



LOWER REPUBLICAN NRD
FY2024 BUDGET HEARING & SUMMARY HEARING &
BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Lower Republican NRD Meeting Room, 30 North John, Alma, NE
September 14th, 2023, LRNRD Board Meeting, immediately following the 6:30pm Budget Hearing

Meeting notices were published in the Harlan County Journal and on the District Website at www.lrnrd.org.

FY 2024 Budget Hearing

A Notice of Budget Hearing & Summary Hearing, and Public Meeting Notice was published in the Harlan County Journal on September 7th, 2023, and on the District Website at www.lrnrd.org.

FY2024 BUDGET HEARING & SUMMARY PUBLIC HEARING

The Lower Republican NRD FY24 Budget Hearing was called to order by Vice Chairman David Bartels at 6:35pm. The notice to this hearing was published in the Harlan County Journal on September 7th, 2023. Manager Todd Siel provided the proof of publication affidavit for the notice. The chairperson provided notice that the location of the current copy of the statutes dealing with public meetings laws is located on the south wall. Siel presented an outline of the key provisions of the proposed budget statement, including, but not limited to, a comparison with the prior year's budget. Three (3) copies of the budget were available for public review. County Valuations were reviewed, and the amount of the property tax request in the draft budget document is \$1,565,431; this would equate to a tax rate of 0.033989 cents per \$100 of assessed value. The total assessed value of property differs from last year's total assessed value by 11.75%. Based on the proposed property tax request and changes in other revenue and grants, the total operating budget of the LRNRD will be over last year's by 2.17%. The floor was then opened for public comment on the proposed budget statement. All members of the public wishing to address the governing body were provided a reasonable amount of time to do so. There were no comments from the public.

Vice Chairman David Bartels closed the budget hearing at 6:45pm.

Board of Directors Meeting:

Vice Chairman David Bartels called the meeting of the Lower Republican NRD Board of Directors to order with an invitation to prayer at 6:45pm. The vice chairperson provided notice that the location of the current copy of the statute dealing with public meetings laws is located on the south wall. Guests were asked to sign the attendance roster.

MATERIAL E-MAILED OUT PRIOR TO THE MEETING & AVAILABLE AT THE MEETING

Agenda 9/23

LRNRD Board Meeting Minutes, 8/23

LRNRD/RWP Treasurer's Report, 8/23

NRCS Staff Report, 9/23

LRNRD Staff Report, 9/23

FY2024 Draft Budget, 9/23

Excused Absences: Lee Fintel, Tim Kahrs, Marlin Murdoch, Brad Wulf.

Directors present at the NRD Office: Clark Andrews, David Bartels, Don Duffy, Troy Fletcher, Chris Grams, Matt Harrison, Toby tenBensel.

Others present at the LRNRD office: Chelsea Erickson, KS DWR.

Staff present at LRNRD office: Todd Siel, Nick Simonson, Kristen Heft.

Comments from the Public: None.

Motion #1 by Don Duffy seconded by Troy Fletcher to approve the August minutes as presented. Motion carried. Ayes 7 Nays 0, Absent 4. Lee Fintel, Tim Kahrs, Marlin Murdoch, Brad Wulf.

Motion #2 by Clark Andrews seconded by Don Duffy to approve the LRNRD and Rural Water Treasurer's reports for August. Motion carried. Ayes 7 Nays 0, Absent 4. Lee Fintel, Tim Kahrs, Marlin Murdoch, Brad Wulf.

NRCS Staff Report: The NRCS report was submitted by Shaina Vincent. A full copy of this report is in the minute book.

LRNRD Staff Report: Managers Todd Siel and Nick Simonson gave the NRD staff report. The report provided updates on RRCA Annual Meeting, Platte Republican High Flow Diversion Project, WaterSMART Telemetry Meters and Rural Water and NARD Annual Conference. A copy of the report is in the minute book.

Chelsea Erickson, Kansas DWR, attended the RRCA annual meeting in Burlington. Drought conditions were the main topic at the meeting. Kansas is reviewing the Lower Superior Canal Project that is being developed for Nebraska Bostwick. It was also noted there were no dramatic announcements at the meeting.

General water conditions and outlook for next year were discussed. Harlan County Lake is about 2 feet lower than it was last year at this time. Above average inflow will be needed if we wish to avoid a Compact Call Year for 2024

Nebraska CLASS: Nebraska Cooperative Liquid Assets Securities System (Nebraska CLASS) is a competing investment company similar to NPAIT. NE CLASS has been contacting NRD's about investing funds with them. Currently, the LRNRD has savings deposited with NPAIT. Todd will investigate this and bring something back to the board.

Manager Todd Siel presented the LRNRD FY2024 draft budget, the process and reasoning for the approval of the additional 1% increase in Restricted Funds Authority, and LRNRD Tax Resolution LR-09142023-01 to the board for consideration and approval.

Motion #3 by Toby tenBensel seconded by Clark Andrews to approve the increase in Restricted Funds Authority by an additional 1%. Motion carried. Ayes 6, Nays 1 Matt Harrison, Absent 4. Lee Fintel, Tim Kahrs, Marlin Murdoch, Brad Wulf.

Motion #4 by Matt Harrison seconded by Clark Andrews to approve the FY2024 LRNRD Budget with a change to the tax rate, providing a property tax request which would be equal to last year's property tax request. Motion carried. Ayes 7 Nays 0, Absent 4. Lee Fintel, Tim Kahrs, Marlin Murdoch, Brad Wulf.

Motion #5 by Toby tenBensel seconded by Chris Grams to approve LRNRD Tax Resolution LR-09142023-01, as required by Nebraska Revised Statute 77-1632, setting the property tax request at \$1,400,824.00 (\$.030415 per \$100 of assessed value). Motion carried. Ayes 7 Nays 0, Absent 4. Lee Fintel, Tim Kahrs, Marlin Murdoch, Brad Wulf.

Variance Request approvals: Currently, the NRD has 3 contiguous acre trades that are being considered.

Rural Water Update: The sale of the building in Franklin was completed and closing was finalized on 9/1/2023. The new pump and motor have arrived! Haug Communications came back this morning to set a lag point to where it will automatically turn on the second well if the first well is struggling to keep up with demand. We continue to work with NDEE on the expansion project, but it is moving slowly as it involves a federal grant.

Platte Republican High Flow Diversion: Manager Siel attended the PRD hearing before the Nebraska Supreme Court on August 29th in Lincoln. Appellants argued before the court first - those 5 are: North Platte NRD, Lower Loup NRD, Loup Public Power District, Central Platte NRD, and Cozad Ditch Company. 2 different attorneys represented the appellants and split their time for arguments. Our legal counsel, and the Attorney General's Office, went second to present our case and also split the allotted time. Our attorneys were well prepared and effectively argued all of the points we intended. The biggest issue discussed (and what also prompted the most questions from the justices) was the conditioning of our permit to expressly apply the status of being junior in right to divert excess flows. There is no specific timeline for when the justices' opinion will be released, but our attorneys estimate that it will likely be 4-6 months.

Flag Creek Update: Simonson spoke with Holdrege Electric Service, and they are hoping to have the wells wired by October 1st. Also, we are working with Olsson to get a test pump timeframe and strategy in place for this fall and winter.

NCORPE: There have been some overheating issues with the control panels for the augmentation wells. NCORPE staff has been spending a significant amount of time working on and dealing with air conditioner issues and replacing other control panel components. We are in our 4th and final year with the Invenergy contract, so we will soon be looking to either extend the current contract or formulate a new agreement.

Watershed & Flood Prevention Operations Environmental Assessment Plan and Design (WFPO EA Plan): Olsson is working with NRCS to finish the final chapters needed for submittal.

WaterSMART Grant: We are getting ready to do the first round of telemetry meter installation with McCrometer next week. Travis and Nick were able to install a meter on a new system (replacement well) south of Arapahoe. To be clear, Nick took pictures and Travis was able to successfully install the meter. They were able to get it to check in on the website. McCrometer will be here on Monday, September 18th - Nick and the Techs will go out with them to several different sites to install the new flow meters.

NARD Update: Annual NARD Conference is September 25 and 26 in Kearney at the Younes Conference Center.

Other Business: Nick is working on the new IT contract and will be able to provide an update either at the October or November board meeting.

Motion #8 by Clark Andrews seconded by Chris Grams to move that the Board go into Closed Session at 8:18pm to discuss Contractual Negotiations, Imminent Litigation and Personnel. Motion carried. Ayes 7 Nays 0, Absent 4. Lee Fintel, Tim Kahrs, Marlin Murdoch, Brad Wulf.

Motion #9 by Clark Andrews seconded by Toby tenBensel to move that the Board come out of Closed Session at 8:40pm and declare that no actions of the board, official or unofficial, were taken during said Closed Session. Motion carried. Ayes 7 Nays 0, Absent 4. Lee Fintel, Tim Kahrs, Marlin Murdoch, Brad Wulf.

The next regularly scheduled board meeting will be held on October 12th, 2023, at 8am, with a virtual option for both directors and the public. Virtual meeting details will be posted on our website.

The meeting adjourned at 8:41pm.

Secretary

Date