

**Minutes of the
Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District
Committee of the Whole**

Thursday, February 8, 2024 – 7:00 p.m.

Lower Elkhorn NRD

1508 Square Turn Blvd, Norfolk, Nebraska

Chairman Roger Gustafson informed the Board and those attending of the Publication of Meeting Notice in the Norfolk Daily News on February 2, 2024, and of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act information posted on the wall.

Directors in attendance were Jerry Allemann, Jim Aschoff, Mark Burenheide, Scott Clausen, Michael Fleer, Roger Gustafson, Mark Hall, Kris Loberg, Gary Loftis, Matt Steffen, Melissa Temple, Anthony Wisnieski, and Rod Zohner. Directors Chad Korth and Jay Reikofski were absent.

1. Statement of Public Notice of Meeting and Posted Nebraska Open Meetings Act Information
- Chairman Roger Gustafson

2. Water Resources

- a. Proposed Amendments to the Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources Districts Rules and Regulations for the Management of Groundwater – District staff will review proposed changes and will discuss possible options for the scheduling of a public hearing.

General Manager Brian Bruckner reviewed some proposed changes to the District’s Rules and Regulations, which were initiated by action of the Board in the Fall of 2023. Along with a handful of minor amendments, changes are being proposed to the document to allow flexibility in consideration of new irrigated acres in the LENRD Quantity Management Subareas.

Recommended Motion: To approve the proposed amendments to the Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District Rules and Regulations for the Management of Groundwater as presented by District staff and to instruct staff to schedule and advertise for a Public Hearing to be conducted on March 28, 2024 to receive testimony from the public on the proposed changes.

- b. Report of Geographic Distribution of Standard Variances to Expand Irrigated Acres for the November 2023 Signup Period – A map showing the locations of variance applications, both approved and denied, will be provided by District staff.

Water Resources Manager Josh Schnitzler displayed a geographic distribution map of the locations associated with Standard Variance applications that were processed as part of the November 2023 sign-up period for new groundwater irrigated acres.

3. Projects and Programs

a. Discussion on District Conservation Cost-Share Program

1. Discussion on possible modifications to District Cover Crop Program Guidelines – Assistant General Manager Curt Becker presented potential changes to the District’s Cover Crop Program Guidelines.

Recommended Motion: To approve changes to the Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District’s Cover Crop Program Guidelines as presented by Staff.

2. Discussion on potential development of a cost-share practice or program for installation of Y- drop equipment on implements for the implementation of later season side-dress applications of fertilizer - The Committee had discussions about possible options for a new Y-drop Equipment cost-share program.
3. Discussion on modifications to the dam renovation practice and/or potential development of a dam renovation program - Possible changes may include more assistance for dam renovations.
4. Discussion on potential modifications to the chemigation cost-share program – Discussions focused on potential changes on cost-share coverage for producers.
5. Discussion on potential modifications to the reverse osmosis system cost-share program – Modifications to the reverse osmosis system cost-share were discussed.
6. Discussion on development of a potential soil health and/or alternate cropping system cost-share program – The Committee had discussions about a cost-share program to incentivize the incorporation of a crop other than corn or soybeans into a producer’s crop rotation.

4. Election of Past Chairman Position

Nominated for the Past Chairman position were Gary Loftis and Anthony Wisnieski. After ballots were gathered and counted; it was announced that Director Anthony Wisnieski was elected for the Past Chairman position for 2024. (Wisnieski – 10, Loftis - 3)

Meeting adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Others Present: Loren Bosler and Keith Dittrich