

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

Thursday, April 11, 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 April 5, 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, Chad Korth, Gary Loftis, Jay Reikofski, Matt Steffen, Melissa Temple, Anthony Wisnieski, and Rod Zohner. Directors Mark Hall and Kris Loberg were absent from the meeting.

1. Projects and Programs

- a. City of Wayne Prairie Park Project Discussion – Wayne, Nebraska City Administrator Wes Blecke gave the Board a review on the project which is located on around 45 acres in the southeast part of Wayne. The project began in 2013 and will include a small lake, soccer fields, camping pads, playground equipment, shower house, and various other recreational opportunities. The city of Wayne is requesting \$250,000 dollars in funding from the LENRD.

Recommended Motion: To recommend that the LENRD support the City of Wayne Prairie Park Project at the requested amount of \$250,000. Funding will be provided in one yearly payment per year for three years as follows: \$85,000 in FY 2025, \$85,000 in FY 2026, and \$80,000 in FY 2027.

- b. Urban Conservation Assistance and Recreation Area Development Program Applications – A review of the applications received requesting cost share from the NRD was given.

Recommended Motion: To approve the Recreation Area Development Program applications as recommended by staff.

- c. Long Range Plan Pages- Assistant Manager Curt Becker presented the following Fiscal Year 2025 Long Range Plan Pages: Wildlife Habitat, Agroforestry Incentives Program, Conservation Tree Program, Erosion and Sediment Control Act & Well Sealing Program, and Recreation Area Development and Conservation Assistance Programs.

2. Water Resources

- a. Discussion on Supplemental Wells – Water Resources Manager Josh Schnitzler led the discussion on producers wanting to install additional wells on acres currently certified as irrigated. The issue came up during the Standard Variance sign-up in November of 2023. A handful of producers had one well irrigating two quarters and wanted to apply for another well. Although both quarters were certified, the Variance application scoring process counts the acres associated with the requested well as if they were requested acres, lowering the total variance score. Staff will work to develop a protocol for allowing supplemental wells and report back to the board at a future date.
- b. Update on testimony received during the Lower Elkhorn NRD Groundwater Management Area Rules & Regulations Public Hearing held on March 28, 2024 - Letters were presented from both the Department of Natural Resources and the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy. While the DNR had no comment to the proposed changes, the NDEE supports the LENRD's efforts in modifications to the Phase II, III, and IV area requirements. The main focus of the change was to modify Rule 17 which currently does not allow for flexibility to add new irrigated acres in the LENRD Quantity Subareas. Staff also discussed additional changes to help better define certain definitions.

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 issue and publicize an Order of Designation.

- c. Pierce County Pilot Project Discussion – Staff gave a review to the Board of the an original motion made in 2018 in regard to the Schmidt Pilot Research Project. Staff was made aware that the Exactrix Tapps equipment utilized by Schmidt Pilot Research Project was being used on more fields than what was originally presented in 2018. Staff will work with the Schmit brothers to know which farms their equipment is being used on as well as adding additional sampling events on those fields.
- d. Long Range Plan Pages – Water Resources Manager Josh Schnitzler presented the following Fiscal Year 2025 Long Range Plan Pages: Groundwater Quantity Monitoring Program, Groundwater Management Area, District Wellhead Protection Program, Chemigation Program, Public Water Supply Test Well Cost-Share, Water Resources Planning Program, and the Stream Gage Program.

3. Administrative

- a. Information and Education Long Range Plan Pages - Communications Specialist Liz Lienemann presented Fiscal Year 2025 Long Range Plan Pages for Public Outreach, Water Resources Advertising and Education, Youth and Adult Education,

Forestry Advertising and Education, the Scholarship Program, Outdoor Classroom Grants, and the District Awards Program.

The meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Others present: Bob Herchenbach