



LOWER REPUBLICAN NRD BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Lower Republican NRD Meeting Room, 30 North John, Alma, NE
December 11, 2025, LRNRD Board Meeting, at 1:30 pm

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING:

Meeting notices were published in the Harlan County Journal and on the District Website at www.lrnrd.org.

Vice Chairperson Dave Bartels called the Lower Republican NRD Board of Directors meeting to order at 1:30 pm, with an invitation to prayer offered by Tim Kahrs.

Manager Todd Siel announced that the current copy of the statute regarding public meeting laws is posted on the south wall. Guests were asked to sign the attendance roster.

Excused Absences: Lee Fintel, Troy Fletcher, Marlin Murdoch.

Directors present: Brian Ballou, Dave Bartels, Don Duffy, Chris Grams, Matt Harrison, Tim Kahrs, Toby tenBensel, Brad Wulf.

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

Others Present: Jerry Kovark, NRCS, Garold Ohmstede, Guide Rock, Sasha Hahn, Tri-Basin NRD.

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

Agenda

LRNRD Board Meeting Minutes, 11/25

LRNRD/RWP Treasurer's Report, 11/25

LRNRD Staff Report, 12/25

Public Comments: none.

Motion #1 by Chris Grams, seconded by Toby tenBensel, to approve the November minutes as presented.

Motion carried. Aye 8, Nays 0, Absent 3, Lee Fintel, Troy Fletcher, Marlin Murdoch.

Motion #2 by Tim Kahrs, seconded by Toby tenBensel, to approve the LRNRD and Rural Water Treasurer's reports. Motion carried. Aye 8, Nays 0, Absent 3, Lee Fintel, Troy Fletcher, Marlin Murdoch.

NRCS Staff Report: Jerry Kovarik, NRCS, provided an update on the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Kovarik also announced that the new Regional Conservationist, Jimmy Emmons, will now be based in Nebraska.

LRNRD Staff Report: Harlan County Reservoir is currently 59.3% full, 2.6 feet lower than this time last year. The lake numbers indicate that Harlan is holding 26,942 acre-feet less than it was at this time last year. A copy of this report is in the minute book.

Variance Requests: Two contiguous-acre trades received approval from staff, Thom Brothers, and Robert Swanson. Both involve moving an irrigated pivot corner from one side of the pivot to the other. They will be 1:1-acre trades with no required model run.

Rural Water Expansion Project: Riverton developed a well that will meet demands until we can integrate it into our system. We continue to move forward with the expansion project and are currently looking for a site for our new well and tower. Nick has begun the process of obtaining Grade 4 Water Operator certification to ensure two staff members are licensed to operate the system.

FY2025 Annual Budget – Audit report: AMGL shared the FY2025 audit report via email, and we're pleased to report that the results were very positive.

RRCA Update: We have started the augmentation well, owned by Tri-Basin, in the Turkey Creek watershed north of Edison, in Gosper County, also known as the Holen well. We have finalized the agreement with Tri-Basin, and we will operate the well through the winter and spring, unless conditions require otherwise.

NCORPE: We are also working to finalize the pumping operations at NCORPE. Upper Republican will plan to pump at both NCORPE and Rock Creek. Middle Republican's compliance water from Frenchman Valley and Riverside has been released for the past couple of weeks.

WaterSmart: We have installed over 900 meters and expect to complete Phase 1 in 2026. We plan to install over 1,000 meters as part of Phase 1. The installations for Phase 2 will also begin in 2026.

NARD Update: NRDs continue to support the development of HydroData and Producer Connect. The NARD Legislative Conference is scheduled for January 26-28, 2026.

SBS Hearing: Last month, the board voted to proceed with a penalty hearing for SBS Farms. The hearing has been scheduled for January 8, 2026, at 1:00 pm. It is also necessary to confirm that Luke Deaver will serve as the Hearing Officer/Examiner for this hearing.

Motion #3 by Toby tenBensel, seconded by Chris Grams, to affirm Luke Deaver as the Hearing Officer/Examiner for our January 8th, 2026, Penalty Hearing. Motion carried. Aye 8, Nays 0, Absent 3, Lee Fintel, Troy Fletcher, Marlin Murdoch.

Other Business: The board discussed considering possible changes to the 13-acre-inch maximum allocation for Compact Call Years. Board meeting times were discussed.

The next regularly scheduled board meeting will be held on January 8th, immediately following the 1:00 pm Penalty Hearing.

The meeting concluded at 4:00 pm.

Secretary

Date

Recorded and distributed by: Shirlee Poyser, Administrative Assistant
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