

**Minutes of the Lower Niobrara Natural Resources  
Board of Directors Meeting  
September 3, 2025**

The meeting of the Lower Niobrara Natural Resources District was called to order by Secretary Baumeister at 7:07 P.M. at the Butte Community Center. Secretary Larry Baumeister called attention to the Open Meeting Law and statement of advertisement throughout our district.

**Director's Present:**

Curt Morrow	Ray Naprstek	Kevin Randa	Larry Baumeister
Karl Connell	Shaun Higgins	Don Holtgrew	Brian Kaczor
Randy Klawitter	Brenda Wendt	Dwain Marellus	

**Directors Absent:** J.J. Pritchett, Deb Hansen, Linda Hoffman, Chuck Zegers, Jack Engelhaupt, Shane Lechtenberg.

**Staff Present:** Wade Ellwanger Britanie Brewster Connie McCarthy Gary Richardson Brandon Fischer  
**Guests Present:** None.

**Approval of Agenda:**

Motion was made to approve September 3, 2025, agenda by Holtgrew and seconded by Klawitter, **Aye:** Morrow, Naprstek, Randa, Baumeister, Connell, Higgins, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Klawitter, Wendt, Marcellus. **Nay:** None.

**Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Pritchett, Hansen, Hoffman, Zegers, Engelhaupt, Lechtenberg.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Approval of August 4, 2025, Minutes:**

Motion was made to approve August 4, 2025, minutes by Kaczor seconded by Randa. **Aye:** Morrow, Naprstek, Randa, Baumeister, Connell, Higgins, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Klawiter, Wendt, Marcellus. **Nay:** None. **Abstain:** None.

**Absent:** Pritchett, Hansen, Hoffman, Zegers, Engelhaupt, Lechtenberg.

**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 that the Water Sustainability Fund Grants came out at the end of August. The LNNRD received the second year allotment award for the Water Reduction Cost Share Program. The joint application between the LNNRD and UENRD was not funded to fly the district. The UENRD will be flying their district on their own. Letters for support the NET Grant went out last week for Ravenkamp's and the Northeast Weed Management Area. The LNNRD will close on the Roth Lot on September 15, 2025. LR158 interim study in regard to the State taking over the Wild and Scenic designation of the Niobrara River was discussed in Valentine on August 21<sup>st</sup>. The Niobrara Council voted to take a supporting role at their meeting held on August 21, 2025. The Legislative Hearing will be on September 19, 2025, in Lincoln, at 1:00pm testimony will be by invitation only. Ellwanger submitted a letter of support for LR158 on behalf of the LNNRD. Ellwanger reported that we had 13 expanded acres applications, for 725 new acres, 7 new wells, and 138 added irrigation acres. The Groundwater Committee will meet in September.

**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 has been busy attending the State Fair and Producer Connect meetings across the area. September will be busy with Husker Harvest Days is the 10<sup>th</sup>, state Range Judging will be in Keya Paha Co on September 24<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Conservation Day will October 18<sup>th</sup>.

**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 the LNNRD had 1501 chemigation permits, with 772 being inspected. Has been working with Strom's on the dirt work bid, he requested new bids from Morton and Strom's. He had Strom's add an additional 20 feet to the building, 10 to the office and 10 to the shop. We will need an architectural drawing for permitting and professional engineer stamp to be complete. Currently that process is 2.5 to 4 weeks out. Richardson stated he has been working with Longitude 103 to make improvements and develop software. Phase II emails were sent asking farmers if they farmed the same ground they did last year, that information will need to be entered into longitude 103 and fields linked to emails. 116 emails were sent and have received roughly 10 back.

**Natural Resource Technician Report:** Fischer reported that he is nearing the end of his sampling with just a handful of systems left. The west side of the district has been extremely dry with the east side being really wet. Making collecting samples a challenge has reached out to producers asking them to call when systems are running. Fischer has roughly a week of water samples left then will be out testing wells.

**NARD Association Report:** Ellwanger reported that Hansen will have a committee meeting on September 23<sup>rd</sup>. We do have a Tree Planter of the Year award winner from the LNNRD. The Annual NARD Conference will be September 28<sup>th</sup>- 30<sup>th</sup>.

**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 has started on the 90-foot tank. The total project will take about 30 days. The generator was installed, and pictures were included in the meeting packet.

**BGMA Coordinator Report:** Lisa Lauver resigned as the BGMA Coordinator. Currently Lower Elkhorns office has been picking up the slack as they are looking for options to hire someone to fill the open position.

## **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 that the meeting was held on August 21, 2025. The Council discussed the National Park Service not approving any contracts going forwards, approved 4 burns permits, voted to support the Weed Board and their NET Grant for weed control on the west end of the Niobrara River, would be using planes or helicopters. The Council voted in support of the LR158 Interim Study of the Niobrara River.

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

**NC RC&D Report:** No Meeting Held

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

**Missouri Sedimentation Action Coalition:** No Meeting held.

## **Additional Business:**

### **Committee Reports and Recommendations:**

#### **Operations Committee:**

Ellwanger reported that the Operation Committee met prior to the regular board meeting at the community hall in Butte starting at 5:45pm. Ellwanger reported that committee looked at proposed designs and discussed the building, and changes in operations. The next step on the building is closing on the Roth Land Purchase.

A motion was made to authorize the Chairman to sign the closing documents on the Roth lot by Holtgrew seconded by Klawitter. **Aye:** Morrow, Naprstek, Randa, Baumeister, Connell, Higgins, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Klawiter, Wendt, Marcellus. **Nay:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Pritchett, Hansen, Hoffman, Zegers, Engelhaupt, Lechtenberg.

**MOTION CARRIED**

A motion was made to approve the recommendation to hire an Architect for a max of \$5,200 by Klawitter seconded by Kaczor. **Aye:** Morrow, Naprstek, Randa, Baumeister, Connell, Higgins, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Klawitter, Wendt. **Nay:** Marcellus. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Pritchett, Hansen, Hoffman, Zegers, Engelhaupt, Lechtenberg.

**MOTION CARRIED**

Ellwanger discussed the current process for Public Information Request and changes that will be implemented to cover staff time, copies and machine time.

#### **Budget Hearing:**

Ellwanger reported that the Budget Hearing was opened by Hoffman at 2:00pm. No one was present and no comments submitted. The hearing was closed at 2:45pm.

Ellwanger stated the total valuation increase for the district 13%, there were no changes to the draft budget beyond the draft budgets valuation being based on an estimated 5% valuation increase. The change in valuation changed the unused budget authority from \$129,000 to \$ 179,000. The budget deadline is September 30, 2025.

#### **Levy Hearing**

Ellwanger reported that the Levy Hearing was opened by Hoffman at 3:00pm. No one was present, and no comment was submitted. The hearing was closed at 3:30pm.

A motion was made to approve FY 2025-2026 Budget by Randa seconded by Marcellus. **Aye:** Morrow, Naprstek, Randa, Baumeister, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Wendt, Marcellus. **Nay:** Connell, Higgins, Klawitter. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Pritchett, Hansen, Hoffman, Zegers, Engelhaupt, Lechtenberg.

**MOTION CARRIED**

A motion was made to approve FY 2025-2026 Levy by Wendt seconded by Holtgrew. **Aye:** Morrow, Naprstek, Randa, Baumeister, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Wendt, Marcellus. **Nay:** Connell, Higgins, Klawitter. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Pritchett, Hansen, Hoffman, Zegers, Engelhaupt, Lechtenberg.

**MOTION CARRIED**

### **NSWCP Activities:**

McCarthy reported that she has talked with the state. They have not released new allocation but there is currently a surplus of roughly \$20,000 per NRD due to the state merger. McCarthy stated there are currently 3 contracts that need approved 2433, 2435, and 2436.

A motion was made to approve contract 2433,2435, and 2436 by Wendt seconded by Kaczor. **Aye:** Morrow, Naprstek, Randa, Baumeister, Connell, Higgins Holtgrew, Kaczor, Klawitter, Wendt, Marcellus. **Nay:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Pritchett, Hansen, Hoffman, Zegers, Engelhaupt, Lechtenberg. **MOTION CARRIED**

### **Treasurer Report:**

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

A motion was made to approve September 3, 2025, treasurer's report by Randa seconded by Wendt. **Aye:** Morrow, Naprstek, Randa, Baumeister, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Wendt, Marcellus. **Nay:** Connell, Higgins, Klawitter. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Pritchett, Hansen, Hoffman, Zegers, Engelhaupt, Lechtenberg. **MOTION CARRIED**

### **Public Comment:**

None

**Excused absent Directors:** Pritchett, Hansen, Hoffman, Zegers, Engelhaupt, Lechtenberg

Secretary Larry Baumeister declared the meeting adjourned at 7:58PM.

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 September 3, 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