

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

**June 10, 2021**

The regular meeting of the North Platte Natural Resources District (NRD) Board of Directors was called to order in person at 3:00 p.m. MST, June 10, 2021, by Roger Eirich, at the North Platte NRD Offices. Notice of the meeting was given to the public by publishing a legal notice in the June 3, 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 on the NPNRD website for public inspection (Agenda Item #2).

Board members present Kent Andreas, Gary Darnall, Dave Deines, Roger Eirich, Pete Lapaseotes, and Ryan Reuter. Board members absent: Dan Weinreis, Chuck Henkel, and Mark Westphal.

Chairman Eirich called for a motion to excuse Weinreis, Henkel, and Westphal from the meeting. Motion made by Andreas, seconded by Lapaseotes, to excuse board members Weinreis, Henkel, and Westphal from the meeting. Motion passed.

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

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Weinreis, Henkel, Westphal

Others present in person: John Berge, Danielle Schafer, Scott Schaneman, Kyle Ann Hopkins, Lydia Hendrickson, Craig Uhrig, Amanda Shepperd, and Travis Preston of NPNRD staff; Megan Dockery and Steve Smith, Simmons Olson Law Firm; Thad Kuntz, Adaptive Resources, Inc.; Sarah Gray, and Chris Jensen NRCS; Lex Larsen JG Elliot. Bob Sullivan, Allen Gehring, and Richard Vaughn from NRCS joined by zoom.

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

1. Agenda
2. Minutes, North Platte Natural Resources District, Board of Directors Meeting, May 13, 2021.
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Manager's Report
5. Minutes, North Platte Natural Resources District, Executive Committee Meeting, May 13, 2021.
6. Minutes, Nebraska Association of Resources Districts, Intergovernmental Risk Management Pool Association, Loss Control Committee, May 25, 2021.
7. Minutes, North Platte Natural Resources District, Budget & Personnel Committee, May 24, 2021.
8. Memo from Robert Sullivan, FPAC-NRCS to John Berge, General Manager, dated May 7, 2021, Regarding High Hazard Dams and discussing the NRCS Rehab Program.
9. Letter from Natural Resources Committee dated June 1, 2021, regarding an Interim Study to assess the progress of Natural Resources Districts relative to the purposes for the creation and existence of the 23 NRDs throughout Nebraska. The following items were provided to the Directors at the Board Meeting:

The same items as listed above were provided to board members in person.

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

The Board reviewed the minutes of the May 13, 2021, regular Board meeting.

Motion made by Reuter, seconded by Andreas, to approve the minutes of the May 13, 2021, regular Board meeting. Motion passed.

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

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Weinreis, Henkel, Westphal

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

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

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

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Weinreis, Henkel, Westphal

#### **5. Comments from the Public**

Sarah Gray, NRCS District Conservationist asked to speak and informed the group that the CRP signup has been set for June 14<sup>th</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup>. Sarah also informed the Board that CRP rates may increase possibly by as much as 10% and those producers interested should contact FSA and have them run a new rate quote.

#### **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 highlighted the following items:

Administrative:

- The water technician position had closed, and a good selection of candidates would be pared down by John Berge, Craig Uhrig, and Scott Schaneman, Opportunities to interview would then be offered to the qualified candidates with the hopes of filling the position in the next few weeks.
- The budget process had seen some slight delays but should still be on target for delivering a final budget later this Summer. With the fiscal year ending on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June the fiscal footing looks quite good. After discussing the budget with the Budget and Personnel Committee, the Committee wanted to see the budget increase by 3-4% to match our growth with inflation. Another Committee meeting will be scheduled as the efforts come more clearly in focus.
- Staff evaluations will be completed by supervisors by the end of July with Berge's evaluation to be scheduled by the Executive Committee.

#### Projects and Programs:

- Ground water levels presentation was delayed due to some technology and calculations issues. The presentation will be made at the July Board meeting.
- GVFC inspections were made by the Permanent Maintenance Committee of the Gering Valley Flood Control Project at the end of May. While the inspections of all the dams were not completed, they should all be inspected within the next several weeks. An assessment of the inspections will be provided later in the agenda.
- The NPNRD and the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources held a surface water infrastructure meeting at the NPNRD with five surface water Districts included. The Districts were asked to fill out a survey provided by NDNR outlining the infrastructure needs within their District. Those repairs would be

made through the Water Resources Cash Fund. In exchange the Districts would be required to participate in conjunctive management projects.

- Sometime in the month of July, Staff and the Board will be touring the Schaneman Recharge Facility. Farmers Irrigation District has also provided their consent to use their drain on the West side of the ponds as an emergency spillway if needed.

#### Outreach:

- July 14<sup>th</sup> will be the Platte Basin annual meeting in North Platte. The District will be providing a presentation on the EPIC program at that meeting.
- June 23<sup>rd</sup> will be a meeting of the POAC Administrators as well as the modelers to discuss the upcoming robust review of activities in the Platte Basin.
- August 14<sup>th</sup> will be the NPNRD Water Expo from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Planning efforts are underway for this year's event.

## **7. Report from Executive Committee**

Berge provided the report from the Executive Committee meeting, in which it was discussed by the committee to remain a member of the NARD risk pool and continue to provide input to the risk pool committee regarding our concerns with current health care coverage and costs associated with that coverage. Darnall asked if there were any options available financially to provide better coverage and costs. Berge replied, the only option he was aware of is to join a larger pool or continue to search out other quotes. Darnall also asked if there was a way to just remove ourselves from the risk pool and continue to remain a member of NARD? As a follow up question Darnall asked how the other Districts felt about costs and coverages? Reuter replied that we cannot separate ourselves from the risk pool

without separating ourselves from the Association. Reuter also mentioned he believed other Districts were feeling the same way about costs and coverages but not saying anything. It also may not be an issue due to those other NRD's enjoying a larger tax base. It was the consensus of the Executive Committee to continue to provide input to the Risk Pool Committee and remain a member of the Association.

#### **8. Report from The Budget and Personnel Committee**

Berge reported the Committee had met and reviewed a working copy of the budget in detail both expenses and revenues. The Committee felt the budget would need to show a slight increase to account for inflation. The Committee felt a 3-4% increase would be appropriate. Towards late Summer, the Committee would need to reconvene to finalize the new budget that will be approved by the Board of Directors in September.

#### **9. Presentation on the Outdoor Education Project**

Amanda Shepperd, Forestry Technician and Community Educator provided a presentation of the planned outdoor education project that will be located just South of the NPNRD Campus. The presentation revealed the plans for construction as well as a detailed drawing of the educational areas. Berge pointed out that the project would be real asset to our campus as well as inexpensive, with a planned cost of \$2,500.00.

#### **10. Discussion of High Hazzard Dam Assessment**

Berge reported that the NPNRD had met with Bob Sullivan, Allen Gehring, and Richard Vaughn NRCS Dam assessment specialists regarding the dams located in the Gering Valley Watershed. The impoundment structures both labeled high hazard and others were recently

inspected and through that inspection several concerns were noted, with some concerns related to cattle trails over the impoundment structures, invasive plant species on the dam face were also noted. Any assessments needed would be 100% funded by NRCS through the Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations Funding Program (WFPO). The assessment could be made by each structure or by entire watershed. This NRCS program was discussed with the Gering Valley Flood Control Committee with the Committee showing great interest in pursuing a complete assessment and rehabilitation of the entire watershed. The assessment would also include Yensen Drain. NRCS officials mentioned another structure in this District that qualifies for assessment is Wildhorse Dam, which is North of the City of Bayard, and under the jurisdiction of Farmers Irrigation District.

#### **11. Discussion of LR23 – Progress of Natural Resources Districts in Nebraska**

Berge informed the Board of Directors that the District received a letter from Cynthia Lamm legal counsel representing the Natural Resources Committee of the Nebraska Legislature. The letter referred to the requirement of the legislative review that each NRD District provide comment on the supplied survey outlining all the activities and responsibilities that each District has afforded its residents throughout the existence of NRD's in the State. The District will focus on conservation practices, cost sharing programs, The Harrisburg Water System, as well as a multitude of other programs and projects. Staff will provide a copy of the survey for the Board to review before the July Board meeting.

#### **12. Adjourn**

There being no further business, the Chairman called for a motion to adjourn. Motion made by Reuter, seconded by Darnall, to adjourn at 3:55 p.m., MST. Motion passed.

Ayes: Andreas, Darnall, Deines, Eirich, Lapascotes, Reuter,

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Weinreis, Henkel, Westphal