



LOWER REPUBLICAN NRD
BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Lower Republican NRD Meeting Room, 30 North John, Alma, NE
August 14th, 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.

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: Don Duffy, Tim Kahrs.

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

Others present: Chris Miller, Miller & Associates, Sasha Hahn, TBNRD, Jerry Kovarik, and Spencer Moore, Harlan County NRCS.

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

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

Agenda

- LRNRD Board Meeting Minutes, 7/25
- LRNRD/RWP Treasurer's Report, 7/25
- NRCS Staff Report, 8/25
- LRNRD Staff Report, 8/25

Manager Siel requested to move agenda item twelve after agenda item nine.

Comments from the Public: None.

Motion #1 by Lee Fintel, seconded by Chris Grams, to approve the July minutes as presented. Motion carried. Ayes 9, Nays 0, Absent 2, Don Duffy, Tim Kahrs.

Motion #2 by Chris Grams, seconded by Dave Bartels, to approve the LRNRD and Rural Water Treasurer's reports. Motion carried. Ayes 9, Nays 0, Absent 2, Don Duffy, Tim Kahrs.

NRCS Staff Report: The NRCS report was sent out via email before the meeting. Jerry Kovarik, NRCS, provided an update on the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Kovarik announced that an open house will be held at the new office in Franklin on September 5th from 10 am to 12 pm. Spencer Moore from NRCS introduced himself to the board. A copy of this report is available in the minutes book.

LRNRD Staff Report: Harlan County Reservoir is currently 63.6% full. The lake numbers indicate that Harlan is holding 41,409 acre-feet less than it was at this time last year. A copy of this report is in the minute book.

Rural Water Expansion Project: The Riverton Expansion Project was approved for funding through the EC-SDC program. We received the draft agreement from DWEE. Chris Miller has been here, and we have been working on the schedule, timeline, and setting priorities as we start developing the project. This is an excellent opportunity to improve our Rural Water District and provide Riverton with safe drinking water for the future.

Motion #3 by Brad Wulf, seconded by Chris Grams, to authorize the LRNRD General Manager to review and sign all necessary documents related to executing an Agreement with DWEE for the Lower Republican RWD Riverton Expansion Project. Motion carried. Ayes 9, Nays 0, Absent 2, Don Duffy, Tim Kahrs.

Motion #4 by Troy Fletcher, seconded by Matt Harrison, to give the LRNRD General Manager the authority to review and sign an Agreement with Miller and Associates to provide Professional Services for the Lower Republican RWD Riverton Expansion Project. Motion carried. Ayes 9, Nays 0, Absent 2, Don Duffy, Tim Kahrs.

The LRNRD Rural Water District recently executed a contract with Maguire Iron to perform sandblasting and repainting of both the exterior and interior of the rural water tower. To facilitate the repainting, the Variable Frequency Drives (VFDs) are now required to be upgraded, as the drives from the original system are more than 20 years old and are outdated. The VFDs control the pumps, via pressure, allowing the system to operate independently of the tower. The repair work for the tower is expected to begin in September and will take about four weeks to complete.

Motion #5 by Toby tenBensel, seconded by Brian Ballou, to approve up to \$40,000 for the replacement of Variable Frequency Drives (VFDs) on the Rural Water System. Motion carried. Ayes 9, Nays 0, Absent 2, Don Duffy, Tim Kahrs.

Siel presented the draft FY2026 LRNRD budget to the board.

Motion #6 Toby tenBensel, seconded by Brad Wulf, to approve the FY2026 Draft LRNRD budget as presented. Motion carried. Ayes 9, Nays 0, Absent 2, Don Duffy, Tim Kahrs.

Motion #7 by Matt Harrison, seconded by Dave Bartels, to set the FY2026 Occupation Tax rate at \$6 per acre. Motion carried. Ayes 9, Nays 0, Absent 2, Don Duffy, Tim Kahrs.

Motion #8 by Troy Fletcher, seconded by Chris Grams, to set the FY2026 Budget Hearing date and time for September 11, 2025, at 1:30 pm. Motion carried. Ayes 9, Nays 0, Absent 2, Don Duffy, Tim Kahrs.

Variance Requests: Simonson presented the Rodger Hersh variance request to the board for approval.

Motion #9 Brad Wulf, seconded by Toby tenBensel, to approve the Hersh Variance request as presented. Motion carried. Ayes 9, Nays 0, Absent 2, Don Duffy, Tim Kahrs.

RRCA Update: The RRCA Annual 3-States meeting will be held in Concordia, KS, on August 28th. While the meeting has been mostly uneventful in recent years, we will have some topics to discuss, including the low lake level and Nebraska possibly needing to pump some compliance water. We met with Upper, Middle, and DWEE to keep open lines of communication and discuss our expectations over the next few months.

Platte Republican High Flow Diversion: We met with DWEE about the project timeline and several activities we've been working on since we met with Game and Parks. It provided some clarity on how we can move forward with the application.

NCORPE: Our next regular board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 20th, in Imperial. We will be gathering information on our pumping capacity for the potential call from Kansas for compliance water. We will also review the budget and discuss any other updates.

Watershed & Flood Prevention Operations Environmental Assessment Plan and Design (WFPO EA Plan):

The extra funds have been approved. A meeting with Olsson and Jim Schneider has been scheduled to continue with the project.

WaterSmart: McCrometer has introduced a new meter design. They are currently working on programming the meters.

NARD Update: NARD Annual Conference will be in Kearney on September 28-30.

Other Business: Eakes managed to install the new phone system early because the previous system had failed working.

Motion #10 by Matt Harrison, seconded by Chris Grams, to move the Board into Closed Session at 3:09 pm to discuss Contractual Negotiations, Imminent Litigation, and Personnel. Motion carried. Ayes 9, Nays 0, Absent 2, Don Duffy, Tim Kahrs.

Motion #11 by Matt Harrison, seconded by Chris Grams, to move that the Board exit the Closed Session at 4:09 pm and declare that no actions, official or unofficial, were taken during the Closed Session. Motion carried. Ayes 9, Nays 0, Absent 2, Don Duffy, Tim Kahrs.

No other updates

The next board meeting is scheduled for September 11, 2025, at 1:30 PM, starting with the Budget hearing at the LRNRD office.

The meeting concluded at 4:10 PM.

Secretary

Date

Recorded and distributed by: Shirlee Poyser, Administrative Assistant
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