



LOWER REPUBLICAN NRD

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Lower Republican NRD Meeting Room, 30 North John, Alma, NE
June 12th, 2025, at 1:30 PM

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.

Vice Chairman Dave Bartels called the meeting of the Lower Republican NRD Board of Directors to order at 1:30 PM. 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. Toby tenBensel led the group in prayer.

Excused Absences: Don Duffy, Marlin Murdoch.

Directors present at the NRD Office: Brian Ballou, Dave Bartels, Lee Fintel, Troy Fletcher, Chris Grams, Matt Harrison, Tim Kahrs, Toby tenBensel, Brad Wulf.

Others present: Jerry Kovarik, NRCS; Jamie Gustafson, NRCS; Zach Nagel, Maguire Iron; Casey Conway, Campbell, NE.

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

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

Agenda

LRNRD Board Meeting Minutes, 5/25

LRNRD/RWP Treasurer's Report, 5/25

NRCS Staff Report, 6/25

LRNRD Staff Report, 6/25

Matt Harrison entered the meeting at 1:34 PM.

Comments from the Public: New Rural Water Superintendent Mitch Daily, from Guide Rock, was introduced to the board. Casey Conway introduced himself and thanked the board for the LRNRD scholarship he received.

Motion #1 by Chris Grams, seconded by Troy Fletcher, to approve the May minutes as presented. Motion carried. Ayes 9, Nays 0, Absent 2, Don Duffy, Marlin Murdoch.

Motion #2 by Tim Kahrs, seconded by Brad Wulf, to approve the LRNRD and Rural Water Treasurer's reports. Motion carried. Ayes 9, Nays 0, Absent 2, Don Duffy, Marlin Murdoch.

NRCS Staff Report: The NRCS report was emailed out before the meeting. Jerry Kovarik updated the board on the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and the Food Security Act (FSA) Compliance Status Reviews. Additionally, a walk-through of the new NRCS office in Franklin is scheduled for Monday, June 16, and the plan is to move to the new office in July. Soil Conservationist Jami Gustafson from the NRCS of Furnas County briefly spoke to the board. A copy of this report is in the minutes book.

LRNRD Staff Report: If it is determined that 2025 is a water-short year, Kansas will likely request water and that quantity will be determined in October. Meetings will be held with DWEE staff and the other Republican Basin NRDs to discuss how to maintain compliance and ensure that water reaches its destination in the Republican Basin.

Jaeger Enterprise has done an excellent job and completed the 2025 tree planting in one week. Harlan County Reservoir is currently 75.4% full. Inflows from April and May are the lowest they've been in a long time. Todd Siel attended the Little Blue NRD meeting on water allocations, where he assisted in answering questions about water allocations.

Rural Water Update: The Rural Water Project celebrates 20 years of providing water to residential and livestock users in the LRNRD. We remain hopeful that the expansion project will successfully pass the review process. Siel mentioned that the Rural Water pickup has been repaired and is back in service. Zach Nagel from Maguire Iron gave a presentation on rural water tower maintenance. Maguire Iron specializes in painting and

repairing water towers. The repair work is expected to take about four weeks to complete. Nagel presented the full-service water tower maintenance agreement. A copy of the presentation is in the minute book.

Motion #3 by Brad Wulf, seconded by Matt Harrison, to give our General Manager the authority to review and sign an agreement for a Full-Service Maintenance Plan with Maguire Iron. Motion carried. Ayes 9, Nays 0, Absent 2, Don Duffy, Marlin Murdoch.

Variance Requests: LRNRD staff is working on a variance request for Steve Sindt and a contiguous acre trade for Butler/Miller.

RRCA Forecast: Nebraska is likely to owe water to Kansas as we enter the new water year in October, unless we receive substantial rainfall soon. Although we have been fortunate over the last two years in achieving the initial storage target for KBID, 2025 may not be such a lucky year. The inflows were significantly below average from January through May. KBID should have enough irrigation water to provide a full allocation to its customers this year. Meetings will be held with Jesse Bradley and Matt Manning, Chief Water Officer, to discuss the strategy, maintain compliance, ensure that water reaches its destination, and help Matt gain a thorough understanding of the Republican Basin.

Simonson addressed the board regarding the enforcement of the June 1st deadline for both chemigation and occupation tax exemption.

NARD Update: The 1st Session of the 109th Legislature adjourned on June 2nd. This year, 322 bills were passed, with an additional 46 bills amended. Aside from the NDEE and NDNR Merger bill, there were not many bills that directly impacted the NRDs. The most significant change we observed this year was in the funding for the programs we utilize. Both the Water Resources Cash Fund and the Water Sustainability Fund were slated to receive reduced funding; however, discussions took place about potentially restoring some of those funds during the short session. There was a threat of a lawsuit from a "Friend of NET" due to a substantial amount of money being carved out of the funding established for the Nebraska Environmental Trust. This could substantially impact the financing for these programs.

New Boardroom Chairs: A discussion was held regarding the purchase of new boardroom chairs, as the original chairs are over 20 years old. Todd and Nick purchased a new office chair for the board members to inspect.

Motion #4 by Matt Harrison, seconded by Toby tenBensel, to approve purchasing new boardroom chairs. Motion carried. Ayes 9, Nays 0, Absent 2, Don Duffy, Marlin Murdoch.

Motion #5 Matt Harrison, seconded by Tim Kahrs, to move the Board into Closed Session at 3:08 pm to discuss Contractual Negotiations, Imminent Litigation, and Personnel. Motion carried. Ayes 9, Nays 0, Absent 2, Don Duffy, Marlin Murdoch.

Motion #6 by Matt Harrison, seconded by Toby tenBensel, to move that the Board come out of Closed Session at 4:04 pm and declare that no actions of the board, official or unofficial, were taken during said Closed Session. Motion carried. Ayes 9, Nays 0, Absent 2, Don Duffy, Marlin Murdoch.

Motion #7 by Tim Kahrs, seconded by Toby tenBensel, to approve the FY2026 salaries as presented. Motion carried. Ayes 9, Nays 0, Absent 2, Don Duffy, Marlin Murdoch.

Other Business: No other updates

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

The meeting concluded at 4:10 PM.

Secretary

Date