

LOWER BIG BLUE NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
July 10, 2025
7:00 P.M.

Notice of the meeting was published in accordance with Section 84-1411, Nebraska Statutes, in the Beatrice Daily Sun and the Wilber Republican. Notice was also sent to Radio Station KWBE, Crete News, and Fairbury Journal-News. In accordance with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act, the Open Meetings Act is posted on the north wall of the meeting room for public viewing.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Duane Parde at 7:00 p.m.

Directors Present: Larry Barta, Ryan Birkett, Steve Kelley, Bob Lorenz, Duane Parde, Jason Pohlmann, Dean Roehr, Rodney Skleba, Jason Sand, Doug Stokebrand, Chad Weichel, Bruce Weise.

Staff Present: Scott Sobotka, Manager; Tyler Weishahn, Assistant Manager; Adam Kimmerling, Office Administrator; Nick Schroeder, GIS/IT/Technical Specialist, Brandy Scholl, NRD Secretary, Scott Theis, Operations Supervisor.

Directors Absent: Brent Katz

Others Present: Senator Tom Brandt, District 32, Kelli Evans, NRCS District Conservationist

CONSIDERATION OF EXCUSED ABSENCES

Brent Katz has requested to be excused from the July 10th board meeting.

MOTION #1 was made by Jason Pohlmann, seconded by Doug Stokebrand, to excuse Brent Katz from the July 10th board meeting.

YEA: Barta, Birkett, Kelley, Lorenz, Parde, Pohlmann, Roehr, Sand, Skleba, Stokebrand, Weichel Weise. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None.

APPROVAL OF JULY 10, 2025, CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION #2 was made by Chad Weichel, seconded by Steve Kelley, to adopt the Consent Agenda for the July 10, 2025, board meeting which includes: adoption of the agenda as submitted, approval of the June 12, 2025, meeting minutes, financial status report dated June 30, 2025, June 2025 bills payable, June 2025 revenues, monthly bank account summary and Beatrice West and Wymore Rural Water Financials. Motion carried.

YEA: Barta, Birkett, Kelley, Lorenz, Parde, Pohlmann, Roehr, Sand, Skleba, Stokebrand, Weichel, Weise. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Senator Brandt spoke to the Board about the 109th Legislative session's bills and resolutions including the merger of the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources and Nebraska Department

of Environment and Energy into a new agency, The Department of Water Energy and Environment (DWEE). He also spoke about the Governor's water task force. He encouraged anyone interested in the task force to contact his office.

WATER COMMITTEE REPORT

Chad reviewed the minutes of the July 9th water Committee meeting. The committee discussed a variance for a proposed addition of a corner system to a pivot located in the NW ¼ of Section 6-2-5 in Gage County. As it is similar to other variance requests the Board has denied during the moratorium, the Committee recommended denying this application as well. Additionally, the committee discussed a new well permit for a low-capacity livestock system.

The Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NeDNR) has completed their review of the rules and regulations revisions submitted to them a month ago. They noted two items they would like to clarify.

The Committee discussed possible public hearing dates, landing on late October or early November to allow producers to finish harvest. Staff will look into the availability of the Gage County 4-H Building for those weeks.

Tyler discussed a scope of services provided by Olsson to discuss scoping a hydrogeologic review of the proposed management strategy and monitoring well network. In addition to those services, Olsson scoped modeling and tools for estimating timelines for controls by subarea, evaluating the efficacy of controls, and determining allocation amounts. The Committee discussed the scope provided, noting that it is good to know these services are available and at what cost should the Board choose to utilize them.

The third LBBNRD AEM flights took place over the Fourth of July weekend and were completed in two days. Five flights collected all the data and preliminary profiles have been sent to the NRD. Staff have been utilizing the profiles to assess areas where calls have been received about water level declines and well issues.

Staff have ordered telemetry equipment through the NeDNR agreement signed last year and expiring at the end of this calendar year, and that equipment has been shipped. Staff have also investigated locations within Subarea 7 for dedicated monitoring wells as requested by the Board. A potential dedicated monitoring well in Subarea 9 was also discussed.

WELL PERMITS, IRRIGATION AGREEMENTS, VARIANCES

Tyler presented a variance application from Susan Fielder and John Dauber for a proposed addition of a corner system to a pivot located in the NW ¼ of Section 6-2-5 in Gage County. The addition of a corner system would expand the current certified irrigated acres. The Board discussed the variance.

MOTION #3 was made by Bruce Weise, seconded by Larry Barta, to deny the variance application from Susan Fielder and John Dauber for a proposed addition of a corner system to a pivot located in the NW ¼ of Section 6-2-5 in Gage County Motion carried.

YEA: Barta, Kelley, Lorenz, Parde, Sand, Skleba, Stokebrand, Weichel, Weise. **NAY:** Birkett. **ABSTAIN:** Pohlmann, Roehr.

Tyler also presented a comingled well permit for Trent and Haley Tietjen and Summit Pork for two wells for a confined animal feeding operation in Section 29-4-3. The permit allows the NRD to make sure the comingled wells are not operated simultaneously to achieve greater than 50 gallons per minute. Tyler noted that the permit is similar to other low-capacity livestock system permits the NRD has received in the past where two wells are installed with one serving as a backup. Flow meters will be installed and annual use reports are required.

MOTION #4 was made by Jason Pohlmann, seconded by Jason Sand, to approve the comingled well permit for Trent and Haley Tietjen and Summit Pork for a confined animal feeding operation in Section 29-4-3. Motion carried.

YEA: Barta, Birkett, Kelley, Lorenz, Parde, Pohlmann, Roehr, Sand, Skleba, Stokebrand, Weichel, Weise. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None.

Tyler noted that he received a replacement well permit today which was approved since it was during the growing season. The well developed a hole in the column.

HAY LAND BIDS

Scott reviewed hay land bids received for maintenance. 13 bids were received for 8 of the 9 areas. High bids totaled \$18,392.75. No bid was received for Green Top WMA. Since it was not hayed last year, it should be hayed to reduce tree pressure. Staff has reached out to the high bidder on Swan 5 to see if they would hay Green Top for 50% of the bales.

MOTION #5 was made by Dean Rohr, seconded by Jason Pohlmann, to accept the high bid received for each area and to allow the high bidder of Swan 5 to hay Green Top for 50% of the hay. Motion carried.

YEA: Barta, Birkett, Kelley, Lorenz, Parde, Pohlmann, Roehr, Sand, Skleba, Stokebrand, Weichel, Weise. **NAY:** None **ABSTAIN:** None.

LITTLE INDIAN WFPO PROJECT UPDATE

Scott stated that the plan has been authorized for federal funding and that copies of the authorization were sent to the Nebraska Congressional Delegation. The next step is to work with JEO and NRCS to request design construction funding. The plan calls for construction of 24 new dams at an estimated cost of \$29 million. The nonfederal share would be approximately \$1.6 million.

FY 2026 BUDGET

Scott reviewed items which have been updated in the FY 2026 budget. Several urban conservation projects have been carried over to this fiscal year. The other change is to the building fund line item to account for the utilization of the building sinking fund and loan proceeds needed to complete the building project. Capital expenditures for FY 2026 is expected to be \$5,881,058.42 with total expenditures of \$7,403,664.40.

Scott recommended that the Budget Hearing be set for September 18th at 8:30 A.M., with the Levy and Property Tax Request Hearing immediately following the Budget Hearing.

MOTION #6 was made by Dean Rohr, seconded by Rodney Skleba, to approve the budget as presented and that the District hold a public hearing for the proposed FY 2026 budget with a public

hearing for the 2026 Levy and Property Tax Request immediately following on September 18th at 8:30 A.M. at the LBBNRD office, with the NRD board meeting to follow and that legal notices for said public hearings be published once on or before September 11, 2025 in the Beatrice Daily Sun, Crete News, Fairbury Journal News and Pawnee Republican. Motion carried.

YEA: Barta, Birkett, Kelley, Lorenz, Parde, Pohlmann, Roehr, Sand, Skleba, Stokebrand, Weichel, Weise. **NAY:** None **ABSTAIN:** None.

NRD ACTIVITIES

Scott reported that the property survey at Swan 31 has been completed.

Scott continues to work with Saline County planning and zoning to recognize NRD high water marks.

Tyler updated the Board on the progress of chemigation inspections. Staff are inspecting Jefferson County and any new permits.

Scott noted that an alternate source of funding will be needed for the 9 county all hazard mitigation plan.

A list of cost share practices developed by the NRD's was shared with the Board. Scott encouraged anyone with ideas for future cost share programs to let him know.

Staff are working with producers to get phase II reporting forms turned in.

Scott stated that the office received and investigated an irrigation runoff complaint recently.

BUILDING COMMITTEE REPORT

Dean noted that the building committee met for their monthly progress meeting on June 25th. He provided an overview of the progress on the building project.

HUSKER HARVEST DAYS

Scott asked for volunteers to attend Husker Harvest Days to work in the NARD booth. Bob Lorenz expressed interest in attending.

MOTION #7 was made by Dean Rohr, seconded by Bruce Wiese, to authorize per diem and expenses for Bob Lorenz, to work at Husker Harvest Days one day. Motion carried.

YEA: Barta, Birkett, Kelley, Lorenz, Parde, Pohlmann, Roehr, Sand, Skleba, Stokebrand, Weichel, Weise. **NAY:** None **ABSTAIN:** None.

AGENCY REPORTS

NRCS

Kelli provided an update on the activities of the Beatrice office.

EXTENSION OFFICE

No Report

NRC

Steve reported he attended the NRC meeting on July 9th. Water Sustainability Fund Applications were scored.

NARD

Steve reported that they have not met since the last meeting.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

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| a. July 11 th | Jefferson County Tire Recycling Event |
| b. July 21 st -23 rd | GMDA Conference – Idaho Falls, ID. |
| c. July 23 rd | NRC Meeting, Kearney – WSF Grant Award Announcement |
| d. August 25 th -27 th | Manager's Meeting |
| e. August 28 th | NRD Board Meeting 8:30 a.m. |
| f. September 1 st | Labor Day – Office Closed |
| g. September 9 th – 11 th | Husker Harvest Days |
| h. September 18 th | NRD Board Meeting 8:30 a.m. |

Being no further business, Chairperson Larry Barta adjourned the meeting at 9:03 p.m.

Secretary, Jason Sand

I, the undersigned, Secretary of the Lower Big Blue Natural Resources District, hereby certify that these are true and correct minutes of the meeting of the Board of Directors of the District held July 10, 2025, that all of the subjects discussed at the meeting were contained in the agenda for the meeting, kept continually current and readily available for public inspection at the principal office of the District during normal business hours, and except for items of an emergency nature, the agenda was not altered later than twenty-four (24) hours before the scheduled commencement of the meeting; that at least one copy of all reproducible material discussed at the meeting was available at the meeting for examination and copying by members of the public; that the minutes were in written form and available Lower Big Blue NRD Board of Directors Meeting July 10, 2025 for public inspection within ten working days and prior to the next convened meeting for said body; and that all news media requesting notification of the meeting of said body were provided advance notification of the time and place of said meeting and the subjects to be discussed at said meeting.