

LOWER BIG BLUE NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
February 12, 2026
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 Chad Weichel at 1:30 P.M.

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

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

Directors Absent: Jason Sand

Others Present: Kelli Evans, Gage County District Conservationist.

CONSIDERATION OF EXCUSED ABSENCES

Jason Sand asked to be excused from the February 12th meeting.

MOTION #1 was made by Dean Roehr, seconded by Rodney Skleba, to excuse Jason Sand from the February 12, 2026 board meeting. Motion Carried.

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

APPROVAL OF JANUARY 12, 2026 CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION #2 was made by Duane Parde, seconded by Steve Kelley, to adopt the Consent Agenda for the February 12, 2026, board meeting which includes: adoption of the agenda as submitted, approval of the January 08, 2026, meeting minutes, financial status report dated January 31, 2026, January 2026 bills payable, January 2026 revenues, monthly bank account summary and Beatrice West and Wymore Rural Water Financials. Motion carried.

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

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

WELL PERMITS, IRRIGATION AGREEMENTS

Tyler presented transfer permit # TLBB 016. The owner wishes to transfer water from Section 6-7N-4E to irrigate approximately 32 acres in Section 7-7N-4E. The permit is in sub-area one and meets all rules and regulations.

MOTION #3 was made by Duane Parde, seconded by Jason Pohlmann, to approve transfer permit #TLBB 016. Motion carried.

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

Tyler presented the following well permits received this month which meet all District rules and regulations:

- LBB 1176 in Section N1/2 NE ¼ 18-7N-4E. The permit is in sub-area one.
- LBB 1178 in Section NE ¼ 7-4N-3E. The permit is in sub-area four.
- LBB 1180 in Section SW ¼ 20-4N-3E. The permit is in sub-area four.
- LBB 1181 in Section SESW ¼ 23-4N-2E. The permit is in sub-area four.
- LBB 1182 in SW ¼ Section 14-8N-4E. The permit is in sub-area one.

Discussion was held on the well permits

MOTION #4 was made by Jason Pohlmann, seconded by Larry Barta, to approve well permits LBB 1176, LBB 1178, LBB 1180, LBB 1181 and LBB 1182. Motion carried.

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

Tyler presented two well permits received this month which did not meet the scoring requirements for new wells.

- LBB 1177 in Section NESE ¼ 1-3N-2E. The permit is in sub-area four.
- LBB 1179 in Section NW ¼ 5-4N-3E. The permit is in sub-area four.

Discussion was held on the permits. Tyler reminded the Board that permits which do not meet scoring requirements may apply for a permit to conduct a pumping test under the new rules.

MOTION #5 was made by Jason Pohlmann, seconded by Ryan Birkett, to deny well permits LBB 1177 and LBB 1179 due to their failure to meet the required points. Motion carried.

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

Ryan presented an irrigation agreement in the W1/2 SW ¼ Section 4-4N-3E. Matt and Renae Heidemann currently irrigate 67.41 acres from Swan 27. They own 57% of the permanent pool. The owners of the remaining 43% have been notified and had no objection to the permit.

MOTION #6 was made by Jason Pohlmann, seconded by Brent Katz, to enter into a 10-year irrigation agreement with Matt and Renae Heidemann to irrigate 67.41 acres with 67.41 Acre Feet of water from Swan 27. Motion carried.

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

Tyler presented a replacement well in SESW ¼ Section 21-5N-2E. The permit meets all rules and regulations.

MOTION #7 was made by Larry Barta, seconded by Jason Pohlmann, to approve the replacement well permit. Motion carried.

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

UPDATE OF GROUNDWATER QUANTITY RULES AND REGULATIONS REVISIONS

Tyler reviewed AEM proposal #4. The survey would cover approximately 442-line miles west of Beatrice between Hwy 4 and Hwy 136. The Districts application to the Water Sustainability Fund last year for the project was not funded. He noted that he would like to update and submit the application for consideration this year.

MOTION #8 was made by Bruce Wiese, seconded by Larry Barta, to submit an application to the Water Sustainability Fund in the amount of \$249,999.00. Motion carried.

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

RURAL WATER PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Adam reviewed plans for rural water advisory committees to meet. The staff would like the committees to review the status of each project. Any recommendations will be brought to the Board for consideration.

Adam also stated that he would like to submit a Water Sustainability Fund application to install remote read meters on the Wymore project. A \$60,000 WSF application would provide funds for new meters, cellular MIUs and a complete evaluation of system capacities.

MOTION #9 was made by Doug Stokebrand, seconded by Ryan Birkett, to submit a Water Sustainability Fund Application for \$60,000 on behalf of the Wymore Rural Water Project. Motion carried.

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

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE AND NARD WASHINGTON DC ANNUAL MEETING

Scott noted that seven directors attended the legislative conference. He reviewed items of interest with the directors.

Directors were asked to let Adam know if they are interested in attending the annual meeting in Washington D.C.

BUILDING COMMITTEE REPORT

Dean updated the Board on the building project and reviewed the minutes of the January 20th progress meeting. Progress on concrete pours, interior framing and the geothermal well field was discussed. The committee has reviewed proposals from both Eakes and Cornhusker State Industries. The committee has recommended purchase of 8 desks, four office chairs, front counter, small meeting room table and a podium. The approximate cost for these items is \$36,209.00.

MOTION #10 was made by Doug Stokebrand, seconded by Ryan Birkett, to purchase furniture as recommended by the building committee. Motion carried.

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

NRD PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES REPORT

Scott stated that easement crossings have been finalized with Tallgrass.

Scott noted that staff plan to meet with the Department of Water Energy and Environment to discuss 319 funding for Clatonia 3-A.

CONSIDERATION OF NINE COUNTY MULTIJURISDICTIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE FUNDING

Scott told the board that the funding rate for the plan has been reduced. FEMA has asked for \$18,000 of in-kind contributions and \$25,918 of cash contributions toward the plan.

MOTION #11 was made by Bruce Wiese, seconded by Duane Parde, to authorize the Manager to negotiate agreements with the entities involved in the plan to cover the new contribution requirements. Motion carried.

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

PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT COMMITTEE

Dean reviewed the minutes of the meeting held January 23rd. The committee discussed staff performance reviews. Merit pay of \$10,000 was distributed among employees. Staff were encouraged to consider investing the merit increase in the new Roth 457 Plan.

Scott also noted that there are still plans to hire a shared employee.

AGENCY REPORTS

NRCS

Kelli Evans updated the Board on the activities of the Gage County NRCS office.

EXTENSION OFFICE

No Report

NRC

Steve reported that the next meeting will be in February.

NARD

Steve reported that the NARD met at the Legislative conference. He reviewed the NARD finances with the board.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, UPCOMING MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES

- February 16th - Presidents Day – Office Closed
- February 24th - Southeast Regional Envirothon – Beatrice
- February 27th - UNL Irrigation Conference -- Beatrice
- March 2nd & 3rd - NRD Water Conference – Kearney
- March 4th - Managers Meeting – Lincoln
- March 8th & 9th - NARD Board Meeting -- Lincoln
- March 3rd - Southeast Regional Envirothon – Lincoln
- March 12th - NRD Board Meeting – 7:00 p.m.
- March 18th - UNL Irrigation Conference -- Beatrice
- March 28th-April 2nd - NARD Annual Washington D.C Meeting

Being no further business, Chairperson Chad Weichel adjourned the meeting at 3:13 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 February 12, 2026 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