

**Minutes of the Lower Niobrara Natural Resources
Board of Directors Meeting
August 4, 2025**

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

Director's Present:

Curt Morrow	Ray Naprstek	J.J Pritchett	Kevin Randa
Larry Baumeister	Karl Connell	Deb Hansen	Shaun Higgins
Don Holtgrew	Chuck Zegers	Brian Kaczor	Randy Klawitter
Jack Engelhaupt	Brenda Wendt	Shane Lechtenberg	

Directors Absent: Dwain Marcellus, Linda Hoffman.

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

Guests Present: Willim Babutzke, Terri Krysl, Steven Banks, Anita Babutzke, Kipton Krysl, Joseph Olson, Robin Olson, Dewey Peterson, Becky Ravenkamp, Mike Murphy, Rick Joseph, Adam Nolan.

Approval of Agenda:

Motion was made by Zegers and seconded by Pritchett to approve August 4, 2025, agenda, **Aye:** Morrow, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Connell, Hansen, Higgins, Holtgrew, Zegers, Kaczor, Klawitter, Engelhaupt, Wendt, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** None. **Abstain:** Naprstek. **Absent:** Marcellus, Hoffman.

MOTION CARRIED

Approval of July 7, 2025, Minutes:

Motion was made to approve July 7, 2025, minutes with corrections by Engelhaupt seconded by Hansen. **Aye:** Morrow, Naprstek, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Connell, Hansen, Higgins, Holtgrew, Zegers, Kaczor, Klawitter, Engelhaupt, Wendt, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Marcellus, Hoffman.

MOTION CARRIED

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 reported on LR158, there are a lot of questions, they are working with stakeholders, NRBA and Game and Parks to create a fact sheet. There is a meeting set for August 21, 2025, in Valentine. The Legislative Hearing is set for September 19, 2025, in Lincoln. Ellwanger stated we have 3 applications for new irrigated acres, for a total of 355 acres, and 3 applications for added acres for a total of 20 acres.

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 there are currently 2 outstanding Phase II reports. Chemigation have been entered, and Larry should be done with all inspections this week.

Natural Resource Technician Report: Fischer reported that he has completed 162 of the 260 water samples.

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 reported that she set up a table at the Boyd County Fair. McCarthy stated that she is currently working with Upper Elkhorn and Middle Niobrara on proposed tree planting contracts.

NARD Association Report: Hansen stated the NARD is getting ready for the NRD Annual conference in Kearney September 29-30, 2025. Engelhaupt will be the voting delegate at the NARD conference in September, Hansen will be the alternative.

West Knox Rural Water Report: Ebel's report was included in the meeting packet a copy is attached to the official minutes. Ellwanger stated tank rehab will start on August 14, 2025. Ellwanger stated that West Knox Rural Water applied for a Security Grant for GPS mapping, and doors at the well house. Master Meters have been installed, and 50 meters have been switched out. Beacon is holding a software training at WKRW on August 7, 2025.

BGMA Coordinator Report: included in the meeting packet and copy is attached to official minutes. McCarthy stated they are offering two separate bus tours. The first tour will be a one-day tour on August 12, 2025. The second will be August 25-27, 2025, it is a three-day tour. There will be pick-up points within the district. Pivot Bio will be doing a follow-up to Tailgate Talk on August 27, 2025, at Roger Lechtenberg's field outside of Spencer.

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: Connell reported the meeting was held on July 17, 2025. Discussed LR158 Feasibility Study.

NE RC&D Report: Hansen reported they met on June 24, 2025. She stated they are planning an electronic recycling event in September; discussion was held about partnering to do battery recycling with local libraries. They are looking at hosting a grant writing class and hosting rural Ghost Tours

NC RC&D Report: Connell reported the meeting was held July 9, 2025. Drawing was held for the bench donated by Champion Recycling from the 2025 tire amnesty. They are working on a grant for the 2026 Tire Amnesty. The next meeting will be August 13th.

Friends of the Missouri: No Meeting held.

Missouri Sedimentation Action Coalition: No Meeting held.

Additional Business:

County Weed Authority Partnership for NET Grant:

William Babutzke, Steven Banks, Terri Krysl, discussed their request to partner with the NRD on a NET Grant for weed management along the Niobrara River. The Northeast Weed Management Area is requesting a monetary match of \$6,000 for the next three years based on NET Grant award. Discussion was held on current practices and future practices.

Motion was made to approve the Northeast Wee Management Area's request of \$6,000 a year for the next three years based on NET Grant award by Connell seconded by Klawitter. **Aye:** Morrow, Naprstek, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Connell, Hansen, Higgins, Holtgrew, Zegers, Kaczor, Engelhaupt, Wendt, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** Klawitter. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Marcellus, Hoffman.

MOTION CARRIED

Letter of Support for No-Fence/Vertical Fencing NET Grant:

Becky Ravenkamp requested a letter of support from the Lower Niobrara NRD board. She is applying for a NET Grant for No-Fence/Vertical Fencing. They will be collecting data and sharing information through field days.

A motion was made for a letter of support from the Lower Niobrara NRD by Klawitter seconded by Hansen. **Aye:** Morrow, Naprstek, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Connell, Hansen, Holtgrew, Zegers, Kaczor, Klawitter, Engelhaupt, Wendt, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** Higgins. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Marcellus, Hoffman. **MOTION CARRIED**

Purchase Agreement:

A motion was made to authorize Lower Niobrara Chairman to sign lot purchase agreement by Higgins seconded by Holtgrew. **Aye:** Morrow, Naprstek, Pritchett, Baumeister, Connell, Hansen, Higgins, Holtgrew, Zegers, Kaczor, Klawitter, Engelhaupt, Wendt, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** Randa. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Marcellus, Hoffman. **MOTION CARRIED**

Annual Producer Water Sampling: No Action

Ellwanger discussed the options of annual producer water sampling, he stated he talked to Blankenau and that would be a rule change. Ellwanger stated what the process looks like, there will be steering committee meetings, potential changes with an anticipated rule change coming in January.

Committee Reports and Recommendations:

Budget Committee:

Ellwanger reported that the Budget Committee met July 24, 2025, at 7:00pm at the LNNRD Office. Budget Committee report is attached to the official minutes.

Ellwanger presented a Budget PowerPoint showing a breakdown of the NRD budget, showing the NRD levy compared to other public entities. Ellwanger discussed the additional 1% Board Approved Restricted Fund Increase and proposed draft budget.

A motion was made to approve the 1% Board Approved Restricted Fund Increase by Connell seconded by Engelhaupt. **Aye:** Morrow, Naprstek, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Connell, Hansen, Higgins, Holtgrew, Zegers, Kaczor, Klawitter, Engelhaupt, Wendt, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Marcellus, Hoffman.

MOTION CARRIED

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

FY 2025-2026 Budget Hearing:

A motion was made to schedule the Budget Hearing for September 3, 2025, from 2:00pm to 3:00pm at the LNNRD Office by Higgins seconded by Zegers. **Aye:** Morrow, Naprstek, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Connell,

Hansen, Higgins, Holtgrew, Zegers, Kaczor, Klawitter, Engelhaupt, Wendt, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Marcellus, Hoffman. **MOTION CARRIED**

A motion was made to schedule the Levy Hearing for September 3, 2025, from 3:00pm to 4:00pm at the LNNRD Office by Engelhaupt seconded by Holtgrew. **Aye:** Morrow, Naprstek, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Connell, Hansen, Higgins, Holtgrew, Zegers, Kaczor, Klawitter, Engelhaupt, Wendt, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Marcellus, Hoffman. **MOTION CARRIED**

Office Building Project:

A motion was made to authorize sending requests for a Final Building Proposal by Hansen seconded by Wendt. **Aye:** Morrow, Naprstek, Pritchett, Baumeister, Hansen, Holtgrew, Zegers, Kaczor, Engelhaupt, Wendt, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** Connell, Higgins, Klawitter. **Abstain:** Randa. **Absent:** Marcellus, Hoffman. **MOTION CARRIED**

A motion was made to authorize Building Loan Search by Holtgrew seconded by Zegers. **Aye:** Morrow, Naprstek, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Hansen, Higgins, Holtgrew, Zegers, Kaczor, Klawitter, Engelhaupt, Wendt, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** Connell. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Marcellus, Hoffman. **MOTION CARRIED**

NSWCP Activities:

McCarthy reported that there were two new applications and one extension. The LNNRD has not received new funding as of August 4, 2025.

A motion was made to approve contract 2434 by Higgins seconded by Baumeister. **Aye:** Morrow, Naprstek, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Connell, Hansen, Higgins, Holtgrew, Zegers, Kaczor, Klawitter, Engelhaupt, Wendt, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Marcellus, Hoffman. **MOTION CARRIED**

A motion was made to extend contract 2408 and contract 2400 by Randa seconded by Pritchett. **Aye:** Morrow, Naprstek, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Connell, Hansen, Higgins, Holtgrew, Zegers, Kaczor, Klawitter, Engelhaupt, Wendt, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Marcellus, Hoffman. **MOTION CARRIED**

Treasurer Report:

Approval of Treasurer Report:

A motion was made by Naprstek seconded by Morrow to approve the August 4, 2025, treasurer's report. **Aye:** Morrow, Naprstek, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Hansen, Holtgrew, Zegers, Kaczor, Engelhaupt, Wendt, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** Connell, Higgin, Klawitter. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Marcellus, Hoffman. **MOTION CARRIED**

Public Comment:

Joe Olson: asked why or what are the concerns about expanding more acres. Why are you only allowing 500 new and 500 added. Some other districts are allowing multiple 1000s of acres. Why don't we do more things to promote conservation, why don't we do other practices to cut down on water loss. Olson asks if we have a nitrate map of wells on the website.

Robin Olson: 2012 expanded a developed a well built in 1978, the water level was higher than when the well was built. Static water levels in 2020 were the highest they have ever been, why are we so restricted.

Excused absent Directors: Marcellus, Hoffman.

Chairman Shane Lechtenberg declared the meeting adjourned at 9:07PM.

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 August 4, 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.

_____ Larry Baumeister, Secretary

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