

LOWER BIG BLUE NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
December 11, 2025
1:30 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 1:30 P.M.

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

Directors Absent: Rodney Skleba, Doug Stokebrand

Staff Present: Scott Sobotka, Manager; Tyler Weishahn, Assistant Manager; Adam Kimmerling, Office Administrator; Nick Schroeder, GIS/IT/Data Specialist; Scott Theis, Operations Supervisor; Ryan Thomas, Resources Specialist; Brandy Scholl, Gage County NRD Secretary and Programs Assistant.

Others Present: Kelli Evans, NRCS District Conservationist, Gage County; Kennon Meyer, BWJ Law Group.

CONSIDERATION OF EXCUSED ABSENCES

Scott reported that Rodney Skleba and Doug Stokebrand have asked to be excused from the December 11th board meeting.

MOTION #1 was made by Dean Rohr, seconded by Jason Pohlmann, to excuse Rodney Skleba and Doug Stokebrand from the December 11, board meeting. Motion Carried.

YEA: Barta, Birkett, Katz, Kelley, Lorenz, Parde, Pohlmann, Roehr, Weichel, Weise **NAY:** None **ABSTAIN:** None **NOT PRESENT:** Sand

APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 11, 2025, CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION #1 was made by Larry Barta, seconded by Steve Kelley, to adopt the Consent Agenda for the December 11, 2025, board meeting, which includes: adoption of the agenda as submitted, approval of the November 13, 2025 meeting minutes, financial status report dated November 30, 2025, November 2025 revenues, and expenditures; Beatrice West and Wymore Rural Water financials. Motion Carried.

YEA: Barta, Birkett, Katz, Kelley, Lorenz, Parde, Pohlmann, Weichel, Weise **NAY:** None **ABSTAIN:** Roehr **NOT PRESENT:** Sand

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

Director Sand arrived at 1:35 P.M.

WATER COMMITTEE REPORT

Chad Weichel reviewed the water committee minutes from December 9th.

MOTION #3 was made by Steve Kelley, seconded by Chad Weichel to approve certified groundwater irrigated acres on file with the District as of December 11, 2025. Motion Carried.

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

Kennon reviewed the various options available to the Board regarding the possibility of lifting the moratorium on expanded acres and/or the moratorium on the drilling of new wells. Discussion was held on the options Kennon presented and the current phase status of each sub area.

MOTION #4 was made by Jason Pohlmann, to lift the moratorium on the expansion of irrigated acres in section, district wide, effective January 1, 2026.

Upon discussion of the motion, Director Pohlmann withdrew motion #4 from consideration.

MOTION #5 was made by Jason Pohlmann, seconded by Dean Roehr to lift the moratorium on the expansion of irrigated acres, district wide, effective January 1, 2026.

AMENDMENT #1 ON MOTION #5 was made by Bruce Weise, seconded by Jason Sand to amend Motion #5 to allow for expansion of irrigated acres only in sub areas 1, 4 and 5. The revised Motion # 5 upon Amendment #1 would read: *to lift the moratorium on the expansion of irrigated acres in sub areas 1, 4 and 5, effective January 1, 2026.* Amendment Carried.

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

AMENDMENT #2 ON MOTION #5 was made by Bruce Weise, seconded by Larry Barta to amend Motion #5 to allow for the drilling of new wells only in sub areas 1, 4 and 5. The revised Motion # 5 upon Amendment #2 would read: *to lift the moratorium on the expansion of irrigated acres and the drilling of new high capacity wells in sub areas 1, 4 and 5, effective January 1, 2026.* Amendment Carried.

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

MOTION #5 AS AMENDED to lift the moratorium on the expansion of irrigated acres and the drilling of new high capacity wells in sub areas 1, 4 and 5, effective January 1, 2026. Motion Carried.

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

Director Sand left at 2:49 P.M.

WATER WELL PERMITS, IRRIGATION AGREEMENTS

Staff reviewed a well registration form being submitted to the Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment (DWEE) by Heartland Bank. The well was drilled in the early 1990s and is the source well for irrigating 123.39 certified acres in the SE ¼ of Section 4-Township 2N-Range 5E in Gage County. These are brought before the Board since one of the required components of the registration form is a NRD signature verifying the well was drilled prior to stays or moratoriums.

MOTION #6 was made by Larry Barta, seconded by Chad Weichel to recognize that the well was drilled prior to any stays or moratorium. Motion Carried.

YEA: Barta, Birkett, Katz, Kelley, Lorenz, Parde, Pohlmann, Roehr, Weichel, Weise **NAY:** None
ABSTAIN: None **NOT PRESENT:** Sand

BUILDING COMMITTEE REPORT

Dean reviewed the minutes of the November 25th meeting. Part of the parking lot has been poured. The contractor has put plastic on the door and window openings and plans to heat the building to prep for interior cement work. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 29th at 10:00 a.m. at the NRD Office.

PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS COMMITTEE REPORT

Ryan Birkett reviewed the minutes of the December 8th meeting. Staff reviewed discussions with Tallgrass Energy regarding the consent to cross agreements of NRD flood control easement by the proposed pipeline.

Scott T. discussed the slip-lining project at Plum 4A. This structure was built in 1966 and has a drainage area of 1.87 miles. Scott presented estimates for repair of the principal spillway. Estimates to complete a cast-in-place liner is approximately \$30,000 more than the estimated cost of NRD staff to install a Snap-Tite liner. The landowner has agreed to pay half of the additional cost of the cast-in-place liner to avoid draining the lake and keep the fishery intact. The landowner has requested to enter a multi-year contract to reimburse the district. The Committee recommended reducing the proposed length of the reimbursement period.

MOTION #7 was made by Dean Roehr, seconded by Chad Weichel, to approve the cast in place quote of \$67,315 and approve repayment of the landowner share of \$15,150.85 over a 3 year

period contingent upon erosion repair and fence improvements to control cattle access. Motion Carried.

YEA: Barta, Birkett, Katz, Kelley, Lorenz, Parde, Pohlmann, Roehr, Weichel, Weise **NAY:** None
ABSTAIN: None **NOT PRESENT:** Sand

Scott S. reviewed a Wild Nebraska Wildlife Habitat cost share agreement that includes seven acres of native grassland enhancement for the benefit of quail. The total estimated cost of the project is \$1,050.00 with 50% cost share in the amount of \$525.00 from the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and 25% percent or \$262.50 from the NRD. The landowner is responsible for the balance.

MOTION #8 was made by Larry Barta, seconded by Dean Roehr, to approve the WILD Nebraska agreement. Motion Carried.

YEA: Barta, Birkett, Katz, Kelley, Lorenz, Parde, Pohlmann, Roehr, Weichel, Weise **NAY:** None
ABSTAIN: None **NOT PRESENT:** Sand

Scott S. informed the committee that BCH has asked the NRD for approximately 600 yards of sediment from Clatonia Public Use Area for the construction of a Hospital Cancer Garden. Clatonia lake is currently dry due to the extended drought in the area and the hospital has volunteers to load and haul the material.

MOTION #5 was made by Steve Kelley, seconded by Brent Katz, to approve that approximately 600 cubic yards of sediment be donated to the cancer garden. Motion Carried.

YEA: Barta, Birkett, Katz, Kelley, Lorenz, Parde, Pohlmann, Roehr, Weichel, Weise **NAY:** None
ABSTAIN: None **NOT PRESENT:** Sand

The Nitrogen Reduction Act and The Nature Conservancy nitrogen management programs were reviewed. Thirty-two applications have been submitted so far for the 2026 crop year.

NRD PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Scott stated that Jason Pohlmann and Ryan Birkett submitted applications to be the Nebraska advisor to the Blue River Compact.

Scott told the Board that Adam Erikson has stayed on part time this winter to help with maintenance as weather allows. Currently, he expects to be around \$14,000 over budget in the operation and maintenance line item at the end of the fiscal year, however, there are unused funds in other areas of the personnel budget which will cover that amount.

Scott asked those wishing to serve on different committees should let he or the Chairman know before the next meeting.

Tyler informed the Board that the monitoring well south of Diller was drilled this week.

NARD LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

Directors were reminded to let Adam know if they are planning on attending Legislative Conference on January 27th & 28th.

AGENCY REPORTS

NRCS

Kelli presented to the Board stating that staff have been working to stake jobs for EQIP and NSWCP in addition to processing FY 2026 EQIP and CSP applications and CRP status reviews.

EXTENSION OFFICE

No Report

NRC

Steve reported that the next meeting will be February 26th.

NARD

Steve reported that the next meeting will be in January at Legislative Conference.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

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| a. December 25 th & 26 th | - | Christmas Holiday – Office Closed |
| b. January 1 st & 2 nd | - | New Years Day Holiday – Office Closed |
| c. January 7 th | - | 109 th Legislative 60 Day Session Begins |
| d. January 8 th | - | Board Meeting 1:30 p.m. |
| e. January 26 th | - | I&E & NRD Managers Meetings – Lincoln |
| f. January 27 th & 28 th | - | Legislative Conference -- Lincoln |

Being no further business, Chairperson Duane Parde adjourned the meeting at 3:15 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 December 11, 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 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.

:amk