

LOWER BIG BLUE NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
October 8, 2026
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 Vice Chairperson Doug Stokebrand at 7:00 P.M.

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

Directors Absent: Chad Weichel

Staff Present: Scott Sobotka, Manager; Tyler Weishahn, Assistant Manager; Adam Kimmerling, Office Administrator; Brandy Scholl, Gage County NRD Secretary, Programs Assistant.

Others Present: None.

CONSIDERATION OF EXCUSED ABSENCES

Chad Weichel has requested to be excused from the October 8th Board Meeting.

MOTION #1 was made by Dean Roehr, seconded by Duane Parde, to excuse Chad Weichel from the October 8th Board Meeting.

YEA: Barta, Kelley, Lorenz, Mason, Parde, Pohlmann, Roehr, Sand, Skleba, Stokebrand, Weise.

NAY: Birkett. **ABSTAIN:** None.

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 8, 2026, CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION #2 was made by Duane Parde, seconded by Larry Barta, to adopt the Consent Agenda for the October 8, 2026, Board Meeting, which includes: adoption of the agenda as submitted, approval of the September 17, 2026 meeting minutes, financial status report dated September 30, 2026, September 2026 revenues, and expenditures; Beatrice West and Wymore Rural Water financials.

YEA: Barta, Birkett, Kelley, Lorenz, Mason, Parde, Pohlmann, Sand, Skleba, Stokebrand, Weise.

NAY: None **ABSTAIN:** Roehr.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

WATER WELL PERMITS, IRRIGATION AGREEMENTS

Tyler noted that the well approved for the Village of Swanton last year has been drilled.

Staff plans to meet with Olsson soon to discuss the latest AEM data. A water committee meeting will be scheduled in November to review the findings with the committee.

LITTLE INDIAN WFPO UPDATE

Scott reviewed media coverage of the funding award for the Little Indian project. Letters were mailed to landowners in the project area to inform them of the start of the design phase. The design phase is expected to take three years, meaning construction could begin in 2030. Scott also noted that the project must be at least 90% designed before the District can request construction funding.

CONSIDERATION OF LITTLE INDIAN 3-9 EASEMENT IMPACTS

Scott stated that the landowner of Little Indian 3-9 would like to construct a bin pad in the flood pool of the structure. He would need to place a small amount of fill in the area to construct a pad. Staff have worked with the landowner to draft an agreement whereby any fill placed in the flood pool would need to be offset with the removal of fill elsewhere in the flood pool. The agreement also removes any liability from the District for damages which could result from normal operation of the structure.

MOTION #3 was made by Larry Barta, seconded by Duane Parde, to enter into the Encroachment and Release agreement with the landowner of Little Indian 3-9.

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

Scott also noted that he has been contacted by Northern Natural Gas about a pipeline which may cross NRD easement areas. Scott stated that the crossings would be handled the same way as previous crossings.

NARD CONFERENCE REPORT

Scott reviewed NARD conference resolutions.

Steve Kelley reported that the next NARD meeting will be November 8th and 9th. Steve also reviewed the status of Water Sustainability Funding.

Bruce Weise noted that Dean Edson announced his retirement at the end of the NARD meeting.

CONSIDERATION OF NEBRASKA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAM APPLICATIONS

Scott stated that the freeze in State affects funding for the NSWCP program. The District currently has \$10,915.18 in approved projects for FY 2026 which were supposed to be paid with state funds but were not paid before the freeze in funding. The Programs and Projects Committee has recommended paying the remaining approvals from this year's NRD budget. Payees would be asked to assign their payment due under the NSWCP program to the Lower Big Blue NRD. If state funds become available, the State would then be able to reimburse the NRD for the payments.

MOTION #4 was made by Ryan Birkett, seconded by Bruce Weise, to pay \$10,915.18 in approved projects from FY 2026.

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

The Programs and Projects Committee has also recommended denying FY 2027 NSWCP applications since no decision on the current injunction is expected until at least February. The District had expected to receive approximately \$85,000 in funding this year. Letters notifying applicants of the denial would be sent out next week.

MOTION #5 was made by Jason Pohlmann, seconded by Jason Sand, to deny the FY 2027 applications.

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

FY 2026 NRD TREE PROGRAM REVIEW

Adam reviewed proposed changes to the NRD tree program for FY 2027. A few species will change due to availability this year. The District will also be able to offer the 5-species acreage packages again. Adam stated that the price per tractor hour will increase from \$30.00 to \$50.00 per hour and handling will increase from \$2.20 to \$3.00. The increase in handling is due to the fact that the District has gone back to wrapping trees in paper.

MOTION #6 was made by Rod Skleba, seconded by Duane Parde, to approve the tree program for FY2027.

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

BUILDING COMMITTEE REPORT

Dean reviewed progress on the new office and shop construction. He noted that roof material for the office has been ordered and is expected October 28th.

NRD PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES REPORT

Zack has mailed letters to Phase II Operators

Scott reported on the Integrated Management Plan meeting which was held at the Lower Big Blue on October 7th

Scott noted that Tyler and Chuck, from the Nemaha NRD, have been asked to attend the Gage County Planning and Zoning meeting on October 15th to review each Districts' rules on large water users.

Pictures of structures operating following recent heavy rains were shown.

Scott reviewed Directors up for election in November.

ONE RED training meetings were discussed.

A handout of NRCS activities was given to Directors.

Adam discussed a career fair at SCC he and Scott Theis attended.

Scott noted that Nick is currently collecting nitrate samples.

Tyler stated that he overflowed the Wymore rural water tower for maintenance purposes.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- a. October 12th - Office Closed - Columbus Day
- b. November 3th – 4th - NRD Managers Meeting UNWNRD
- c. November 8th – 9th - NARD meeting
- d. November 11th - Office Closed – Veterans Day
- e. November 12th - Board Meeting 7:00 p.m.

Being no further business, Vice Chairperson Doug Stokebrand adjourned the meeting at 8:23 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 October 8, 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.

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