

**Minutes of the Lower Niobrara Natural Resources  
Board of Directors Meeting  
June 2, 2025**

The meeting of the Lower Niobrara Natural Resources District was called to order by Vice-Chairman Pritchett at 7:00 P.M. at the Butte Community Center. Vice- Chairman J.J. Pritchett called attention to the Open Meeting Law and statement of advertisement throughout our district.

**Director's Present:**

Dwain Marcellus	Curt Morrow	J.J Pritchett	Kevin Randa
Larry Baumeister	Karl Connell	Deb Hansen	Shaun Higgins
Don Holtgrew	Brian Kaczor	Randy Klawitter	Jack Engelhaupt
Brenda Wendt			

**Directors Absent:** Ray Naprstek, Linda Hoffman, Chuck Zegers, Shane Lechtenberg.

**Staff Present:** Wade Ellwanger Britanie Brewster Connie McCarthy Gary Richardson Brandon Fischer

**Guests Present:** Tom Schaaf, and guest.

**Approval of Agenda:**

Motion was made by Hansen and seconded by Baumeister to approve June 2, 2025, agenda, **Aye:** Marcellus, Morrow, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Connell, Hansen, Higgins, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Klawitter, Engelhaupt, Wendt. **Nay:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Naprstek, Hoffman, Zegers, Lechtenberg.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Approval of May 5, Minutes:**

Motion was made to approve May 5, 2025, minutes by Hansen seconded by Baumeister. Marcellus, Morrow, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Connell, Hansen, Higgins, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Klawitter, Engelhaupt, Wendt. **Nay:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Naprstek, Hoffman, Zegers, Lechtenberg.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Public Comment:**

**Tom Schaaf:** Schaaf stated his neighbor Jim Maly has a well that falls within the 600ft rule. He has mentioned this several times and would like it to be addressed. The well is 570ft from his existing irrigation well. Nothing in our rules says the well must be used just that it can't be within 600ft of an existing well. He requested that something be done, something needs to be enforced.

**Staff and Agency Reports:**

**Manager's Report:** Ellwanger's report was mailed to the directors prior to the Board meeting and a copy attached to the official minutes. Ellwanger stated there would be a cedar workshop in O'Neill on June 5, 2025. The LNNRD along with MNDRD, UENRD, NDNR and Yield Plus Agronomics, LLC are sponsoring a Resilient Soil Health and Water Management Producer Panel at the Ranch Expo June 18, 2025. Ellwanger reported that June 2, 2025, was the last day of this year's legislative session. The LNNRD staff have been busy getting ready for the Basin Tour that will be running through the Niobrara River Basin this year June 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>. Ellwanger stated we have had interest in the Water Reduction Cost Share program we have received, several applications.

**Programs Assistant Report:** McCarthy's report was mailed to directors prior to the Board meeting and a copy is attached to the official minutes. McCarthy stated the BGMA will have Regenerative Ag Field Day on

July 8, 2025, near Randolph registration is available on our Facebook page. She reported she completed all her year-end classroom visits with the help of Brandon. McCarthy worked with the UENRD and completed the mulching of trees, they completed 4.1 miles of mulch, 2851 trees were machine planted, and she hand planted 300 trees.

**Water Resources Report:** Richardson's report was mailed to directors prior to the Board meeting and a copy is attached to the official minutes. Richardson stated we have 11 outstanding Phase II forms. He is currently working on Chemigation Permits, Larry will be starting inspections at the end of the week.

**Natural Resource Technician Report:** Fischer reported that for the first couple weeks he trained with Gary. He passed his Water Test on May 7<sup>th</sup> in Norfolk. Static levels were tested and a report included in the meeting packets.

**NARD Association Report:** Hansen stated the NARD Basin Tour will be in the Niobrara Basin June 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. The NARD meeting is scheduled for June 9, 2025.

**West Knox Rural Water Report:** Ebel's report included in the director's meeting packet, and a copy is attached to the official minutes.

**BGMA Coordinator Report:** No Report.

### **Agency Reports:**

**Natural Resources Conservation Service:** Adam Nolan's report was included in the meeting packet and a copy attached to the official minutes.

**Niobrara Council:** No meeting held. The next meeting will be June 19, 2025

**NE RC&D Report:** No Report

**NC RC&D Report:** Connell the Ranch Expo will be June 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> 2025. They will be having there "Lick Tub Challenge" at the Ranch Expo.

**Friends of the Missouri:** No Meeting held.

**Missouri Sedimentation Action Coalition:** Richardson reported that had a presentation on the changes of the river. The bed load collector will be utilized again this fall; they will be adjusting the grates on the bed load collector.

### **Additional Items of Business:**

**Dana F. Cole Audit Engagement Letter:**

Ellwanger stated we received our letter of engagement from Dana F. Cole to complete the LNNRD and WKRW audit this year. He stated the audit will be \$15,125, with \$8,350 to the LNNRD and \$6,775 to WKRW.

A motion was made to approve the Dana F. Cole Audit Engagement Letter by Higgins seconded by Engelhaupt.  
**Aye:** Marcellus, Morrow, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Hansen, Higgins, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Engelhaupt, Wendt.  
**Nay:** Connell, Klawitter. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Naprstek, Hoffman, Zegers, Lechtenberg. **MOTION CARRIED**

## Committee Reports and Recommendations:

### Groundwater Committee:

Ellwanger reported that the Groundwater Committee met on May 27, 2025, and the LNNRD office. The Groundwater Committee report was included in the meeting packet and a copy attached to the official minutes. Discussion was held on the Groundwater Committee's recommendations. The board discussed program options that would enhance water quality.

A motion was made to approve the Groundwater Committees recommendations of a 2025 Expanded Irrigated Acre Program for up to 1000 acres consisting of no more than 500 new groundwater irrigated acres and no more than 500 added groundwater irrigated acres. The acre ranking points for subsurface drip irrigation shall be increased from 10 to 20, and the acre ranking points for currently farmed land will increase from 5 to 10. Well ranking points for subsurface irrigation will increase from 50 to 100. No new wells will be allowed for any added acres by Holtgrew seconded by Marcellus. **Aye:** Marcellus, Morrow, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Hansen, Higgins, Holtgrew, Engelhaupt, Wendt. **Nay:** Connell, Klawitter. **Abstain:** Kaczor. **Absent:** Naprstek, Hoffman, Zegers, Lechtenberg. **MOTION CARRIED**

A motion was made to approve the Groundwater Committees recommendations to authorize the General Manager to lift cease and desist orders when compliance to lift said order is met by Randa seconded by Hansen.  
**Aye:** Marcellus, Morrow, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Hansen, Higgins, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Engelhaupt, Wendt.  
**Nay:** Connell. **Abstain:** Klawitter. **Absent:** Naprstek, Hoffman, Zegers, Lechtenberg. **MOTION CARRIED**

### Personnel Committee:

Ellwanger reported that the Personnel Committee met on May 22, 2025, at 7:00pm at the LNNRD office. The Personnel Committee report was included in the meeting packet and a copy attached to the official minutes. The COLA+ formula which is Cost of Living Adjustment (2.5%) plus performance/responsibilities (0% - 1.5%). Combined average wage increase should not exceed 3.5%.

A motion was made to approve the Personnel Committees recommendations to approve the Nebraska Lead class sponsorship for Britanie Brewster by Marcellus seconded by Higgins. **Aye:** Marcellus, Morrow, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Connell, Hansen, Higgins, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Klawitter, Engelhaupt, Wendt. **Nay:** None.  
**Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Naprstek, Hoffman, Zegers, Lechtenberg. **MOTION CARRIED**

A motion was made to approve the Personnel Committees recommendations to increase NRCS secretary salary by \$4000 by Higgins seconded by Holtgrew. **Aye:** Marcellus, Morrow, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Hansen, Higgins, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Engelhaupt, Wendt. **Nay:** Connell. **Abstain:** Klawitter. **Absent:** Naprstek, Hoffman, Zegers, Lechtenberg. **MOTION CARRIED**

A motion was made to approve the Personnel Committees recommendations to increase the Program Coordinator, Water Resource Coordinator, and Administrative Assistant salaries using the presented COLA+ formula not to exceed a combined 3.5% by Randa seconded by Hansen. **Aye:** Marcellus, Morrow, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Hansen, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Engelhaupt, Wendt. **Nay:** Connell, Klawitter, Higgins. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Naprstek, Hoffman, Zegers, Lechtenberg. **MOTION CARRIED**

### **Budget Committee:**

Ellwanger reported that the Budget Committee met on May 29, 2025, at the LNNRD office. The Personnel Committee report was included in the meeting packet and a copy attached to the official minutes. Ellwanger stated there are currently no recommendations, the meeting was to inform and receive guidance on this year's budget.

### **Hazard Mitigation Plan Sponsorship:**

McCarthy request the LNNRD consider sponsoring the Hazard Mitigation Plan for \$3000.

A motion was made to approve the sponsorship of the Hazard Mitigation Plan by Klawitter seconded by Wendt. **Aye:** Marcellus, Morrow, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Connell, Hansen, Higgins, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Klawitter, Engelhaupt, Wendt. **Nay:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Naprstek, Hoffman, Zegers, Lechtenberg. **MOTION CARRIED**

### **NSWCP Activities:**

McCarthy reported that there were 2 completions.

### **Treasurer Report:**

#### **Approval of Treasurer Report:**

A motion was made by Randa seconded by Klawitter to approve the June 2, 2025, treasurer's report. **Aye:** Marcellus, Morrow, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Hansen, Higgins, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Engelhaupt, Wendt. **Nay:** Connell, Klawitter. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Naprstek, Hoffman, Zegers, Lechtenberg. **MOTION CARRIED**

**Excused absent Directors:** Naprstek, Hoffman, Zegers, Lechtenberg

Vice-Chairman J.J. Pritchett declared the meeting adjourned at 8:23PM.

I, the undersigned Secretary of the Lower Niobrara Natural Resources District hereby certify the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the proceedings had and done by the Board of Directors on June 2, 2025, that all subjects included in the foregoing proceedings were contained in the agenda for at least twenty-four hours prior to the meeting. The minutes of the Chairman and Board of Directors were in written form and available for public inspection within ten working days and prior to the next convened meeting of said body. All news media requesting notification of the time and place of said meeting and the subjects to be discussed at said meeting were notified.

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Larry Baumeister, Secretary

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