

LOWER LOUP NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

April 23, 2015

Ord, Nebraska

The April meeting of the Board of Directors of the Lower Loup Natural Resources District was held at the Headquarters Office, 2620 Airport Drive, Ord, Nebraska, on April 23, 2015. Chairman Kruse called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Directors in attendance

James C. Adams
Darwin B. Anderson, Secretary
Beth Boesch
James J. Eschliman
N. Richard Hadenfeld
Clifford P. Loseke
James C. Nelson
Dean J. Rasmussen
Dean G. Thede

Rollie D. Amsberry, Treasurer
Timothy E. Bartak
Joseph L. Citta, Jr., Vice Chairman
Virgil W. Gellermann
Gary A. Kruse, Chairman
Matt Lukasiewicz
Alan D. Petersen
Gerald P. Smith
Henry J. Thoene

Directors absent

Michael P. Gutzmer
Darwin R. Sieh

Randy Kauk

Staff in attendance

Leon "Butch" Koehlmoos, General Manager
Irene F. Kreifels, Financial Secretary
Larry D. Schultz, I&E Coordinator
Dell Harris, Water Resources Specialist

Russell G. Callan, Assistant General Manager
Rita A. Goldfish, Administrative Assistant
Richard L. Woollen, District Forester
Jason Moudry, Water Programs Specialist

Guests in attendance

Bryce Bauer, LDC, NRCS, Ord
Joe Mangiamelli, Columbus City Admin.
Eugene Bredthauer, Ord

Mike Winter, Downey Drilling, Lexington
Rick Bogus, Columbus City Engineer

NOTICE OF OPEN MEETING LAW POSTING

Chairman Kruse referred those in attendance to the open meeting law information posted in the Board room.

APPROVAL OF VERIFICATION OF MEETING NOTICE, ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND EXCUSED ABSENCES

Chairman Kruse asked for verification of the meeting notice. General Manager Leon “Butch” Koehlmoos verified that the meeting notices were properly published in all newspapers and that the meeting notice was also posted at the NRD Headquarters office in Ord, the NRD web site, and the eight field office locations. Koehlmoos said there were no modifications to the agenda.

Boesch motioned, seconded by Loseke, to approve the verification of the meeting notice, adopt the agenda, and excuse all absent directors. Motion carried by roll call vote, all present voting yes.

MINUTES

Chairman Kruse asked for corrections and/or additions to the March 26, 2015, Board meeting minutes. None being heard, Chairman Kruse ruled the March 26, 2015, minutes stand approved as submitted.

TREASURER’S REPORT

Chairman Kruse directed the Board’s attention to the Treasurer’s Report as published in the regular and supplemental agendas.

Koehlmoos reported on expenditures for a Chevy Suburban. He said a payment to JEO Consulting Group was for the South Loup study, and reminded the Board that the first stakeholders group meeting for the project would be May 5th in Callaway. He directed the Board to a payment to Gene’s Electric for electrical work at Davis Creek Recreation Area and to Olsson Associates, Inc. for work on the Pibel Lake project. He said RFPs for the rec area picnic shelters had gone out and Naprstek said that the 404 permit for the Pibel Lake project had been received. Koehlmoos said that a payment to USGS was for work on the ELM project. He said that there would be a delay in receiving the final report due to USGS staffing issues.

Koehlmoos directed the Board to an advertising flyer for NRD vehicles, which are to be sold by sealed bid.

Eschliman motioned, seconded by Smith, to approve the April 2015, Treasurer’s Report and pay all bills. Motion carried by roll call vote, all present voting yes.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There was no public comment.

FORESTER'S REPORT

District Forester Rich Woollen directed the Board to his written report in the agenda and then provided a power point presentation on the conservation tree program and the community forestry program.

Loseke asked how many plantings get drip irrigation and Woollen said the bulk do. Gellermann asked if a well permit was required for drip irrigation and Koehlmoos said no, as they are low capacity wells.

NRCS REPORT

Bryce Bauer reported that a special code had been developed for cost-share for tree planting in the Lower Loup NRD. He said that plantings will be reviewed on a random basis and checks will be done on sites with previous issues. He said that compliance checks would be done across the NRD. He said that sodbust sites would be re-examined for compliance in the coming weeks. He said that Dave Reilly had been named the Resource Conservationist for the Fullerton office and a job announcement was being posted for a technician position.

Thoene asked if a new program was being developed for reclamation pits and Bauer said that there wasn't. Koehlmoos said that there was an area of the rainwater basin under the AWEP program that might have funding.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION REPORT

State Envirothon

Information & Education Coordinator Larry Schultz reported that the State Envirothon would be held on April 29, 2015, at Camp Comeca near Cozad. A team from Boone Central was the lone qualifier from the Lower Loup NRD and the District had paid their entry fee. He said that he had volunteered to help with the contest.

Children's Groundwater Festival

Schultz said he would be doing the Water Drop Relay at the Groundwater Festival on May 12th at Central Community College and College Park in Grand Island. He said that the activity teaches students the water cycle.

Quarterly I&E Meeting

Schultz reported that he had attended the quarterly meeting of statewide I&E staff at Papio-Missouri River NRD in Omaha. He said the group elected Dave Wolfe of North Platte NRD as the group's new chairman.

CITY OF COLUMBUS-COLUMBUS LEVEE PROPOSAL

City Administrator Joe Mangiamelli and City Engineer Rick Bogus provided the Board with a presentation on the Columbus Levee. Mangiamelli said that FEMA required an assessment of the levee to make sure they met the agency's requirements. He said that work on the levee needs to be done to meet those standards, from adding just a few inches of earth upwards to 16 to 18 additional inches. He said that the US Army Corps of Engineers then required a full environmental assessment. He said that created additional delays and it is now being reviewed in Washington, D.C.

Mangiamelli said that the city has spent approximately \$900,000 in engineering and consulting fees. He said the scope of the project was increased to include replacement of existing toe drains. He said the cost of the project has increased from \$2 million to over \$3.3 million in construction costs. He said there were another \$325,000 in engineering and \$90,000 for testing. He said the total project cost is now expected to hit \$4.6 million. He said there would be no federal or state aid available for the project.

Mangiamelli said that 30 to 35 percent of the community was protected by the levee. He said that the original levee was built by the US Army Corps of Engineers. Smith asked if the levee would be extended and Mangiamelli said it would not. Mangiamelli said that the project would not likely begin until 2016 and be completed in 2017. Gellermann asked how much dirt would be needed and Mangiamelli said 60,000 cubic yards would be needed. Koehlmoos referred the Board to the supplemental agenda and excerpts from the Board minutes showing previous actions on the levee. The Board had previously committed \$600,000, but that funding had since expired. Mangiamelli said the city would pay for the project using sales tax funds. Kruse said that any action would take place at the May meeting. Koehlmoos said there would be no budget issues from participating in the project.

2015 STATIC SWL REPORT

Assistant General Manager Russell Callan told the Board that the average district groundwater level had fallen 0.01 of a foot. He said that the static water levels had flattened out and he hoped to see a rebound in the future. He reviewed each of the water quantity areas and discussed the trends. He said that Area 7 and 8 were areas of concern, with the last readings in Area 7 about five feet below the 1982 baseline. Koehlmoos said that, when compared to other states in the High Plains Aquifer, the declines in Nebraska are slight.

Loseke asked why 1982 was used and Callan said that it was the year set as the baseline for groundwater levels by the Board. Callan said that Smith was compiling trend data for each of the wells that were sampled.

Callan directed the Board to the NRD web site, where a page on the South Loup River Project had been established. Koehlmoos asked how many stakeholders had been identified and Naprstek said there were 42.

ASSISTANT MANAGER'S REPORT

Water Resources Committee

Sargent Irrigation District Recharge Project

Callan told the Board that staff had discussed the project with irrigation district officials and asked them what it might cost to maintain water in the system for recharge. He said that it was estimated to cost about \$100,000, including bringing the canal up to date, chemicals for weed control, salary for a ditch rider, and other expenses. He said many of the costs would be one-time expenses. Callan said that estimates suggested about 5,000 acre feet of recharge at an annual cost of \$50,000, or about \$10 an acre foot for the water. He said that the Water Resources Committee recommended moving forward with the project. Lukasiewicz said that a study will provide data on the impact of the proposal as well as the optimum timing for it. Loseke asked if the NRD would pay the total cost and Callan said it would, in the area of \$40,000 to \$50,000 in all.

Lukasiewicz motioned, seconded by Thoene, that the NRD move forward with the Sargent Irrigation District Recharge Project study and engineering for the Sargent Irrigation District Recharge Project. Motion carried by roll call vote, all present voting yes.

New Irrigated Acres Development

Callan told the Board that the Water Resources Committee had asked staff to compile data on high water level areas where potential irrigation could be allowed. He said that Naprstek had begun putting information together on static water levels, stream gauge data, and non-irrigated acres in those areas.

Columbus Area Water Assessment

Callan said that the contracts with HDR, the consultant for the project, had been received. He said he planned to meet with the Christopher Cove Association on May 3rd. He said that staff would meet with Columbus officials and HDR to discuss the study.

Stakeholders Meeting

Callan said that he and Naprstek provided the stakeholders group with presentations on the NRD's water management efforts. He said that the group was led through some small group sessions by Karen Griffin of Olsson Associates. He provided the Board with the presentation he gave at the stakeholders meeting.

District Court Update

Koehlmoos said that the NRD's attorney indicated he expected a ruling favorable to the district in the Koch matter. He said that the final determination had not yet been made in the Prokop case.

Variance Committee

Callan told the Board that staff had met with Mike Pandorf and were able to reach agreement with him on the transfer of irrigated acres without Committee or Board action.

He said that the Committee recommended approval of the variance request from Rod Psota to transfer the consumptive use of 80 acres to be spread over 130 acres as a 5-year test project between Psota and the NRD.

Hadenfeldt motioned, seconded by Amsberry, to approve the Psota Consumptive Use Project and to approve the contract for the project. Motion carried by roll call vote. Directors voting yes: Adams, Amsberry, Anderson, Bartak, Boesch, Citta, Eschliman, Gellermann, Hadenfeldt, Kruse, Loseke, Nelson, Petersen, Rasmussen, Smith, Thoene. Directors voting no: Lukasiewicz, Thede. Directors absent: Gutzmer, Kauk, Sieh.

PROGRAMS/PROJECTS COMMITTEE REPORT

City of St. Paul - Northwest Drainage Ditch

Koehlmoos said that the drainage issue in northwest St. Paul had been tabled until May.

City of Columbus Levee

Koehlmoos said the levee matter would be brought to the full Board at the May meeting.

Columbus Area Assessment

Koehlmoos said that the matter was discussed with the city administrator and engineer at the Committee meeting. He said that they discussed the data needs and the wellhead protection area. He said that the city would not be eligible for cost-share for the wellhead area.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Litigation Update

Koehlmoos said the matter had been discussed earlier in the meeting.

2015 Legislation

He said that there was no natural resources legislation to report.

New Hires

Koehlmoos said that tree planting help, Zach Wilson, Christy Berghorst, and Nick Ray, had been hired for limited time work.

Non-action Reports

There was no report.

NARD REPORT

Director's Report

Rasmussen said he had a list of legislation if anyone was interested in the bills being followed by NARD. He said that the NARD Board would not meet until June.

NRC REPORT

Commissioner's Report

Hadenfeldt said that the group would meet in June. He said he has received no feedback regarding the new rules for funding. He said that a final decision on the rules would not be likely until the June meeting.

RC&D REPORTS

Loup Basin RC&D

Rasmussen reported that he and Schultz attended the Ord FFA banquet. He said that the RC&D met at the Country Neighbor restaurant on Tuesday. Rasmussen said that the RC&D would move to its new building in Burwell on May 1st. He said that there was a presentation from the Pawnee Arts Center in Dannebrog. He said that the RC&D would approve membership from Boone, Nance and Platte Counties if those counties chose to join.

PrairieLand RC&D

Gellermann reported that PrairieLand RC&D approved transfers of memberships and discussed closing out the RC&D. He said it would end its non-profit status as soon as allowed. Eschliman asked if the county board would have to approve a change in membership and Gellermann said it would.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Koehlmoos reminded the Board of the South Loup River Project stakeholders meeting on May 5th in Callaway.

Koehlmoos said that the Water Resources Committee and the Programs/Projects Committee would continue to meet on the third Tuesday of each month.

Koehlmoos said that Anderson has been attending the Weed Management Group meetings in Wahoo and that group is interested in weed reconnaissance work on tributaries of the Loup River, including Beaver Creek, Cedar River and others.

Koehlmoos said that planning is underway for a meeting with DNR to lay out the framework for the integrated management plan.

Kruse said the paper agenda is being delayed by the US Mail service. Koehlmoos suggested relying on the electronic version being sent out by Schultz.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Board, Chairman Kruse declared the meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Roster for attendance of this meeting and tally of votes cast on motions at this meeting are being filed with the official minutes of this meeting at the Lower Loup Natural Resources District's Headquarters Office, 2620 Airport Drive, Ord, Nebraska. Publication notification of this meeting was made via a newspaper in each county within the District. The next Board of Directors meeting will be held Thursday, May 28, 2015, at 5:00 p.m., at the Headquarters Office in Ord, Nebraska.

Darwin B. Anderson
Secretary