



BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING:

Meeting notices were published in the Harlan County Journal, posted in the District NRCS Office’s and on the District Website at www.lrnrd.org.

Chairman Marlin Murdoch called the meeting of the Lower Republican NRD Board of Directors to order with an invitation to prayer at 1:33 pm. The chairman provided notice that the location of the current copy of the statute dealing with public meetings laws is located on the south wall of the boardroom and on the district website.

Excused Absences: Brad Wulf.

Directors present at the NRD Office: Brian Ballou, Don Duffy, Lee Fintel, Troy Fletcher, Chris Grams, Matt Harrison, Tim Kahrs, Marlin Murdoch, Toby tenBensel.

Others present: Dave Bartels, Nolan Little, TBNRD

Staff present: Todd Siel, Nick Simonson, Kristen Heft.

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

Agenda

LRNRD Board Meeting Minutes, 12/24

LRNRD/RWP Treasurer’s Report, 12/24

NRCS Staff Report, 1/25

Manager Todd Siel discussed the opening for the LRNRD At-Large position. Dave Bartels and Mike Delka submitted letters of application, and both candidates are qualified to serve as the At-Large Director. Dave Bartels addressed the board, expressing his desire to continue as a director on the board.

Motion #1 by Tim Kahrs seconded by Chris Grams to appoint David Bartels to the LRNRD At-Large position.

Motion carried. Ayes 10 Nays 0, Absent 1 Brad Wulf.

Dave Bartels read and signed the LRNRD Oath of Office.

Manager Todd Siel stated that those who had been recently elected took the Oath of Office prior to the start of the board meeting.

Chairman Murdoch turned the meeting over to Manager Siel to conduct the 2025 election of board officers. Siel presented the 2024 list of officers, representatives, and committees and asked for nominations.

Motion #2 by Don Duffy seconded by Lee Fintel to accept the Executive Committee/Officers, as presented.

Motion carried. Ayes 10 Nays 0, Absent 1 Brad Wulf.

Executive Committee/Officers:

Marlin Murdoch	Chairperson
David Bartels	Vice Chairperson
Toby tenBensel	Secretary
Tim Kahrs	Treasurer

Motion #3 by Chris Grams seconded by David Bartels to accept the Human Resources Committee, Scholarship Committee, LRNRD Project Committee, Platte to Republican Basin High Flow Diversion Project representatives, Representatives, and Alternates as presented. Motion carried. Ayes 10 Nays 0, Absent 1 Brad Wulf.

Representatives:

Don Duffy	NARD Representative
Lee Fintel	NARD Alternate
Lynetta Snelling	Trailblazer RC&D Representative
Todd Siel	Trailblazer RC&D Alternate

Tim Kahrs NCORPE Representative
Troy Fletcher NCORPE Alternate

LRNRD Project Committee:

Matt Harrison, Marlin Murdoch, Toby tenBensel

Platte to Republican Basin High Flow Diversion Project

Todd Siel, Voting Member, Nick Simonson, Alternate Voting Member

Scholarship Committee:

Mary Goebel, Nick Simonson, Don Duffy, Troy Fletcher, Brad Wulf

Human Resource Committee:

Lee Fintel, Tim Kahrs, Marlin Murdoch

Motion #4 by Troy Fletcher seconded by Chris Grams to authorize the Lower Republican NRD Board Chairperson, Treasurer and the District's General Manager, Assistant Manager and Administrative Bookkeeper/Assistant to sign/open/close on all LRNRD accounts, LRNRD Rural Water Accounts and the Platte to Republican Basin High Flow Diversion Project (PRD). Motion carried. Ayes 10 Nays 0, Absent 1 Brad Wulf.

Comments from the Public: Nolan Little, TBNRD, announced that the Tri-Basin NRD board meetings will now be on the third Wednesday of each month at 1:30 pm.

Motion #5 Don Duffy seconded by Toby tenBensel to approve the December minutes as presented. Motion carried. Ayes 10 Nays 0, Absent 1 Brad Wulf.

Motion #6 by Toby tenBensel seconded by Don Duffy to approve LRNRD and Rural Water Treasurer's reports. Motion carried. Ayes 10 Nays 0, Absent 1 Brad Wulf.

NRCS Staff Report: No report. NRCS offices were closed today because of the funeral for President Carter.

LRNRD Staff Report: Siel and Simonson provided the NRD manager's report. The Harlan County Reservoir is currently at 1,937.6 acre-feet. He also read through the new legislative committee chairs. The NRD Legislative Conference is scheduled for January 27-29, 2025. Governor Pillen and Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE) has cut funding for tire recycling. There are a few exceptions in the area, where funds are available if a tire recycling event was not held in 2024. Furnas County will have a tire recycling event this year, but Harlan, Franklin, Webster, and Nuckolls will not. Kevin Fornhoff, the Republican River Basin Commissioner for the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission, is stepping down from his seat on the commission. A caucus will be held next Thursday, January 16th, at the Middle Republican NRD office, to name a new commissioner.

Variance Request: Maxine Johnson in Franklin County is requesting to move acres to allow for a corner system pivot. There are a couple of pending variance requests for a later date.

Motion #7 by David Bartels seconded by Tim Kahrs to approve the Variance Request for Maxine Johnson. Motion carried. Ayes 9 Nays 0, Absent 1 Brad Wulf, Abstain 1 Chris Grams.

Rural Water Update: NDEE and the EPA will meet on January 15th – we are hoping funds will be released in the next few weeks, or with the change in administration, it could be a few months. The Rural Water Project is looking for a Rural Water Superintendent.

RRCA Forecast: The latest news is about the end-of-year lake storage and expectations for increased inflows. Discussions will occur to explore options for reaching the initial target storage level for Bostwick in Kansas, with further talks planned for February.

Platte Republican High Flow Diversion: The PRD had a regular board meeting on Monday, January 9th. A meeting will be scheduled in the next few weeks with Nebraska Game and Parks to discuss mitigation strategies that should help advance this project. Pheasants Forever will coordinate a prescribed burn that includes the PRD property. The total area of the prescribed burn will cover a little more than 1,500 acres.

Flag Creek Update: No update.

NCORPE: The next board meeting will be held in February.

Watershed & Flood Prevention Operations Environmental Assessment Plan and Design (WFPO EA Plan): The grant has extended for another year.

WaterSMART Telemetry Meters: Approval for \$4.3 Million from BOR for Phase II has been finalized and the new contract officially starts February 1st.

NARD Update: January 27-29, 2025, is the Legislative Conference in Lincoln.

Other Business: Lee Fintel talked about O&M Budgets for the Bostwick Irrigation districts and issues with past projects at HCL now being considered O&M. This is causing their rates to increase significantly and wanted the NRD to be aware of the issue. Manager Siel will reach out to NeDNR and Nebraska Bostwick for additional information.

Manager Todd Siel spoke to the board about changing to a different auditing firm.

The Nitrogen Reduction Incentive Act has been promoted in the LRNRD newsletter, local newspapers, and on Facebook. The signup deadline is January 15. Our NRD is facing a challenge compared to many other NRDs because we do not have mandatory nitrogen use reporting in our district. As a result, individuals will be responsible for providing the necessary documentation to verify their nitrogen use.

South Central Water Conference is Thursday, January 23rd in Holdrege.

Motion #8 by Matt Harrison seconded by Chris Grams to move that the Board go into Closed Session at 3:12 pm to discuss Contractual Negotiations, Imminent Litigation and Personnel. Motion carried. Ayes 10 Nays 0, Absent 1 Brad Wulf.

Motion #9 by Matt Harrison seconded by Chris Grams to move that the Board come out of Closed Session at 3:52 pm and declare that no actions of the board, official or unofficial, were taken during said Closed Session. Motion carried. Ayes 10 Nays 0, Absent 1 Brad Wulf.

The next regularly scheduled board meeting will be held on February 13th at 1:30 pm, at the LRNRD office.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:52 pm.

Secretary

Date