meeting was given to the public by publishing a legal notice in the December 3, 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 on the NPNRD website for public inspection (Agenda item #2).

Board members present via zoom: Kent Andreas, Gary Darnall, Dave Deines, Roger Eirich, Ryan Reuter, Dan Weinreis and Mark Westphal. Board members absent: Henkel and Lapaseotes. Others present: John Berge, Barb Cross, Danielle Schafer, Amanda Sheppard, Carolyn Hudson, Scott Schaneman, Lydia Hendrickson, Lynn Okicki, and Dave Christian of NPNRD staff; Thad Kuntz, Adaptive Resources, Inc; Megan Dockery, Simmons Olson Law Firm, and Lex Larson, J.G. Elliot.

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

1. Meeting Notice
2. Final Agenda
3. Minutes, North Platte Natural Resources District, November 12, 2020
4. Final Treasurers Report
5. Manager's Report
6. Employee Manual Effective 12-10-2020
7. Resolution of Recognition

8. 10-2021 NSWCP Cost List

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

Due to the meeting being conducted by Zoom, all items were provided electronically prior to the meeting.

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

The Board reviewed the minutes of the November 12, 2020 regular Board meeting.

Moved by Eirich seconded by Darnall, to approve the minutes of the November 12, 2020 regular Board meeting. Motion passed.

Ayes: Andreas, Darnall, Eirich, Reuter, Westphal

Nay: none

Abstain: Deines, Weinreis

Absent: Henkel, Lapaseotes

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

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

Ayes: Andreas, Darnall, Eirich, Reuter, Weinreis, Westphal,

Nay: none

Abstain: Deines

Absent: Henkel, Lapaseotes

**5. Comments from the Public**

None

**6. Manager's Report**

General Manager John Berge indicated that the written report was sent to the board and

was available on the NPNRD website. He reviewed the following items:

Administrative:

The first two topics were not addressed in the packet:

- Robert O. Gifford, long time board member and the first Chairman of the NARD board, passed away on Monday, November 30<sup>th</sup>. Flowers were sent to the service from the Board and staff.
- Local working group with NRCS will meet on February 11, 2020 from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. District Operations Committee is invited to attend. The meetings have been good the last couple of years.
- COVID Operations – Our COVID operations continue with mandatory mask wearing for employees, encouraged mask wearing for the public and closure except by appointment. We also issued specific guidance about isolation needs after travel/celebration of the Thanksgiving holiday.
- Ventilation – We recently had a window installed in our breakroom that will add to the capability for ventilation in our offices.
- Personnel Changes – As you will note, you are considering a resolution later in the agenda honoring Carolyn Hudson for her 19 years of service here at the NRD. This and other expected and planned personnel activities will require some planning on how we address our human resource needs in the future. I will be working with our department heads to develop appropriate staffing plans.
- Master Planning – The Department Heads and I held a productive meeting this morning scaling up our work that will include you on the renewal of the master plan for the District.

Projects and Programs:

- Hazard Mitigation Planning – The kickoff meeting for the North Platte NRD’s Hazard Mitigation Planning for 2021-2026 occurred on Wednesday.
- Schaneman Recharge Project – Transfer permit application for this incredibly important project have now been submitted to DNR for their consideration.
- Meter Reads/Water Use Reports – Meter Reads are complete, and Water Use Reports will be generated and mailed as early as next week.
- Nitrogen Management – I will bring to you a proposal for nitrogen management implementation to the Board meeting in January for your consideration.
- Staff is working on a potential variance for the January – February timeframe. One application has been completed and copies will be sent to the Water Resources Committee.

Outreach:

- Nebraska: Water Machine – I participated in the production of Nebraska: Water Machine, a documentary film produced by NET, NWRA and NSIA – it is available for viewing on the NET website.
- NWRA Board – I was reelected to the Board of the Nebraska Water Resources Association at the annual convention last month.
- Conservation Roundtable Board – I was reelected to the Board of the Conservation Roundtable, and our organization is currently working to develop positive communication strategies on conservation easements.

**7. Consideration of the Audit and Annual Financial Statements for FY2020**

This item was on the draft agenda but on Monday, Kevin Sylvester from Dana F. Cole & Co. LLP called to let us know that Doug Millay passed away. Doug has been doing

our yearly audit. Doug's computer was still at his home and Kevin is working on getting it back to finalize the audit. The audit is not required to have board approval before it is submitted to the state by December 31<sup>st</sup>, and that deadline will be met. Kevin will present the audit findings to the Board of Directors in January.

## **8. Consideration of Changes to the Personnel Manual**

Berge discussed the changes made in the personnel manual to accommodate changes in the staff. 1. We have added protected classes in terms of employment. Discrimination status updates. 2. We have changed the section on flexible schedules. We have people working different schedules to accommodate family and we wanted to define those in the personnel manual. Some employees have children to pick up or some are working 8 9-hour days and 1 8-hour day with a day off in a two-week period. Discussion was had on the possibility of working 4 10-hour days a week. There are opportunities for employees to make the schedule work for their families and the office. Andreas indicated that he would like the entire Personnel Manual to go back to the Budget and Personnel Committee for review before the changes are approved by the Board. Weinreis asked if there were any legal protections in the manual for asking employees to come to an in-person meeting with the current COVID-19 situation. Berge replied that the House & Senate are currently looking at legal protections for organizations that require employees to come in to work in person with people who may have COVID-19. Weinreis then asked who makes the decision on how essential employees are determined. Berge indicated that there is specific guidance from Homeland Security on this issue and it has been reviewed by our attorney, Megan Dockery. NPNRD employees are considered essential personnel. Everything we do is related to the services for production agriculture and water quality. Generally, 6 – 8 employees are in the office at one time. The rest of the employees are working from home.

Further discussion will be tabled until a meeting can be held by the Budget and Personnel Committee.

**9. Consideration of Resolution #20-19 Honoring Retiring Staff Member Carolyn Hudson**

Scott Schaneman – In 2008, I came to NPNRD from the farm to establish a new career. Carolyn was my office mate and teacher. We have developed a great relationship over the years and a year ago, she indicated that she was thinking about retiring. The last twelve months discussions have been going on in the Water Department. Carolyn has been my right hand. She has been a teacher to me, and the staff and we will really miss her.

Berge – Carolyn is kind of the glue that keeps us together. She organizes activities and is Chairman of the Safety Committee. We have had limited issues because of that. She is written grants for LARM. Decorates the office for Christmas, even in the awful year. She is the only person on staff that practices what she preaches on water quality. Carolyn does not cut corners. She is a wonderful resource for all of us.

Berge then presented to Carolyn a clock with an inscription documenting her 19 years of service to NPNRD.

Carolyn – I came here in March of 2002. It has been a wonderful journey and I have learned so much. I came to the Panhandle in the summer of 1999 and attended WNCC to complete my Associate Degree in Auto Mechanics. I thank you all for the opportunity to serve. The board members, staff and co-workers have made my life complete. I get to work in a beautiful basin, and I could not have a better “office”. Thanks to Scott for guiding me in so many ways. He has been terrific. It has been a pleasure.

Berge read the resolution honoring Carolyn. The Board thanked her for her service.

*Motion made by Darnall, seconded by Weinreis to adopt the resolution as read.*

*Motion passed.*

Ayes: Andreas, Darnall, Deines, Eirich, Reuter, Weinreis, Westphal,

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Henkel, Lapaseotes

### **10. Consideration of Proposed Cost-Share Rates**

Berge indicated that new cost share rates are updated and reviewed every year.

Both Todd Filipi and Scott Schaneman have reviewed the rates and if the board agrees, we can put this to motion. Motion made by Reuter, seconded by Eirich to approve the new 2021 cost share rates. Motion passed.

Ayes: Andreas, Darnall, Deines, Eirich, Reuter, Weinreis, Westphal,

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Henkel, Lapaseotes

### **13. Adjourn**

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

Motion made by Westphal, seconded by Deines to adjourn at 3:52 p.m., MST. Motion passed.

Ayes: Andreas, Darnall, Deines, Eirich, Reuter, Weinreis, Westphal,

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Henkel, Lapaseotes