



LOWER REPUBLICAN NRD

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Lower Republican NRD Meeting Room, 30 North John, Alma, NE
March 13, 2025, at 1:30pm

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING:

Meeting notices were published in the Harlan County Journal, posted in the District NRCS Offices, 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 at 1:30 PM, inviting everyone to join in prayer. He noted that the current copy of the statute regarding public meeting laws is posted on the south wall of the boardroom and is available on the district website.

Excused Absences: Lee Fintel, Toby tenBensel

Directors present at the NRD Office: Brian Ballou, Dave Bartels, Don Duffy, Troy Fletcher, Chris Grams, Matt Harrison, Tim Kahrs, Marlin Murdoch, Brad Wulf.

Others present: John Thorburn, TBNRD, Jerry Kovarik, NRCS, Jack and Cathy Russell, Curtis.

Staff present: Todd Siel, Nick Simonson, Shirlee Poyser.

MATERIAL E-MAILED OUT BEFORE THE MEETING & AVAILABLE AT THE MEETING

Agenda

LRNRD Board Meeting Minutes, 2/25

LRNRD/RWP Treasurer's Report, 2/25

NRCS Staff Report, 2/25

Comments from the Public: None.

Motion #1 by Tim Kahrs, seconded by Matt Harrison, to approve the February minutes as presented. Motion carried. Ayes 9 Nays 0, Absent 2 Lee Fintel, Toby tenBensel.

Motion #2 by Troy Fletcher, seconded by Chris Grams, to approve LRNRD and Rural Water Treasurer's reports. Motion carried. Ayes 9 Nays 0, Absent 2 Lee Fintel, Toby tenBensel.

NRCS Staff Report: The NRCS report was emailed out before the meeting. Jerry Kovarik updated the board on EQIP and CSP. A copy of this report is in the minute book.

LRNRD Staff Report: Siel and Simonson provided the NRD manager's report. The Harlan County Reservoir is currently 72% full, which is 0.9 feet lower than it was at this time last year. Jesse Bradley is the interim Director for NDEE and NDNR.

Manager Siel discussed the need to approve the hiring of a new auditor. Todd and Nick interviewed two accounting firms and recommended AMGL for payroll services and account auditing.

Motion #3 by Brad Wulf, seconded by Don Duffy, to approve AMGL for payroll services and as the auditor of accounts for LRNRD. Motion carried. Ayes 9 Nays 0, Absent 2 Lee Fintel, Toby tenBensel.

Manager Todd Siel is looking for 15 new boardroom chairs. The board left the purchase of new chairs up to the manager's discretion.

Variance Request: The board reviewed two staff-approved variances: D & K Land—Drew tenBensel and Evan Schluntz. Dan Black's request for a variance to interconnect two wells was discussed and will be brought to the board for approval at the next meeting.

Chris Grams left at 2:59 pm.

Rural Water Update: NDEE staff met with the EPA about the EC-SDC projects in Nebraska, and whether they might be cut under the current administration or if the funding is secure. A decision should be made soon.

RRCA Forecast: While we have not spoken directly with the Bureau about the inflows to Harlan County Lake, we will predict that they are at or below the average. This means that we would have to lower the final shutoff elevation for the lake if inflows were below calculated averages to ensure that the Bostwick Irrigation Districts

receive their minimum supply set in January. We continue to monitor the situation, but we have no set plans to try to pump water that is not required under the Compact to augment the supply.

Platte Republican High Flow Diversion: No updates.

Flag Creek Update: No update.

NCORPE: Meadowlark requested that we refrain from acting on the contract for the renewable energy project. As that was the primary reason for the meeting, we canceled it. We have not received any explanation other than that Meadowlark felt they would be unable to meet the March 1 deadline for the Interconnection Queue.

Watershed & Flood Prevention Operations Environmental Assessment Plan and Design (WFPO EA Plan): No update.

WaterSMART Telemetry Meters: We are moving forward with the second grant while continuing to install meters under the first grant. Some initial planning requirements will be required before we start installing meters for the second grant, but those should be minimal.

NARD Update: While attending the manager’s meeting in Lincoln, we discussed several of the bills that the NRDs are focusing on this session. The Governor signed the bill allowing NRDs statutory authority to use electronic payment systems on Tuesday. This is the last week for Senators to declare their priority bills for the session. Each gets one, and each committee gets two to designate as priority bills. The Natural Resource Committee designated LR317, the Merger Bill, a priority. We talked about this at length during the manager’s meeting. LB145, TVWMA funding, was heard in committee on January 28th but has not been voted out of the Ag Committee. LB638, Nitrogen Reduction Incentive Act, was heard in the Ag Committee on February 25th. Neither of these bills has been designated a priority, and since both are asking for “new” funding, they may not get out of committee. Committee hearings continue through March 28th, when they will switch to all-day floor debate. The Appropriations Committee must move the budget bills to the floor by day 70, scheduled for April 29th. With a projected budget shortfall of \$289 million, this will be the legislature's focus once it is moved out of committee. So far, filibusters have been minimal, and we hope it continues this way.

Other Business: Mary spoke with Unanimous about upgrading our website and will contact another firm for an additional proposal.

The next board meeting is scheduled for April 10th, 2025, at 1:30 PM, at the LRNRD office.

The meeting concluded at 3:35 PM.

Secretary

Date