

LITTLE BLUE NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
Minutes **January 16, 2024**

CALL MEETING TO ORDER – Alan Wiedel

The Directors of the Little Blue Natural Resources District met in regular session on Tuesday, January 16, 2024 at the Little Blue Natural Resources District Office, Davenport, Nebraska. Chairman Wiedel called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Wiedel led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL OF DIRECTORS

Directors Present: Glen Bonifas, Glen Bredthauer, Bill Glenn, Jessi Hoefl, Mason Hoffman, Brent Hoops, Alan Kenning, Courtney Luebben, Jay Meyer, Russ Ochsner, Lyle Schroer, Steve Shaw, Warren Taylor, Jesse VonSpreckelsen and Alan Wiedel.

Directors Absent: Kyle Knight and Aaron Paus.

Others Present: Scott Nelson, Tyler Goeschel, Marie Herbek, Kevin Orvis, Jessica Hedges; Janet Valasek, NRCS; Don Blankenau, legal counsel.

Wiedel noted that a copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act was posted and available for anyone who may want to review the document.

PUBLICATIONS OF BOARD MEETING NOTICE

Nelson announced the official district publications for notices. Legal notice of the regular meeting was provided to the *FAIRBURY JOURNAL NEWS* and the *HASTINGS TRIBUNE*. The agenda was sent to all board members, radio, television and newspapers in the district and posted at the NRCS offices in the district and the Little Blue NRD office.

ACTION TO ADOPT BOARD MEETING AGENDA

MOTION # 1 – Hoffman moved, seconded by Bredthauer to approve the agenda for the January 16, 2024 meeting as presented. Carried by roll call vote – 15 yes votes.

ACTION TO APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Acceptance of Board Member Absences: Knight and Paus notified the office of their intended absence.

Approval of Minutes of December 12th, 2023 Board Meeting: There were no changes to the minutes.

Approval of Certified Acres: There were no changes to certified acres to report.

MOTION # 2 – Luebben moved, seconded by Ochsner to approve the absence of Knight and Paus and the minutes of the December 12, 2023 meeting, as circulated. Carried by roll call vote – 15 yes votes.

TREASURERS REPORTS – Bill Glenn

Copies of the Little Blue NRD Treasurer's Report were circulated. Glenn reviewed the report. **MOTION # 3 - Glenn moved, seconded by Ochsner to approve the report as presented.** Carried by roll call vote – 15 yes votes.

Glenn reviewed the Little Blue Public Water Project - North Treasurer's Report. **MOTION # 4 - Glenn moved, seconded by Kenning to approve the report as presented.** Carried by roll call vote – 15 yes votes.

Glenn reviewed the Little Blue Public Water Project - South Treasurer's Report. **MOTION # 5 - Glenn moved, seconded by Taylor to approve the report as presented.** Carried by roll call vote – 15 yes votes.

AGENCY REPORTS

NRCS Report – Janet Valasek: Valasek gave a brief report on happenings at the NRCS.

NARD Report – Mason Hoffman: Hoffman reported the Legislative Conference will be held January 24 – 25 in Lincoln. Hoffman reviewed some bills that are being considered during the legislative session.

SENATOR HALLORAN’S REQUEST TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

Senator Halloran gave a report on the EpicOption bill he has co-sponsored and answered questions.

DISTRICT APPOINTMENTS

Action to Select Auditor: The District’s contract with Schulz & Associates P.C. to conduct the annual audit of the District and Rural Water Projects expired in 2023. Schulz & Associates P.C, submitted a bid to conduct the district’s audit in 2024. **MOTION # 6 – Bonifas moved, seconded by VonSpreckelsen to accept the bid from Schulz & Associates P.C. to conduct the district’s F.Y. 2024 audit in the amount of \$ 9,750.** Carried by roll call vote – 15 yes votes.

Action to Select District’s Legal Counsel: Nelson reported the district currently uses Don Blankenau as legal counsel. **MOTION # 7 – Ochsner moved, seconded by Hoffman to approve Don Blankenau as legal counsel for the district.** Carried by roll call vote – 15 yes votes.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee met prior to the regular meeting.

Nominations Report and Election of 2024 Board Officers and Representatives

The Nominations Committee –Courtney Luebben, Aaron Paus and Alan Kenning met to select candidates for Board positions for the year 2024.

The Committee proposed the names of Alan Wiedel and Jesse VonSpreckelsen for the position of Board Chairman. Wiedel asked for further nominations from the floor. No additional nominations were received, nominations ceased, a ballot vote was taken. Wiedel – 9 votes, VonSpreckelsen – 6 votes. Wiedel was declared Chairman.

The Committee proposed the names of Brent Hoops and Jesse VonSpreckelsen for the position of Vice-Chairman. Wiedel asked for further nominations from the floor. No additional nominations were received, nominations ceased, a ballot vote was taken. Hoops – 4 votes, VonSpreckelsen – 11 votes. VonSpreckelsen was declared Vice-Chairman.

The Committee proposed the names of Jay Meyer and Courtney Lubben for the position of Secretary. Wiedel asked for further nominations from the floor. No additional nominations were received, nominations ceased, a ballot vote was taken. Meyer – 8 votes, Luebben – 7 votes. Meyer was declared Secretary.

The Committee proposed the name of Bill Glenn for the position of Treasurer. Wiedel asked for further nominations from the floor. No additional nominations were received, nominations ceased. By unanimous consent Glenn was declared Treasurer.

The Committee proposed the name of Mason Hoffman for the position of NARD Representative. Wiedel asked for further nominations from the floor. No additional nominations were received, nominations ceased. By unanimous consent Hoffman was declared NARD Representative.

The Committee proposed the name of Alan Kenning for the position of alternate NARD Representative. Wiedel asked for further nominations from the floor. No additional nominations were received, nominations ceased. By unanimous consent Kenning was declared alternate NARD Representative.

Action to Authorize Signatures for Banking Activities: No action was needed since no changes were made to the Executive Committee.

Appointment of Voting Delegate for NARD Legislative Conference: Hoffman will be the voting delegate for the NARD conference as the district's NARD representative.

Board Member Standing Committee Selections: Wiedel requested all members to submit a preference of what standing committee they would like to serve on to him. The proposed committee list will be presented at the February meeting.

Discussion/Action on Proposed Changes to 414(h) Retirement Plan: Discussion on proposed changes to the NARD (414) Retirement Plan was held at the December, 2023 meeting, staff was directed to gather additional information. **MOTION # 8 – Wiedel moved, seconded by Hoffman to not approve changes to the NARD 414(h) retirement Plan.** Carried by roll call vote. Yes: Bonifas, Bredthauer, Glenn, Hoeft, Hoops, Kenning, Luebben, Meyer, Ochsner, Schroer, Shaw, Taylor and Wiedel. No: Hoffman and VonSpreckelsen.

Discuss Plans for General Manager Performance Evaluation: Wiedel explained the process to complete the general manager's performance evaluation.

Other Business: There was no other business.

WATER RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The Water Resources Committee met prior to the regular meeting.

Action to Approve Board Resolution for WaterSmart Grant Application: A resolution to submit an application for a WaterSmart grant was submitted for approval. **MOTION # 9 – Hoops moved, seconded by Hoffman to approve the Resolution of the Little Blue NRD application for the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation WaterSmart grant and authorize its signature.** Carried by roll call vote – 15 yes votes.

Discussion and Possible Action for Non-Compliance of Annual Pumpage Reports: A list was created of producers who are in non-compliance in submitting their pumpage reports to the district. **MOTION # 10 – Hoops moved, seconded by Bredthauer to authorize legal counsel to send a Notice of Intent of a Cease-and-Desist Order for non-compliance of annual pumpage reports.** Carried by roll call vote – 15 yes votes.

Discussion/Action to Consider Increasing Cost Share for Water Meter Repair: Due to the increased cost of repairing flow meters staff recommended increasing the district’s meter repair cost share. **MOTION # 11 – Hoops moved, seconded by Shaw to approve proposed changes to the meter repair policy.** Carried by roll call vote – 15 yes votes.

Discussion/Action for Setting a Public Hearing Date for Potential Groundwater Rule Changes: No action was taken as further discussion is necessary.

Consideration of District Groundwater Transfer: A Transfer Permit for the Little NRD Blue Rural Water Projects was presented for approval. **MOTION # 12 – Hoops moved, seconded by Hoffman to approve the Permit to Transfer Groundwater for the Little Blue NRD Rural Water Project.** Carried by roll call vote. Yes: Bonifas, Bredthauer, Hoeft, Hoffman, Hoops, Kenning, Luebben, Meyer, Ochsner, Schroer, Shaw, Taylor, VonSpreckelsen and Wiedel. Abstain: Glenn.

Other Business: There was no other business.

PROJECTS AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Projects and Planning Committee met prior to the regular meeting.

Review/Approve Bids for Cropland Lease at Prairie Lake Recreation Area: The lease agreement for the cropland at Prairie Lake expired in 2023, bids were accepted for a new lease. **MOTION # 13 – Luebben moved, seconded by VonSpreckelsen to approve Ben Trausch’s bid for 29 acres at Prairie Lake Property at \$186/acre with a lump sum of \$5,394.** Carried by roll call vote – 15 yes votes.

Discussion/Action on Land Rights for Little Blue Public Water Project: Land rights for the Little Blue Public Water Project was presented for approval.

MOTION # 14 – Luebben moved, seconded by VonSpreckelsen to approve the Deed of Property Easement for Access and Use of Groundwater with William R and Mary L Glenn and authorize its signature. Carried by roll call vote. Yes: Bonifas, Bredthauer, Hoeft, Hoffman, Hoops, Kenning, Luebben, Meyer, Ochsner, Paus, Schroer, Shaw, Taylor, VonSpreckelsen and Wiedel. Abstain: Glenn.

MOTION # 15 – Luebben moved, seconded by Ochsner to approve the Land Purchase Agreement with Fred C. Kujath Trust and authorize its signature. Carried by role call vote – 15 yes votes.

MOTION # 16 – Luebben moved, seconded by Shaw to approve the Right of Way Easement with Kaptle Inc and authorize its signature. Carried by roll call vote – 15 yes votes.

MOTION # 17 – Luebben moved, seconded by Hoffman to approve the Right of Way Easement with Leslie B. and Judy K Elder and authorize its signature. Carried by roll call vote – 15 yes votes.

Other Business: There was no other business.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

OTHER BUSINESS

Hoefl mentioned there may be a Q & A session held in Hastings to educate the public about the NRD and what the director's responsibilities are.

Discussion was held on the policies for NRD's to hold virtual board meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

Wiedel adjourned the meeting at 8:45 P.M.

COUNTY OF THAYER)
)
STATE OF NEBRASKA)

I, the undersigned, Secretary of the Little Blue Natural Resources District, hereby certify that these are true and correct minutes of the meeting of the Board of Directors of the District held on January 16, 2024, that all of the subjects discussed at the meeting were contained in the agenda for the meeting, kept continually current and readily available for public inspection at the principal office of the District during normal business hours, and except for items of an emergency nature, the agenda was not altered later than twenty-four (24) hours before the scheduled commencement of the meeting; that a copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act was posted and available to the public; that at least one copy of all reproducible material discussed at the meeting was available at the meeting for examination and copying by members of the public; that the minutes were in written form and available for public inspection within ten working days and prior to the next convened meeting of said body; and, that all news media requesting notification of the meeting of said body were provided advance notification of the time and place of said meeting and the subjects to be discussed at said meeting.
