

**Minutes of the Lower Niobrara Natural Resources
Board of Directors Meeting
January 5, 2026**

The meeting of the Lower Niobrara Natural Resources District was called to order by Chairman Lechtenberg at 2:02 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:

Shaun Higgins	J.J. Pritchett	Larry Baumeister	Randy Klawitter
Deb Hansen	Brett Fuchtman	Linda Hoffman	Don Holtgrew
Brian Kaczor	Karl Connell	Jack Engelhaupt	Brenda Wendt
Dwain Marcellus	Curt Morrow	Shane Lechtenberg	

Directors Absent: Kevin Randa, Chuck Zegers.

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

Guests Present: Dewey Peterson, Amy Timmerman, Karmen Dickey, Adam Nolan.

Randa entered at 2:03PM

Approval of Agenda:

Motion was made to approve January 5, 2026, agenda by Engelhaupt and seconded by Klawitter, **Aye:** Higgins, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Klawitter, Hansen, Fuchtman, Hoffman, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Connell, Engelhaupt, Wendt, Marcellus, Morrow, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Zegers.

MOTION CARRIED

Approval of December 1, 2025, Minutes:

Motion was made to approve December 1, 2025, minutes by Kaczor seconded by Hansen. **Aye:** Higgins, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Hansen, Hoffman, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Connell, Engelhaupt, Wendt, Marcellus, Morrow, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** Klawitter. **Abstain:** Fuchtman. **Absent:** Zegers.

MOTION CARRIED

Election of Officers:

Chairman Lechtenberg called for nominations for the office of Chairman: Hansen nominated Lechtenberg for Chairman.

Motion was made to cease nomination for Chairman by Kaczor, seconded by Holtgrew. **Aye:** Higgins, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Klawitter, Hansen, Fuchtman, Hoffman, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Connell, Engelhaupt, Wendt, Marcellus, Morrow, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Zegers.

MOTION CARRIED

Voice vote called due to one nomination

Nomination passed by voice vote, with no objections.

Lechtenberg named Chairman.

Chairman Lechtenberg called for nominations for the office of Vice Chairman: Klawitter nominated Pritchett for Vice Chairman.

Motion was made to cease nomination for Vice Chairman by Connell, seconded by Kaczor. **Aye:** Higgins, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Klawitter, Hansen, Fuchtman, Hoffman, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Connell, Engelhaupt, Wendt, Marcellus, Morrow, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Zegers.

MOTION CARRIED

Voice vote called due to one nomination
Nomination passed by voice vote, with no objections.

Pritchett named Vice Chairman.

Chairman Lechtenberg called for nominations for the office of Secretary: Hansen nominated Baumeister
Motion was made to cease nomination for Secretary by Holtgrew, seconded by Connell. **Aye:** Higgins, Pritchett, Randa, Klawitter, Hansen, Fuchtman, Hoffman, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Connell, Engelhaupt, Wendt, Marcellus, Morrow, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** None. **Abstain:** Baumeister. **Absent:** Zegers.

MOTION CARRIED

Voice vote called due to one nomination
Nomination passed by voice vote, with no objections.

Baumeister named Secretary.

Chairman Lechtenberg called for nominations for the office of Treasurer: Baumeister nominated Hoffman
Motion was made to cease nomination for Treasurer by Randa, seconded by Marcellus. **Aye:** Higgins, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Klawitter, Hansen, Fuchtman, Hoffman, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Connell, Engelhaupt, Wendt, Marcellus, Morrow, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Zegers.

MOTION CARRIED

Voice vote called due to one nomination
Nomination passed by voice vote, with no objections.

Hoffman named Treasurer.

Board of Directors Representatives by Appointment/Volunteer:

NARD Representative: Hansen
NRBA Representative: Connell
Niobrara Council Representative: Connell
NE RC&D Representative: Hansen
NC RC&D Representative: Connell
Friends of the Missouri Representative: Ellwanger
Missouri Sedimentation Action Coalition Representative: Ellwanger

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 the Producer Connect contract has been signed by the NARD, NRDs including the LNNRD will be moving forward with the platform. The 2026 Nitrogen Reduction Incentive Act applications were due on 12/15/2025. After the initial scale back on the 2026 year, the LNNRD was informed all LNNRD application will be funded through DWEE. Ellwanger reported that the LNNRD along with Central Platte, Lewis and Clark and Tri- Basin NRDs were selected to be part of a state pilot program utilizing cost share for sensor-based farming practices.

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 presented at the Northeast Nebraska Ag Conference in Norfolk. She has been working on tree plans; we currently have 2 cost share applications for Reverse Osmosis systems. McCarthy will be on KBRX January 22, and Pure Nebraska January 27th discussing.

Water Resources Report: Richardson's report was included in Directors Meeting Packets, and a copy is attached to the official minutes. Richardson reported that we have received roughly 500 Phase II reports or 30% of the total reports. We have signed up 172 producers currently.

NARD Association Report: Hansen reported the NARD Legislative Conference will be January 25-28 in Lincoln. She encouraged Director to attend; it is a great opportunity to learn in your role.

NARD Legislative Conference Delegates:

Motion was made to have Hansen as the LNNRD Legislative Conference Delegate and Wendt as Alternate by Morrow and seconded by Pritchett, Aye: Higgins, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Klawitter, Hansen, Fuchtman, Hoffman, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Connell, Engelhaupt, Wendt, Marcellus, Morrow, Lechtenberg. Nay: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Zegers.

MOTION CARRIED

West Knox Rural Water Report: Ebel's report was included in the Directors Meeting Packet a copy is attached to the official minutes. Ellwanger stated the Napoli PFAS litigation final payment was received.

BGMA Coordinator Report: Ellwanger reported they have hired Marcus Blunk as BGMA Coordinator, and he started on January 5, 2026.

Agency Reports:

Natural Resources Conservation Service: Nolan's report was handed out in the meeting packet a copy is attached to official minutes.

UCS/Scope of Work Approval: Ellwanger Reported the UCS/Scope of Work was mailed to Directors Prior to the meeting a copy is attached to the official minutes.

Motion was made to approve the NRCS UCS/Scope of Work by Hansen and seconded by Kaczor, Aye: Higgins, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Klawitter, Hansen, Fuchtman, Hoffman, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Connell, Engelhaupt, Wendt, Marcellus, Morrow, Lechtenberg. Nay: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Zegers.

MOTION CARRIED

Niobrara Council: Connell reported the met-on December 18, 2025. They reviewed financials, the 35th year of the Niobrara Scenic River Designation. The next meeting will be held on January 15, 2026.

NE RC&D Report: Hansen reported no meeting held.

NC RC&D Report: Connell reported not meeting held, the next meeting will be January 14, 2026.

Friends of the Missouri: No Meeting Held.

Missouri Sedimentation Action Coalition: No Meeting held.

Additional Business:

Woods/Aitken, LLP Engagement Letter; Ellwanger stated the engagement letter was included in Directors Meeting Packets, and a copy is attached to the official minutes. Ellwanger stated that Don Blankenau and Kennon Myer will be transferring to Wood Aitkens LLP.

A motion was made to accept the Woods/Aitken, LLP Engagement Letter by Higgins seconded by Holtgrew. **Aye:** Higgins, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Klawitter, Hansen, Fuchtman, Hoffman, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Connell, Engelhaupt, Wendt, Marcellus, Morrow, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Zegers.

MOTION CARRIED

Committee Reports and Recommendations:

Groundwater Committee:

Ellwanger reported the groundwater Committee met December 17, 2025, at the Butte Community Center.

A motion was made to suspend the rules for the 2025 crop reporting cycle and extend the 2025 Phase II reporting deadline to March 1, 2026, by Marcellus seconded by Pritchett. **Aye:** Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Klawitter, Hansen, Fuchtman, Hoffman, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Engelhaupt, Wendt, Marcellus, Morrow, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** Connell. **Abstain:** Higgins. **Absent:** Zegers.

MOTION CARRIED

Operation Committee:

Ellwanger reported the operation committee met prior to the regular scheduled board meeting. Financial Proposals were delivered to 8 banks within and around our district. He received proposals back prior to our regular scheduled meeting. The committee's recommendation is to accept Butte State Bank as the building financing institution. Ellwanger reported we have received a building contract for the shell and cement from Morton Building, the inside of the building and all finishing will be sent out for local contractor bids. Discussion was held on change order authorization for the General Manager and Chairman to keep the project moving.

Building Financing Proposal:

A motion was made to accept the Operations Committee Recommendation to use Butte State Bank as the building financing institution by Connell seconded by Hansen. **Aye:** Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Klawitter, Hansen, Fuchtman, Hoffman, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Connell, Engelhaupt, Wendt, Marcellus, Morrow, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** Higgins. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Zegers.

MOTION CARRIED

Building Contract:

A motion was made to accept the Operations Committee Recommendation to have the Chairman and General Manager sign the Morton Construction Agreement by Connell seconded by Marcellus. **Aye:** Higgins, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Klawitter, Hansen, Fuchtman, Hoffman, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Connell, Engelhaupt, Wendt, Marcellus, Morrow, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Zegers.

MOTION CARRIED

Change Order Authorization:

A motion was made to accept the Operations Committee Recommendation to authorize the Chairman and General Manager to have change order authorization of up to a \$50,000 total threshold for the entire project with Morton Building before requiring additional board approval by Marcellus seconded by Klawitter. **Aye:** Higgins, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Klawitter, Hansen, Fuchtman, Hoffman, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Connell, Engelhaupt, Wendt, Marcellus, Morrow, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Zegers.

MOTION CARRIED

NSWCP Activities:

McCarthy reported they have 5 low priority contracts on hold and one cancelation. No action taken

Approval of the NARD Washington DC Conference Attendance:

Ellwanger state the information was mailed out in Director Packets and a copy attached to official minutes.

A motion was made to send to two staff and one director if interested to the NARD Conference in Washington DC by Morrow seconded by Marcellus. **Aye:** Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Hansen, Fuchtman, Hoffman, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Engelhaupt, Wendt, Marcellus, Morrow, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** Higgins, Klawitter, Connell.

Abstain: None. **Absent:** Zegers.

MOTION CARRIED

Treasurer Report:

Approval of Treasurer Report:

A motion was made to approve January 5, 2026, treasurer's report by Engelhaupt seconded by Pritchett. **Aye:** **Aye:** Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Hansen, Fuchtman, Hoffman, Holtgrew, Kaczor, Engelhaupt, Wendt, Marcellus, Morrow, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** Higgins, Klawitter, Connell. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Zegers.

MOTION CARRIED

Public Comment:

Amy Timmerman shared information on Nitrogen Certification, Chemigation Certification, Pesticide Certification, Beef Quality Assurance Certification and other UNL extension programs

Dewey Peterson: discussed reinstatement of surface water from the Keya Paha River.

Excused absent Directors: Zegers.

Chairman Shane Lechtenberg declared the meeting adjourned at 3:37 P.M.

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 January 5, 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

**Minutes of the Lower Niobrara Natural Resources
Meeting of the Whole
January 5, 2026**

The meeting of the whole for the Lower Niobrara Natural Resources District was called to order by Chairman Lechtenberg at 4:05 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:

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

Directors Absent: Linda Hoffman, Kevin Randa, Chuck Zegers.

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

Guests Present: Dewey Peterson, Amy Timmerman, James Herrick, Riley Ellwanger, Dennis Schueth, Joslynn VanDerslice and several other guests were present.

Sentinel Ag Presentation: (James Herrick)

James Herrick presented insight into Sentinel Ag, the methods which they use to give agronomists, and farmers win-win nitrogen management solutions through on-farm data that can be utilized real-time. James answered several questions asked by the audience regarding reporting, soil testing and pricing.

Gonna Ag Presentation: (Dr. Bruno Lena)

Dr. Lena presented to the group via Zoom. Dr. Lena demonstrated how increased water efficiency creates better time management resulting in more sustainable water use. Gonna Ag is an infield technology designed to provide access to data that improves crop yields while reducing water usage.

Public Comment:

None

Excused absent Directors: Hoffman, Randa, Zegers.

Chairman Shane Lechtenberg declared the meeting adjourned at 5:50 P.M.

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 January 5, 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