UPPER ELKHORN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
February 24, 2020 -- 2:30 P.M.
O’Neill, Nebraska

CALL TO ORDER, STATEMENT OF ADVERTISEMENT AND OPEN MEETING LAW NOTIFICATION:
The regular meeting of the Board of Directors was called to order. The statement of advertisement in the Holt County Independent, Rock County Leader and Neligh News were noted; and, the open meetings law posting were all noted at 2:36 P.M. by Chairman Michael Moser.

DIRECTORS PRESENT:
Gary Bartak  Kevin Blair  Mark Carpenter  Chris Dierks  Marv Fritz
Curtis Gotschall  Keith Heithoff  Ted Hughes  Gene Kelly  Michael Moser
Aaron Rice  Roy Stewart  John Vogel  Chip Whitaker

DIRECTORS ABSENT:
Jim Keller

STAFF PRESENT:
Dennis Schueth, General Manager
Joslynn Vanderslice, Water Resources Manager
Kelly Kloppenborg, Water Resources Technician
Wayne Frederick, Water Resources Technician
Brett Sholes, Agronomy Resource Technician
Beth Walsh, Information & Education Coordinator
Andrea Fisher, Administrative Assistant

GUESTS PRESENT:
Brandon Peterson – NRCS O’Neill
Amy Timmerman – UNL Extension
Connor Baldwin – Bazile Groundwater Management Project Coordinator

ADOPTION OF AGENDA:
⇒ It was moved by Chris Dierks and seconded by Curtis Gotschall to adopt the agenda. AYE: Blair, Carpenter, Dierks, Gotschall, Hughes, Moser, Rice, Stewart, Vogel & Whitaker. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT FROM VOTE: Bartak, Fritz, Heithoff, Keller & Kelly. MOTION CARRIED.

MINUTES:
The minutes of the January Meeting were reviewed by the Directors. ⇒ It was moved by Gene Kelly and seconded by Kevin Blair to approve the minutes of the January Meeting. AYE: Blair, Bartak, Carpenter, Dierks, Fritz, Gotschall, Heithoff, Hughes, Kelly, Moser, Rice, Stewart, Vogel & Whitaker. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Keller. MOTION CARRIED.

TREASURERS REPORT:
The January treasurers report was reviewed by the Directors. ⇒ It was moved by Roy Stewart and seconded by Chip Whitaker to approve the January Treasurers Report. AYE: Blair, Bartak, Carpenter, Dierks, Fritz, Gotschall, Heithoff, Hughes, Kelly, Moser, Rice, Stewart, Vogel & Whitaker. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Keller. MOTION CARRIED.
MINUTES – February 14, 2020 Policy Issues Meeting:
The minutes of the February 14, 2020 Policy Issues Meeting were reviewed by the Directors. It was moved by Curtis Gotschall and seconded by Marv Fritz to approve the minutes of the February 14, 2020 Policy Issues Meeting. AYE: Blair, Bartak, Carpenter, Dierks, Fritz, Gotschall, Heithoff, Kelly, Moser, Rice, Vogel & Whitaker. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: Hughes & Stewart. ABSENT: Keller. MOTION CARRIED. Discussion was held regarding the NRD committee structure. Board members spoke regarding past committee structure and the structure that is in place now. Just because a recommendation comes from a committee does not mean that the rest of the board can not question that recommendation or how the recommendation was arrived upon. The committee structure is designed to keep the issues and the board meetings moving forward. There also needs to be a certain amount of trust in the committees and their members.

PUBLIC FORUM-INPUT:
None

AGENCY & STAFF REPORTS:
NARD Report: Ted Hughes attended the board meeting following the NARD Legislative Conference. Ted reported that they elected new officers; allocated funds for NET and ACE Camp; discussed container trees for the tree program; possible silage bag program; contract with Embassy Suites for 2022 and 2023 legislative conference; and, approve the NARD strategic plan. Ted also reviewed the dates of upcoming activities. Following the NARD board meeting, the Risk Pool met. Ted reported that they elected officers and reviewed the financials. Right now the Risk Pool is down approximately 1 million dollars but there is enough in the reserve to manage the program. There will most likely be a premium increase for the upcoming year.


NRCS Report: Brandon Peterson’s report was mailed out prior to the board meeting. Brandon reviewed the cut-off dates for signing up for NRCS programs. They have also received a list of candidates for the Neligh and Ainsworth Soil Conservationist positions which they are hoping to fill soon. Brandon discussed the local workgroup meeting; and, another one scheduled for March 12 in Ainsworth with the Middle Niobrara NRD. He also reported that they are also reviewing the ranking criteria for the Bazile Management Area.

RC&D Report:
   North Central RC&D: No Report.
   Loup Basin RC&D: No Report.
   Northeast RC&D: No Report.

Information & Education Report: Beth Walsh’s report was mailed out in the Directors packets. Dennis Schueth spoke about the groundwater model the District borrowed from UNL which depicts groundwater movement. The display was on-hand at the KBRX Farm & Home Show with Brett Sholes demonstrating various aspects of groundwater, how it becomes contaminated and how that contamination moves through the groundwater. Brett Sholes reported that the kids were very interested in the display.

Water Resources Report: Joslynn Vanderslice’s report was mailed out in the Directors packets. Joslynn reported that that there are still approximately 1000 Phase II forms that need to be submitted. Last week the Nitrogen Certification classes were held with approximately 80 cooperators attending. UENRD staff will be meeting with Doug Hallum, Wednesday February 26, to go over the LiDAR program and information. Joslynn is also working on the Lower Platte River Basin Water Management Plan Coalition report that is due March 1. UENRD staff will also be attending the upcoming Water Conference in Kearney March 2 and 3. Brett Sholes reported on the NE Soil Health and Cover Crop conference he attended February 21 near Mead, NE.
**Bazile Groundwater Management Area Report:** Connor Baldwin, Bazile Groundwater Management Area Coordinator, attended the meeting. Connor reported on the Winter Cover Crop meeting held February 12; he also attended the NE Soil Health and Cover Crop conference; he has been meeting with cooperators to sign them up for EQIP; and, working with the Bazile Communications Team. The communications team have meetings set up March 10, 17 and 19 to promote community involvement in the Bazile Groundwater Management Area. These meetings are for public input and will be run by a facilitator who will report back to the Bazile team with their input. All three demonstration sites are being set up for the Bazile area. There is also a chance that there will be 2 grad students helping with the demo sites as well as summer interns.

**Holt County Extension Agent:** Amy Timmerman reported that Chemigation training is in full swing and listed the local training dates. She is also working with the Bazile Communications Team.

**Water Resources:** A question was asked regarding Joslynn’s report and the NRD role in reviewing Livestock applications from NDEE. Kelly Kloppenborg explained his role in reviewing the applications.

**EXCUSED ABSENCES:**

⇒ It was moved by Ted Hughes and seconded by Chip Whitaker to excuse the absence of Jim Keller. **AYE:** Blair, Bartak, Carpenter, Dierks, Fritz, Gotschall, Heithoff, Hughes, Kelly, Moser, Rice, Stewart, Vogel & Whitaker. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **ABSENT:** Keller. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Legislative, Finance and Planning:**

- **Action on Current bills and Cost Share Requests:** The Committee met prior to the Board meeting and reviewed the current bills. **⇒ It was moved by Roy Stewart and seconded by Keith Heithoff to approve the current bills for payment.** **AYE:** Blair, Bartak, Carpenter, Dierks, Fritz, Gotschall, Heithoff, Hughes, Kelly, Moser, Rice, Stewart, Vogel & Whitaker. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **ABSENT:** Keller. **MOTION CARRIED.** The committee reviewed the accounts receivable, bank statements and noted that there were not any cost share to review. The committee also reviewed their responsibilities; discussed the $5,000 purchase limit for the General Manager; and, the purchases recommended by other committees. **⇒ It was moved by Roy Stewart and seconded by Gene Kelly to change the purchase limit of the General Manager to $2,000 for any new purchases.** **AYE:** Blair, Bartak, Carpenter, Fritz, Kelly & Moser. **NAY:** Dierks, Gotschall, Heithoff, Hughes, Rice, Stewart, Vogel and Whitaker. **ABSTAIN:** None. **ABSENT:** Keller. **MOTION FAILED.** Discussion was held regarding changing the limit of the purchasing authority of the General Manager. **⇒ It was moved by Roy Stewart and seconded by Mark Carpenter to have all committee purchases go through the Legislative, Budget and Finance Committee.** **AYE:** None. **NAY:** Blair, Bartak, Carpenter, Dierks, Fritz, Gotschall, Heithoff, Hughes, Kelly, Moser, Rice, Stewart, Vogel & Whitaker. **ABSTAIN:** None. **ABSENT:** Keller. **MOTION FAILED.** Discussion was held regarding what purchases the other committees would be making without the Legislative, Budget and Finance Committees approval. The Personnel, Equipment, Promotion and Education Committee reviews equipment bids and quotes; and, the Water Resources and Watershed Committee has been involved in recommending purchases using the Natural Resources Water Quality Fund.

- **NSWCP Survey and Action:** The rankings for the UENRD NSWCP priorities were handed out to the board. These priorities were ranked earlier by the UENRD board members and compiled. **⇒ It was moved by Roy Stewart and seconded by Aaron Rice to approve the NSWCP priority ranking list.** **AYE:** Blair, Bartak, Carpenter, Dierks, Fritz, Gotschall, Heithoff, Hughes, Kelly, Moser, Rice, Stewart, Vogel & Whitaker. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **ABSENT:** Keller. **MOTION CARRIED.**
**Water Resources & Watershed:** The Committee met prior to the Board meeting.

- **Groundwater Acre Expansion/Certification/Transfer Applications:** Mark Carpenter reported that the committee received an update regarding a potential transfer submitted by a land broker; but, there has not been any paperwork submitted by the landowners. There was additional discussion regarding the transfer agreement form which will be directed back to the committee for review before the next sign-up period.

- **Andy Frey’s Irrigation Well Registration Modification (includes filling pond), SW 25-25-5:** The committee is still reviewing this issue and welcomes any input from other board members.

- **Mark Carpenter** also brought up the possible certification of irrigated acres by a landowner who has acres being watered by a neighbor.

**COALITION/TASK FORCE UPDATE:**

- **Niobrara River Basin Alliance:** Dennis Schueth passed out information he received from Jeff Fassett regarding the purchase of NPPDs water right on the Niobrara River near Spencer.

- **Lower Platte River Basin Water Management Plan Coalition:** The annual report for the coalition is due March 1.

- **Nebraska Habitat Conservation Coalition (Piping Plover):** No Report.

- **Nebraska Ground Water Management Coalition:** No Report

**ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT:**

Dennis Schueth’s report was mailed out in the Director’s packets and a copy is kept on file at the NRD office. Dennis noted that Mark Carpenter did not file for his board seat in Subdistrict 5 which takes up the northern two townships in Antelope County and a small area of Holt county between Page and Ewing. The deadline for non-incumbents to file for this subdistrict is March 2.

**MARCH BOARD MEETING:**

The next Upper Elkhorn NRD Board Meeting will be held on March 23, 2020 at 2:30 PM.

⇒ It was moved by Gene Kelly and seconded by Ted Hughes to adjourn at 4:31 PM. **AYE:** Blair, Bartak, Carpenter, Dierks, Fritz, Gotschall, Heithoff, Hughes, Kelly, Moser, Rice, Stewart, Vogel & Whitaker. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **ABSENT:** Keller. **MOTION CARRIED.**

I, the undersigned Chairman of the Upper Elkhorn Natural Resources District hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the proceedings had and done by the Board of Directors on February 24, 2020 that all of the subjects included in the foregoing proceedings were contained in the agenda for at least twenty-four hours prior to said meeting, the minutes of the Chairman and the Board were in written form and available for public inspection within ten working days and prior to the next convened meeting of said body, that all news media requesting notification of the time and place of said meeting and the subjects to be discussed at said meeting.

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Gene Kelly, Secretary/Treasurer