

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

March 12, 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, March 12, 2020, by Roger Eirich 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 March 5, 2020, Scottsbluff *Star-Herald*. Eirich 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: Gary Darnall, Roger Eirich, Chuck Henkel, Pete Lapaseotes, and Ryan Reuter. Board members absent: Kent Andreas, Dave Deines, Dan Weinreis, and Mark Westphal. Others present: John Berge, Barb Cross, Danielle Schafer, Scott Schaneman, Carolyn Hudson, Craig Uhrig, Travis Preston, Lynn Okicki and Jody Fiscus of NPNRD staff; Thad Kuntz, Adaptive Resources, Inc; Steve Smith, Simmons Olson Law Firm; Sarah Gray, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Brian Judy, Hearing Officer.

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, February 13, 2020
4. Variance Applications

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, February 13, 2020.
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Manager's Report
5. Nitrate Sampling Presentation
6. Report from the Water Resources Committee
 - a. Flowmeter proposal from The University of Nebraska
 - b. Presentation from Thad Kuntz with Adaptive Resources Inc. on the Set Aside Study
 - c. Variance Requests for Public Hearing

3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Board reviewed the minutes of the February 13, 2020, regular Board meeting.

Moved by Darnall, seconded by Henkel, to approve the minutes of the February 13, 2020 regular Board meeting. Motion passed.

Ayes: Darnall, Eirich, Henkel, Lapaseotes, Reuter

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Andreas, Deines, Weinreis, Westphal

4. Treasurer's Report and Accounts Payable

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

Ayes: Darnall, Eirich, Henkel, Lapaseotes, Reuter

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Andreas, Deines, Weinreis, Westphal

5. Comments from the Public

None

6. Manager's Report

General Manager John Berge highlighted his report as follows:

Outreach:

*Water or Ag Poll – The Water for Ag group, funded by the University of Nebraska and Penn State University recently conducted a survey of landowners and municipal residents of the NRD on a variety of issues related to water quality and water quantity. Copies of the survey results are attached to this report for your review. I believe that these might be of particular interest to you.

Board members may read all other items of interest in the written report.

7. Nitrate Sampling Presentation and Discussion

Carolyn Hudson presented information on nutrient management. She discussed the 12 statutory purposes for our existence and that nitrogen management is one of them. She also reviewed the keys to Nitrogen Management i.e. – use of fertilizers, soil sampling, sprinkler packages, etc. NPNRD monitors over 800 wells in the district and the wells are spread out over 3 million plus acres. Sampling begins about mid-March and samples are taken through October. Carolyn showed a map of the location of all the monitoring wells throughout the district. She also presented the map from the 1993 Ground Water Management Plan and mentioned the studies that have been done in the NPNRD, for both water quality and quantity. Maps were shown with nitrate levels in 1993 vs 2015 – 2019 and maps indicating nitrate highs from 2009 – 2019. Nitrate management recommendations are made to the Board from the information collected.

8. Report from the Water Resources Committee

a. Consideration of Flowmeter Proposal from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Xin Qiao, Irrigation, Water Management Specialist, Extension Specialist, from UNL, discussed the tower system that they are beginning to develop. It will read multiple flowmeters with one tower. AT&T will have a fee for the cellular service. No money is being requested at this time to continue the project. Currently, NPNRD pays a fee for reading the flow meter from each telemetry unit. This is an exploratory project and UNL would like Board approval to determine NPNRD's interest in continuing the research. UNL will determine if it's a feasible project by June.

Motion made by Darnall, seconded by Lapaseotes, to approved NPNRD's interest in the UNL research for alternate remote flow meter reading. Motion passed.

Ayes: Darnall, Eirich, Henkel, Lapaseotes, Reuter

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Andreas, Deines, Weinreis, Westphal

b. Presentation from Thad Kuntz with Adaptive Resources, Inc. on the Set Aside Study

Berge explained the procedure that has been developed to model the difference in the 6.75% set aside and the new 9.75% set aside that is being recommended for all exemptions from the allocation. Thad Kuntz from ARI went over the analysis and the memo he provided. He questioned if the 1/15th (6.75%) calculation was enough to offset the flood irrigation. He went over the variance applications and completed an analysis on what set aside acres would offset the amount of water that's being pumped. His conclusion was that the 1/15th (6.7%) set aside was inadequate to meet the goals for the exempt acres. A 9.75% set aside would be adequate to meet those goals.

c. Public Hearings on Requests for Variance from the Allocations Chapter of the

Variance hearings were held on the following applications:

- a. Chinook Farms, Inc. – VAR-2020-01
- b. Louis E. Kleager – VAR-2020-02
- c. Gerrod Toepfer – VAR-2020-03
- d. Gary W. Wiedeman – VAR-2020-04
- e. Susan Reese Miller Revocable Trust – VAR-2020-05
- f. Gail D. Newman Trust – VAR-2020-06
- g. Robert Cameron and Jessica J. Carlson – VAR-2020-07
- h. Robert Cameron and Jessica J. Carlson – VAR-2020-08
- i. Robert Cameron and Jessica J. Carlson – VAR-2020-09
- j. Two Bar Land & Cattle, Inc. – VAR-2020-10
- k. Pieper Farms, LLC – VAR-2020-11

After each hearing the following motion was made by Reuter: *I hereby move that the application be approved with the following conditions: That the applicant set aside 9.75 percent of the historically irrigated acreage for the duration of the current allocation period expiring in 2024 and the applicant may apply to combine set aside acres.*

All motions were seconded by Henkel.

The motions were approved for each separate hearing on a roll call vote:

Eirich – yes

Henkel – yes

Lapaseotes – yes

Reuter – yes

Darnall – yes.

14. Adjourn

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

Motion made by Reuter, seconded by Henkel to adjourn at 4:17 p.m., MDT.

Motion passed.

Ayes: Darnall, Eirich, Henkel, Lapaseotes, Reuter

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Andreas, Deines, Weinreis, Westphal