

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

February 13, 2020

The regular meeting of the North Platte Natural Resources District (NRD) Board of Directors was called to order at 3:00 p.m. MST, February 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 January 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, Roger Eirich, Chuck Henkel, Pete Lapaseotes, Ryan Reuter, Dan Weinreis and Mark Westphal. Board members absent: Gary Darnall and Dave Deines. Others present: Barb Cross, Danielle Schafer, Lydia Hendrickson, Scott Schaneman, Carolyn Hudson, Craig Uhrig, Travis Preston, Lynn Okicki and Jody Fiscus of NPNRD staff; Thad Kuntz, Adaptive Resources, Inc; Megan Dockery, Simmons Olson Law Firm; Sarah Gray, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and David Fisher, local landowner.

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, January 9, 2020
4. Manager's Report
5. Legislative Update
6. Directors Per Diem Expense Voucher
7. Budget Process FY 2020-2021

8. Lease Rate tables for 2020-2021
9. EPIC Program Carryforward Policy
10. Master Planning Proposal from CBI
11. Donation to Hoops for Heroes for Heroes Program

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, January 9, 2020.
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Manager's Report
5. Legislative Update
6. Directors Per Diem Expense Voucher
7. Budget Process FY 2020-2021
8. Lease Rates for 2020-2021
9. EPIC Program Carryforward Policy
10. Master Planning Proposal from CBI
11. Donation to Hoops for Heroes Program

3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Board reviewed the minutes of the January 9, 2020, regular Board meeting. Moved by Eirich, seconded by Henkel, to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2020 regular Board meeting. Motion passed.

Ayes: Eirich, Henkel, Lapaseotes, Reuter, Andreas

Nay: none

Abstain: Weinreis, Westphal

Absent: Darnall, Deines

4. Treasurer's Report and Accounts Payable

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

Ayes: Andreas, Eirich, Henkel, Lapaseotes, Reuter, Weinreis, Westphal

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Darnall, Deines

5. Comments from the Public

None

6. Manager's Report

General Manager John Berge highlighted his report as follows:

Administration:

*Illness in the Office – Over the past several weeks, several our staff have been out sick with influenza and a variety of other ailments. I have communicated to them that if they are sick, particularly contagious, we need them to stay home to protect their coworkers and to protect our constituents.

*NRCS Clerk Position in Scottsbluff – We will be advertising the NRCS Clerk Position in Scottsbluff next week. This is a position that was formerly held by Bobbie Dendy at the USDA Service Center and has been vacant for well over a year.

*Staff Appreciation Dinner – The annual staff appreciation dinner will be held on February 21 at the Gering Civic Center. Cocktail Hour begins at 5:45 and dinner begins

at 6:45. Dinner is a choice of either Prime Rib or Shrimp. If you've not yet RSVP'd and plan on attending, please contact Susie.

*Website Updates – Staff are reviewing several areas on our website that need to be updated, and those updates will be occurring over the coming several weeks.

Projects and Programs:

*Bridgeport Ethanol – Our counsel is working with an attorney for the Bridgeport Ethanol plant to resolve the issue of their exceeding their baseline for pumping.

*Nutrient Management – The sampling presentation will not occur until the March Board Meeting but plans for implementation of our nutrient management chapter continue at the staff level.

*PRECIP Grant – In 2018, we were a partner on an application by the Nebraska Water Balance Alliance (NEWBA) called PRECIP. We had a financial commitment to this grant of \$25,000 per year for three years. The grant was intended to assist us in cost-share for irrigation technology improvements. NEWBA's grant administrator has been difficult at best to work with and recently has stopped returning phone calls, emails and other communications not just from us, but from NEWBA Board Members. It is assumed that he will be resigning. As a result of all of this, we have withdrawn from the grant. We had a conference call with Mark Brohman of the NET to confirm this.

*EPIC Sign Up – Sign Up for the EPIC program will run from February 18-28. Any groundwater irrigator that scores could be approved. All counties are eligible.

Outreach:

*Water Tour – The water tour will be held on August 4-5. Content for our media devices is being collected. We have started raising money and have just over \$5,000 pledged. We anticipate raising as much as \$10,000 to offset costs and replenish the Agribusiness Committee scholarship program.

*Water for Ag Poll – The Water for Ag group did a survey across our District that asked very specific questions about the reputation of the NRD, programs of the NRD and things that the NRD could be doing differently. We hope to have those results very soon to share with you as members of the Board.

*Water Conference(s) – The University of Nebraska will be hosting two water conferences this year – In April, the Younes Water Conference will be held and on August 3, the Nebraska Water Center will host a Conference at the Panhandle Station – this conference coincides with the Water Tour to be held August 4th and 5th. Information about each conference will be shared as it becomes available.

*Producer Roundtables – The NRD will be hosting producer roundtables in the coming two weeks in Scotts Bluff, Garden and Morrill Counties. The Scotts Bluff Event is on February 18th at noon at our office. The Garden County Event is on February 20th at noon at the Tiger Den in Lewellen, and the Morrill County Event is to be held on February 25th at noon at the Prairie Winds Center. There will also be a remote signup for EPIC during the roundtable sessions in Garden County.

7. Legislative Update

Berge reviewed LB-1072 which provides bonding authority for all NRD's. Right

now, just the Papio-Missouri NRD has bonding authority. This authority would give all NRD's the option to use bonding for flood control projects that cannot be budgeted in one fiscal year. He also went over the lobby work from Zulkoski-Weber. Their report gives updates on all bills of interest to the Nebraska Association of Resource Districts.

8. Discussion of Reimbursement Process for Directors

Berge reviewed the fact sheet that was presented to the board. Board members must fill out a reimbursement form for regular board meetings. Administrative staff can pre-fill the form if necessary. Mileage to and from meetings is reimbursable. Forms must be completed and signed before they can be reimbursed.

9. Discussion of Budget Process for FY 2020-2021

Berge reviewed the proposed budget schedule. This is just an informational item as the schedule has not changed from last year. April 30th is the deadline for Department Heads to submit budget proposals to the General Manager. Board members are invited to join any of the budget process meetings.

10. Consideration of Lease Rates for 2020-2021

Approximately three and a half years ago, lease rates were established for any Temporary and Permanent retirement contracts that the NPNRD might negotiate. The board is asked to consider three options; Option #1 would be the same as 2019, using the rates for 100 - 80 URF zones. Option #2 only uses the rates established for 100% URF zone (under this option, no other retirements would be considered for areas outside of the 100% zone). Option #3 would be to use the first two tiers of payments which would include the 100% URF zone and a 97-99 percent URF zone. Traditionally, this NRD has not considered retirements outside of these URF zones. If an opportunity arose for consideration of a

retirement outside of the approved zones, the contract would be presented to the full Board for approval.

Reuter made a motion to accept the Option #3 lease rates for 2020-2021. Lapaseotes second the motion. Motion Approved.

Ayes: Andreas, Eirich, Henkel, Lapaseotes, Reuter, Weinreis, Westphal

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Darnall, Deines

11. Consideration of EPIC Program Carryforward Policy

Each groundwater irrigator will be afforded a carryforward of 94 inches in the over appropriated area and 84 inches in the Pumpkin Creek area as there is a 24-inch carryover authorized for both areas. Berge explained that the carryforward amount would be reduced proportionally to the number of inches offered under the EPIC program.

Henkel made a motion to accept the EPIC Program Carryforward Policy. Eirich second the motion. Motion Approved.

Ayes: Andreas, Eirich, Henkel, Lapaseotes, Reuter, Weinreis, Westphal

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Darnall, Deines

12. Consideration of Mater Planning Process Proposal from Consensus Building Institute

Berge reviewed the proposal from CBI to complete the NPNRD Master Plan, which is required for NRD's by statute. Ryan Golten's credentials and references are excellent. The members of the Board of Directors can be as involved in the planning process as they would

like to be. Ms. Golten will schedule either a half day or full day session. Her new proposal is \$10,893.00.

Westphal made a motion to accept the bid from Consensus Building Institute to facilitate the Master Plan. Weinreis second the motion. Motion approved.

13. Consideration of Donation to Hoops for Heroes Program

Travis Preston is part of Leadership Scottsbluff. He asked if the board would help sponsor three different organizations (Catpacks/Puppacks Program, Shop with a Cop Program, and Life Change Connection (LCC)) under their Hoops for Heroes Program.

Eirich made a motion to table the discussion, Weinreis second the motion.

Ayes: Andreas, Eirich, Henkel, Lapaseotes, Reuter, Weinreis, Westphal

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Darnall, Deines

14. Adjourn

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

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

Ayes: Andreas, Eirich, Henkel, Lapaseotes, Reuter, Weinreis, Westphal

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Darnall, Deines