



LOWER REPUBLICAN NRD
BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Lower Republican NRD Meeting Room, 30 North John, Alma, NE
September 11th, 2025, LRNRD Board Meeting,
Immediately following the 1:30 pm Budget Hearing

FY 2026 Budget Hearing

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

FY2026 BUDGET HEARING & SUMMARY PUBLIC HEARING

The Lower Republican NRD FY2026 Budget Hearing was called to order by Vice Chairman Dave Bartels at 1:30 pm. Manager Todd Siel provided the proof of publication affidavit for the notice. The vice chairman provided notice that the location of the current copy of the statutes dealing with public meeting laws is 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 \$1,763,965; this would equate to a tax rate of 0.032118 cents per \$100 of assessed value. The total assessed value of property differs from last year's total assessed value by 7.65%. Based on the proposed property tax request and changes in other revenue and grants, the total operating budget of the LRNRD will increase by 0.33% from last year. 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 Dave Bartels closed the budget hearing at 1:36 pm.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING:

Vice Chairman Dave Bartels called the meeting of the Lower Republican NRD Board of Directors to order at 1:36 pm. Tim Kahrs invited everyone to join in prayer. The Vice Chairman 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: Marlin Murdoch.

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

Others present: Jerry Kovarik, 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, 8/25

LRNRD/RWP Treasurer's Report, 8/25

NRCS Staff Report, 9/25

LRNRD Staff Report, 9/25

Comments from the Public: None.

Motion #1 by Toby tenBensel, seconded by Matt Harrison, to approve the August minutes as presented.

Motion carried. Ayes 10, Nays 0, Absent 1, Marlin Murdoch.

Motion #2 by Tim Kahrs, seconded by Troy Fletcher, to approve the LRNRD and Rural Water Treasurer's reports. Motion carried. Ayes 10, Nays 0, Absent 1, Marlin Murdoch.

NRCS Staff Report: Jerry Kovarik, NRCS, provided an update on the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). A copy of this report is in the minute book.

LRNRD Staff Report: Harlan County Reservoir is currently 58.6% full. The lake numbers indicate that Harlan is holding 27,582 acre-feet less than it was at this time last year. A copy of this report is in the minute book.

Manager Todd Siel presented the LRNRD FY2026 draft budget, the process and reasoning for the approval of the additional 1% increase in Restricted Funds Authority, and LRNRD Tax Resolution LR-09112025-01 to the board for consideration and approval.

Motion #3 by Don Duffy, seconded by Toby tenBensel, to approve the increase in Restricted Funds Authority by an additional 1%. Motion carried. Ayes 8, Nays 2, Tim Kahrs, Matt Harrison, Absent 1, Marlin Murdoch.

Motion #4 by Chris Grams, seconded by Don Duffy, to approve the FY2026 LRNRD Budget as presented. Motion carried. Ayes 10, Nays 0, Absent 1, Marlin Murdoch.

Motion #5 by Brad Wulf, seconded by Brian Ballou, to approve the LRNRD Tax Resolution LR-09112025-01, as required by Nebraska Revised Statute 77-1632, setting the property tax request at \$1,763,965.00 (\$.032118 per \$100 of assessed value). Motion carried. Ayes 10, Nays 0, Absent 1, Marlin Murdoch.

Variance Request: None.

Rural Water Expansion Project: The Village of Riverton's only remaining municipal well has failed. They are taking measures to ensure an adequate water supply until they can connect to our system. We successfully installed the new VFDs, and although we're still fine-tuning them to work with the rest of the system, the process went smoothly. We're still on schedule to have the water tower painted this fall, but weather conditions could force us to postpone until next year.

RRCA Update: The 3-state meeting in Concordia, KS took place on August 28th. Managers Siel and Simonson did not attend the meeting but spoke with Sam Capps afterward. As expected, a lot of information was shared, and everyone agreed to stay in touch about the next steps once irrigation is finished and more details about the projected supplies are available. Both Nebraska Bostwick and FCID canals shut down last Friday, and Kansas Bostwick plans to shut down by the end of the week. The lake level was slightly lower than our estimates for the end of the season, but still above the maximum drawdown for this irrigation season.

Platte Republican High Flow Diversion: We continue working on the supplemental information about the threat of invasive species. Nebraska Game and Parks just released their data on fish sampling along the Platte River. The good news is that no invasive carp were found above the North Platte Diversion. Although there has been a presence below that point, this indicates that there has been no upstream migration of the species and no migration into the CNPPID canal system.

Flag Creek Update: We are still discussing options on funding with DWEE and details on the location and extent of a pipeline.

NCORPE: Troy and Nick traveled to Imperial on August 20th for the quarterly meeting. Good progress was made on the repairs at Kason's from the tornado damage. According to Nick, he recorded that there are 25 wells ready to pump at any time. We have two wells with downhole issues. In a subsequent update, Kyle believed those wells could be repaired and ready to operate by October 1st. One well had a pump issue, and the other had a check valve that wasn't holding. We have three wells that need to have the VFDs updated. Hopefully, that will fix those issues, and all 30 wells will be operational. We are also considering upgrading a tractor and replacing Kyle's pickup, which is scheduled to be traded.

Watershed & Flood Prevention Operations Environmental Assessment Plan and Design (WFPO EA Plan): The extra funds have been approved by NRCS.

WaterSmart: Nick has been working with McCrometer on some technology issues and trying to get the dashboard working.

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

Other Business: We will be selling the three older Honda ATVs at Marshall's Auction on November 4th.

Motion #6 by Matt Harrison, seconded by Tim Kahrs, to move the Board into Closed Session at 2:44 pm to discuss Contractual Negotiations, Imminent Litigation, and Personnel. Motion carried. Ayes 10, Nays 0, Absent 1, Marlin Murdoch.

Motion #7 by Matt Harrison, seconded by Tim Kahrs, to move that the Board exit the Closed Session at 3:38 pm and declare that no actions, official or unofficial, were taken during the Closed Session. Motion carried. Ayes 10, Nays 0, Absent 1, Marlin Murdoch.

No other updates

The next regularly scheduled board meeting will be held on October 9th, 2025, at 7:30 am, with a virtual option for both directors and the public. Virtual meeting details will be posted on our website.

The meeting concluded at 3:45 pm.

Secretary

Date

Recorded and distributed by: Shirlee Poyser, Administrative Assistant
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