

**Minutes of the Lower Niobrara Natural Resources  
Board of Directors Meeting  
May 4, 2026**

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:**

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

**Directors Absent:** Jack Engelhaupt, Linda Hoffman.

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

**Guests Present:** Adam Nolan, Ray Naprstek.

**Approval of Agenda:**

Motion was made to approve May 4, 2026, agenda by Hansen and seconded by Wendt, **Aye:** Higgins, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Klawitter, Hansen, Fuchtmann, Holtgrew, Zegers, Kaczor, Connell, Wendt, Marcellus, Morrow Lechtenberg. **Nay:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Engelhaupt, Hoffman.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Recognition of Service:** Ray Naprstek was recognized for his over 25 years of service. He served on the LNNRD board from March 1999 until his resignation was accepted in November of 2025. Ray was an instrumental part of the LNNRD Board during that time.

**Public Comment:** None

**Approval of April 6, 2026, Minutes:**

Motion was made to approve April 6, 2026, minutes by Higgins seconded by Zegers **Aye:** Higgins, Pritchett, Baumeister, Fuchtmann, Holtgrew, Zegers, Kaczor, Connell, Wendt, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** None. **Abstain:** Randa, Klawitter, Hansen, Marcellus, Morrow. **Absent:** Engelhaupt, Hoffman.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Staff and Agency Reports:**

**Manager's Report:** Ellwanger's report was mailed to the directors prior to the board meeting. Ellwanger stated that the LNNRD will be holding several committee meetings in May. The Water Committee and Personnel Committee will meet on May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026, the Budget Committee will be meet on May 27, 2026. There have been legislative changes made for meeting notice, it will no longer be required to post a meeting monthly, it is sufficient post them quarterly. Ellwanger reported that Larry Kocian passed away suddenly, he was the chemigation inspector for the LNNRD for at least 20 years. He will be greatly missed. We have advertised for

two summer internships and the full-time secretary position. Ellwanger stated he met with the DWEE and enforcement changes that may be coming to the NRDs. Ellwanger stated that the LNNRD's social media policy was included in the meeting packet, it outlines LNNRDs post only policy and we do not comment or engage in debate in comment or messenger features, automatic reply has been set up on messenger. Ellwanger discussed changes that will need to be addressed with the IMP currently held with DWEE.

**Programs Assistant Report:** McCarthy's report was handed out in the meeting packet. McCarthy reported the LNNRD planted 11,000 trees, they have completed 1 day of mulching, should be done mulching early next week. She delivered trees to the elementary students in Butte, Lynch, Niobrara and Verdigre. McCarthy stated that Adventure Camp about the Environment (ACE Camp) will be July 21-24, at Kamp Keleo near Burwell. It is open to students entering 7th and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The LNNRD does offer scholarships to attend ACE camp.

**Water Resources Report:** Richardson's report was handed out in the meeting packet. Richardson reported that we currently have 343 outstanding Phase II reports those reports belong to 178 producers, He has reached to producers via mail and email. Discussion was held on Cease-and-Desist Intent letters via the board.

A motion was made to send Notice of Violation and intent to Cease and Desist Letter to outstanding producers by Marcellus seconded by Pritchett. **Aye:** Higgins, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Klawitter, Hansen, Fuchtman, Holtgrew, Zegers, Kaczor, Connell, Wendt, Marcellus, Morrow, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Engelhaupt, Hoffman.

#### **MOTION CARRIED**

**Building update:** Richardson reported they held a contractor meeting on April 24, 2026, there were 15 local contractors present. He received 12 bids ranging from HVAC, plumbing, dry wall and finishing.

**Water Technician Report:** Fischer's static water report was handed out in the meeting. Fischer stated he had 8 well show an increase, and 67 show a decrease in static levels. He stated he attended the Magic ARC GIS Conference in Omaha.

**NARD Association Report:** Hansen reported that the NARD board is currently discussing the budget, the NARD basin tour takes place June 8-9, 2026. She encouraged all directors to attend; it will be out of North Platte this year highlighting the Perkin County Canal. Ellwanger reported the Water Center is also hosting a water tour on the Republican River.

**West Knox Rural Water Report:** Ebel's report was handed out in the meeting packet. Ellwanger stated they had to change their current blending process due to nitrate levels. They had 3 new requests for hookups. WKRW has seen an increase in gallon usage since updating meters.

**BGMA Coordinator Report:** was included in the meeting packet.

#### **Agency Reports:**

**Natural Resources Conservation Service:** Nolan's report was handed out in the meeting packet. Nolan reported they are working on EQIP contracting documents for preapproved applications. CSP staff have been working on preliminary planning with applicants with ranking deadlines for June 1, 2026. Staff have been working on training; there will be a yearly planning meeting with the NRD in early July

**Niobrara Council:** Connell reported meeting was held on April 16, 2026

**NE RC&D Report:** Hansen reported meeting was held on April 28, 2026. They held a Grant Writing Workshop on May 4, 2026.

**NC RC&D Report:** Connell reported the tire amnesty in Springview collected 350 tons. Collection dates were April 28-29, 2026. The Ranch expo will be holding battery recycling drive and trying to figure out an electronic recycling drive. The O'Neill Tire Amensty will be held in June with a collection goal of 750 ton.

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

**Missouri Sedimentation Action Coalition:** No Meeting Held

## **Committee Reports and Recommendations:**

**Operation Committee:** Met prior to the regularly scheduled board meeting. Discussion was held on the 12 bids received prior to the operation committee meeting. The operation committee recommends accepting bids and entering contracts with Schmitz Electric, Swanson Tech Services, Schulte Heating and Cooling, Next JN Construction and Hamilton Drywall, or any other contractor who submits a bid within 5% of the current approved bid by 4:30 p.m. on May 6, 2026.

A motion was made to accept the Operations Committees recommendation to accept bids and enter into a contract with Schmitz Electric, Swanson Tech Services, Schulte Heating and Cooling, Next JN Construction and Hamilton Drywall, or any other contractor who submits a bid within 5% of the current approved bid by 4:30 p.m. on May 6, 2026. by Klawitter seconded by Higgins. **Aye:** Higgins, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Klawitter, Hansen, Futchman, Holtgrew, Zegers, Kaczor, Connell, Wendt, Marcellus, Morrow, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Engelhaupt, Hoffman.

**MOTION CARRIED**

### **NSWCP Activities:**

McCarthy reported she had several that she will be holding until May. She would like to move forward with the planned grazing contracts 2440, 2476, 2477, 2478 need approval.

A motion was made to approve contract 2440, 2476, 2477 and 2478 by Holtgrew seconded by Baumeister. **Aye:** Higgins, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Klawitter, Hansen, Futchman, Holtgrew, Zegers, Kaczor, Connell, Wendt, Marcellus, Morrow, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Engelhaupt, Hoffman.

**MOTION CARRIED**

A motion was made to amend contract 2442 2444 by Connell seconded by Hansen. **Aye:** Higgins, Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Klawitter, Hansen, Futchman, Holtgrew, Zegers, Kaczor, Connell, Wendt, Marcellus, Morrow, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Engelhaupt, Hoffman.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Treasurer Report:** was presented for file

**Approval of Expenditures:**

A motion was made to approve May 4, 2026, expenditures by Marcellus seconded by Zegers. **Aye:** Pritchett, Randa, Baumeister, Hansen, Fuchtman, Holtgrew, Zegers, Kaczor, Wendt, Marcellus, Morrow, Lechtenberg. **Nay:** Higgins, Klawitter, Connell. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Engelhaupt, Hoffman

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Excused absent Directors:** Engelhaupt, Hoffman.

Chairman Shane Lechtenberg declared the meeting adjourned at 8:32 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 May 4, 2026, 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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