

**Minutes of
Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District
Committee of the Whole Meeting
Thursday, November 9, 2023 at 7:00 pm
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 November 1, 2023, 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 Fler, Roger Gustafson, Mark Hall, Kris Loberg, Gary Loftis, Jay Reikofski, Matt Steffen, Melissa Temple, Anthony Wisnieski, and Rod Zohner. Director Chad Korth was absent.

1. Projects and Programs

- a. Community Forestry Program and Forestry Incentive for Public Facilities Applications for Fiscal Year 2025 – Todd Stewart, LENRD Resources Technician, gave a report and answered Director questions on both programs which included history of the programs, current applications, and the requested funding for the Fiscal Year 2025.

Recommended Motion: To approve ten Community Forestry Program and one Forestry Incentive for Public Facilities applications for a total LENRD cost of \$29,644.89, as presented.

- b. Maskenthine Recreation Area Campground Electrical Upgrade Bids – The bid opening for this project was held on November 2nd. Recreation Area Superintendent Tyler Warren presented the three bids that were received. Bids were below previous projected costs. The upgrade will enable all electrical pedestals in the Maskenthine campground to have 50, 30, and 20 amp receptacles.

Recommended Motion: To authorize staff to proceed with the Maskenthine Recreation Area campground electrical upgrade, and to accept the \$145,569.42 bid from JP Electric Inc. to complete the upgrade.

- c. Maskenthine Hydrant Replacement – Recreation Area Superintendent Tyler Warren presented bids for hydrant replacement in the Maskenthine Recreation Area. The self-draining spigots will require less maintenance and allow for a longer camping season in the park. Bid packages were sent out and two bids were received for the project.

Recommended Motion: To authorize staff to proceed with the Maskenthine Recreation Area hydrant replacements, and to accept the \$14,688.00 bid from Volkman Plumbing and Heating Inc. to complete the replacements.

- d. North Fork Elkhorn River Watershed Plan / Environmental Assessment Update – Projects / Assistant Manager Curt Becker gave an update on the recent open house public meetings that were held on November 6th in Osmond and November 8th in Pierce. Becker informed the committee that we had 67 attendees sign in at the Osmond meeting with 18 comment forms completed. The Pierce Meeting had 54 attendees sign in with 15 comment forms completed. The comments varied greatly.

2. Water Resources

- a. 2023 Fall Static Water Levels – District staff have collected static water level measurements from the LENRD Observation Well Network. Water Resources Technician Dallas Dorey provided a summary report regarding the static water levels that have been collected from the LENRD Observation Well Network in October of 2023. These observations are influenced by any number of factors and therefore are not utilized as information points for any regulatory activity within the District. However, they are interesting pieces of information to use for comparisons, especially as they relate to pumping seasons with similar climatic observations. Overall, the report showed that impacts to groundwater supplies are geographically variable, but that the measured declines are somewhat comparable to irrigation seasons with similar weather patterns. Collection of groundwater elevations will occur again in the Spring of 2024 and are a more reliable bellwether of groundwater supplies in the LENRD.
- b. LENRD Domestic Well Testing Program – In the fall of 2022, the LENRD allocated resources to establish a program that provides assistance to owners of registered domestic wells for evaluating water quality. Julia Polt, LENRD Water Resources Technician, provided the Board with a PowerPoint presentation on the program, which was first established in the Fall of 2022. Domestic wells are analyzed for the presence of nitrate, bacteria, and for the presence of herbicide residue compounds which includes glyphosate. Julia also provided information about the financial assistance programs provided by the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy and the LENRD to owners of domestic wells for the installation of a reverse osmosis treatment system. The LENRD has been working to help well owners complete the necessary steps to make them eligible for the funding, and some well owners have capitalized on this effort. District staff continue to promote the program, and provide sampling assistance, in an effort to ensure that private well owners have a safe and reliable source of drinking water.
- c. Update on LENRD Standard Variance sign-up period which opened November 1, 2023 - Water Resources Coordinator Josh Schnitzler provided an update to the Committee regarding the Standard Variance sign-up period. Application materials have been available since November 1st and several staff members are assisting applicants with inquiries.

3. Administrative

- a. Financial Policy Change – The District proposed a modification to Section 5 of the

Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District Expenditure of Funds Financial Operating Policy. A change to the District's fuel credit card provider is being explored. The new provider would require the District to pay its monthly statement using an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). Current policy limits ACH / EFT disbursements to federal or state payments, or for payments of utilities and telephone claims.

Recommended motion: To approve the updated Lower Elkhorn NRD Expenditure of Funds Financial Operating Policy.