

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

December 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, December 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 December 4, 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: Dave Deines, Roger Eirich, Chuck Henkel, Pete Lapaseotes, Ryan Reuter, and Mark Westphal. Board members absent: Kent Andreas, Gary Darnall, and Dan Weinreis.

Chairman Eirich called for a motion to excuse Andreas, Darnall, and Weinreis from the meeting.

Motion made by Reuter, seconded by Henkel to excuse board member Andreas, Darnall, and Weinries from the meeting. Motion passed.

Ayes: Deines, Eirich, Henkel, Lapaseotes, Reuter, Westphal

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Andreas, Darnall, Westphal

Others present: John Berge, Scott Schaneman, Danielle Schafer, Lydia Hendrickson, Keelie Williamson, Lynn Okicki, and Jennifer Berge-Sauter of NPNRD staff; Thad Kuntz, Adaptive Resources, Inc; Megan Dockery, of Simmons Olson Law Firm, Sarah Gray, NRCS, Kevin Sylvester, of Dana Cole Co. and Carolyn Hudson.

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 Board of Directors Meeting, November 18, 2021.
4. Treasurers Report
5. Manager's Report
6. Nitrate Sampling Presentation
7. Audit Engagement Letter from Dana Cole and Company
8. Independent Audit Report and Financial Statements Completed by Dana Cole and Company

3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Board reviewed the minutes of the November 18, 2021, regular Board meeting.

Moved by Henkel, seconded by Westphal, to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2021 regular Board meeting. Motion passed.

Ayes: Deines, Eirich, Henkel, Lapaseotes, Reuter, Westphal

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Andreas, Darnall, Weinreis

4. Treasure's Report and Accounts Payable

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

Ayes: Deines, Eirich, Henkel, Lapaseotes, Reuter, Westphal

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Andreas, Darnall, Weinreis,

5. Comments from the Public

Sarah Gray NRCS District Conservationist took a moment to provide information on opportunities for enhanced forestry projects that could be available through the RCPP program. Sarah also informed the Board that the State Conservationist position continues to be vacant, and Stacy Riley will fill the role as interim conservationist until sometime in March. Sarah ended her report informing the Board that she will be stepping down as District Conservationist and assuming a new role with NRCS. Sarah will continue to be based out of Scottsbluff office. Berge as well as members from the Board wished Sarah the best in her new role and thanked her for all the work she has done promoting and protecting our natural resources.

6. Manager's Report

Administrative:

Holiday Schedules – As reported to you earlier this month, our office will operate through the holiday season except for December 24 (Christmas is observed) and ½ day on the 23 for employees to get a start on holiday travel. Also, we will not be open on December 31 (New Years is observed).

Holiday Plans – We will not hold our annual Christmas potluck again this year due to COVID concerns, but we are having a “secret santa” gift exchange amongst employees. Employees also volunteered to decorate for Christmas again this year. As we have in years past, we will provide a \$100 per employee Christmas “bonus”.

Office Storage Room – Employees did an excellent job clearing out and organizing the office storage room this last week.

2022 Elections – Gary, Pete, Kent, Ryan and Mark are all up for election in 2022. If any of you do not intend to run for re-election, please let me know. Filing forms are not yet available from the Secretary of State.

Personnel Manual – We will be proposing some changes to the Personnel Manual in the coming months.

Projects and Programs:

PBC Funding Requests – I have requested Water Resources Cash Fund resources in the amount of \$1,184,490 representing a shortfall in long-term funding over the next nine years in contracts 925 and 935 with DNR. This shortfall stems from two issues:

Contracts under Water Resources Cash Fund are not reimbursed at the full 60% rate as our other WRCF contracts are, and contracts under the Water Sustainability Fund are only reimbursed for about half the term of contracts with landowners.

WWS Committee – We have started an internal committee of employees to discuss “Weird Water Stuff” every two weeks – to include, but is not limited to, reconfigurations, transfers, variance requests, etc.

Telemetry – We are continuing discussions with Mr. Reinmuth at Ditto Labs on some potential solutions for our telemetry communication issue that we discussed with the Water Resources Committee several weeks ago.

ARPA Funding – Scott and I will be holding a zoom meeting with Senator Stinner on December 20 to discuss potential ARPA funding for some of our surface water infrastructure challenges in our District and beyond.

Rule Changes? – We have begun preliminary discussions about potential rule changes/amendments that may be required in the next year or so. These will likely include reconfigurations and transfer rules.

Unified Plan – Principals from the Upper Platte NRDs, CNPPID, NPPD and DNR continue to meet to discuss the potential for the Unified Plan. It doesn't seem to be going anywhere very soon.

Outreach:

NSIA/NWRA – I attended the joint conference of the Nebraska State Irrigators Association and the Nebraska Water Resources Association in Kearney earlier this month. I attended several interesting sessions on infrastructure funding and drought.

PBC/POAC – Weather permitting, Scott and I will be attending the POAC/PBC meeting on Friday to discuss current and future projects.

7. Presentation on Nitrate Sampling Study

Lynn Okicki provided a power point presentation on nitrate levels in ground water throughout the District. The presentation focused on the ground water sampling work the water department completed over the past year as well as the incorporation of historical monitoring well data collected over the past 3 decades. The conclusion of Okicki's report honed in on the initial findings from the first year of the two year study that showed at least 50% of the wells sampled, were at or above 5.1 MgL.

Ryan Reuter asked Chairman Eirich to be excused from the meeting at 3:39 p.m. Eirich acknowledged the need for Reuters departure and granted his request.

8. Consideration of Audit Report

Kevin Sylvester of Dana Cole and Company provided the Board a report on the audit of NPNRD accounts for FY 21 that was conducted by the certified public accountants of Dana Cole and Company. The report was presented to the Board and Staff showing no irregularities and found our accounts to be in order.

Motion made by Henkel, seconded by Westphal to accept the audit report for fiscal year 2021. Motion passed.

Ayes: Deines, Eirich, Henkel, Lapaseotes, Westphal

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Andreas, Darnall, Reuter, Weinreis

9. Adjourn

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

Motion made by Henkel, seconded by Westphal to adjourn at 3:55 pm., MDT. Motion passed.

Ayes: Deines, Eirich, Henkel, Lapaseotes, Westphal

Nay: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Andreas, Darnall, Reuter, Weinreis

