

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

September 9, 2021

The regular meeting of the North Platte Natural Resources District (NRD) Board of Directors was called to order at 3:00 p.m. MDT, September 9, 2021, 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 September 2, 2021, 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: Kent Andreas, Gary Darnall, Dave Deines, Roger Eirich, Pete Lapaseotes, Ryan Reuter, Dan Weinreis, and Mark Westphal. Board members absent: Chuck Henkel.

Chairman Eirich called for a motion to excuse Henkel from the meeting. *Motion made by Reuter, seconded by Weinreis to excuse board member Henkel from the meeting. Motion passed.*

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

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Henkel

Others present: John Berge, Scott Schaneman, Lydia Hendrickson, of NPNRD staff; Thad Kuntz, Adaptive Resources, Inc; Steve Smith, Simmons Olson Law Firm. Sarah Gray and Calden Meininger from NRCS

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, August 13, 2020
4. Treasurers Report
5. Manager's Report
6. Suggested Motion for 1% Increase in Budget Authority.
7. Budget Hearing Agenda
8. Testimony for Budget Hearing FY 2022 Budget
9. Budget of Expenses Spreadsheet for Fiscal Year 2022
10. Budget of Revenues Spreadsheet for Fiscal Year 2022
11. State Budget Form for Fiscal Year 2022
12. North Platte Natural Resources District, Public Hearing FY 2022 Budget Script, September 9, 2021.
13. Certification of Taxable Value & Value Attributable to Growth, Tax Year 2021 for Scotts Bluff County, Banner County, Sioux County, Morrill County, and Garden County.

3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Board reviewed the minutes of the August 12, 2021, regular Board meeting.

Moved by Andreas, seconded by Deines, to approve the minutes of the August 12, 2021 regular Board meeting. Motion passed.

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

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Henkel

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, Deines, Eirich, Lapaseotes, Reuter, Weinreis, Westphal

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Henkel

5. Comments from the Public

Sarah Gray from NRCS introduced Calden Meininger to the Board as a new technician to the Scottsbluff NRCS office. Gray went on to provide the Board and public an update regarding potential funding through NSWCP as well as EQIP for those producers affected by the recent wildfires. Gray mentioned the deferred grazing program would be available as well as an FSA emergency program called ECP. Gray offered to keep the Board updated regarding the ECP program from FSA as well as other programs as they become available.

6. Manager's Report

Administrative –

COVID Operations – Effective September 2 through October 2, we will be reimplementing a requirement for masking in the office in common areas and when social distancing is not possible. This is due to at least seven exposures on our staff in the last two weeks and at least one positive case on our staff. Additionally, staff will be expected to mask when interacting with the public. We will be reorganizing our office to ensure social distancing is possible and will be working with individual employees and departments on staggered schedules where possible. Our hope is that this limited timeframe can get the staff through the current surge and this measure can be relaxed again.

Projects and Programs –

Unified Plan – On August 31, I attended a meeting of the Upper Platte NRDs with DNR Director Tom Riley to discuss the Unified Plan (formerly the Grand Plan) and its current status. As you may recall, this plan was designed to designate the entire Upper Platte Basin Fully Appropriated, giving us regulatory certainty for a specific amount of money and water. These talks stalled about two years ago, and the Director is working with NPPD and CNPPID in addition to our NRDs to determine whether there is a viable path forward.

Robust Review – Also on August 31, I met with the entire Platte Over Appropriated Committee (POAC) to discuss the scope of work for the Robust Review. That has been working on this for several months. We are getting a lot closer to a final scope and will meet again in mid-September to finalize.

Greenhouse Electrical Improvements – in anticipation of additional electrical load during the fall and winter months, we recently had some electrical improvements made to the greenhouse to ensure enough circuitry to maintain temperature even in the coldest of conditions.

Gueck Lease – For several months we have been working with landowner Gueck to envelop his property into the Schaneman Recharge project. We have received the blessing from PBC to do so and have been stalled with DNR legal counsel for several months on language alterations. I have taken these issues to the Director of DNR to sort out in the hopes we can execute this contract in the coming weeks.

Geoscientist at UNL – Dr. Mohammed Khalil will be replacing Steve Sibray as the new Geoscientist at UNL-Extension.

Outreach –

Water Expo – On August 14, we hosted over 450 of our constituents for our semi-annual family-oriented Water Expo. This was far and away our largest crowd to date, and the children’s activities as well as the adult seminars were well attended. Many thanks to our staff and Board that assisted in making it such a special day!

Water Conference – On August 16, we joined the Nebraska Water Center in hosting the “What’s the Shape of Water in Western Nebraska” conference at the Panhandle

Research and Extension Center. Nearly 90 attended that conference.

Water Tour – On August 17-18 we held a very successful first iteration of the “*Where the Water Goes*” Water Tour from here east to Lake McConaughy. We are going to alternate a tour to the west to the Wyoming Reservoirs and to the East each year.

7. Consideration of 1% Increase in Budget Authority

Motion made by Reuter, seconded by Andreas to adopt a 1% increase in budget allowed by law above and beyond the levy limits.

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

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Henkel

8. Adoption of Proposed FY-2022 Budget

A motion was made by Reuter and seconded by Weinreis to adopt the FY-2022 Budget as submitted.

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

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Henkel

9. Adoption of the Final Tax Request

Berge indicated that approved budget sets the levy for FY 2022 at 0.051616.

Moved by Henkel, seconded by Reuter to adopt Resolution 20-10 the final tax request at .051615.

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

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Henkel

10. Adjourn

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

Motion made by Deines, seconded by Reuter to adjourn at 3:21 pm., MDT. Motion passed.

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

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Henkel