

LITTLE BLUE NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
Minutes **April 9, 2024**

CALL MEETING TO ORDER – Alan Wiedel

The Directors of the Little Blue Natural Resources District met in regular session on Tuesday, April 9, 2024 at the Little Blue Natural Resources District Office, Davenport, Nebraska. Chairman Wiedel called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Wiedel led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL OF DIRECTORS

Directors Present: Glen Bonifas, Glen Bredthauer, Bill Glenn, Jessi Hoeft, Mason Hoffman, Alan Kenning, Kyle Knight, Courtney Luebben, Jay Meyer, Russ Ochsner, Aaron Paus, Lyle Schroer, Steve Shaw, Warren Taylor and Alan Wiedel.

Directors Absent: Brent Hoops and Jesse VonSpreckelsen.

Others Present: Scott Nelson, Tyler Goeschel, Marie Herbek, Kevin Orvis, Jessica Hedges, Alicia Epps, Kathy Boysen, Rita Peshek, Katie Lepant; Don Blankenau, legal counsel; Jean Itzen, NRCS; numerous members of the public.

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

Wiedel 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 Luebben to approve the agenda for the April 9, 2024 meeting as presented. Carried by roll call vote – 15 yes votes.

ACTION TO APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Acceptance of Board Member Absences: Hoops and VonSpreckelsen notified the office of their intended absence.

Approval of Minutes of March 9th, 2024 Board Meeting: There were no changes to the minutes.

Approval of Certified Acres: A list of certified acre changes was presented.

MOTION # 2 – Shaw moved, seconded by Meyer to approve the absence of Hoops and VonSpreckelsen, the minutes of the March 12, 2024 meeting as presented and all requests for new certified acres identified in the packet, except those with a beginning balance of zero. 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 Little Blue NRD Treasurer's 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 Taylor to approve the Little Blue Public Water Project North Treasurer's 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 Kenning to approve the Little Blue Public Water Project South Treasurer's report as presented.** Carried by roll call vote – 15 yes votes.

AGENCY REPORTS

NRCS Report – Jean Itzen: Itzen gave a brief report on happenings at the NRCS as well as provided information on the Big Sandy NWQI program which the NRD and NRCS partner to sponsor.

NARD Report – Mason Hoffman: Hoffman noted the next NARD Board meeting will be held in June at McCook. He provided a brief report of the Legislative Session which is near completion.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARD PRESENTATIONS

Each year the district awards six scholarships to students attending a two or four-year college majoring in a conservation, agriculture or environmental field. Jessica Hedges presented the scholarships to five of those students who were in attendance; Thomas Thomas, Jack Trausch, Ashley Bonifas, Libby Macklin and Wyatt Ozenbaugh.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee met prior to the regular meeting.

Legal Discussion: Nelson noted this will be discussed in the Executive Session being held later.

Other Business: There was no other business.

PROJECTS AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

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

Discussion/Action on a Request for Additional Funds for Lake Hastings Project: The Little Blue NRD, Upper Big Blue NRD and City of Hastings are cooperating on a Lake Hastings Quality Improvement Plan. Additional funding is being requested to complete the project. **MOTION # 6 – Kenning moved, seconded by Shaw to approve additional funding of up to \$2,500 for the Lake Hastings Water Quality Improvement Project.** Carried by roll call vote. Yes: Bonifas, Glenn, Hoeft, Hoffman, Kenning, Knight, Luebben, Meyer, Ochsner, Paus, Schroer, Shaw, Taylor and Wiedel. No: Bredthauer.

Other Business: There was no other business.

WATER RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The Water Resources Committee met prior to the regular meeting.

Discussion/Action to Consider Reissuance of a Permit to Transfer Groundwater for Little Blue Public Water Project: A transfer permit approved in January, 2024 to transfer groundwater for the Little Blue Public Water Projects is being reconsidered. While the District believes it was in full compliance with the Open Meetings Act at the January meeting, the re-notice, Publication, and issuance is being done out of an abundance of precaution. **MOTION # 7 – Taylor moved, seconded by Hoffman to approve reissuance of the Permit to Transfer Groundwater for the Little Blue NRD Rural Water Project.** Carried by vote. Yes: Bonifas, Bredthauer, Hoeft, Hoffman, Kenning, Knight, Luebben, Meyer, Ochsner, Paus, Schroer, Shaw, Taylor and Wiedel. Abstain: Glenn.

Action to Issue a Board Order to Formally Adopt Groundwater Rules and Regulations and Water Quality Sub-Area Changes: A public hearing was held on March 12th to consider changes to the Groundwater Rules and Regulations and changes to the District's Water Quality Sub-Areas. **MOTION # 8 – Taylor moved, seconded by Shaw to issue an Order to formally adopt the Groundwater Rules and Regulations and changes and to the District's Water Quality Sub-Areas, effective June 1, 2024.** Carried by roll call vote – 15 yes votes.

Discussion/Action on Intent of Groundwater Rule 2.2.5 – Well Permits: Staff requested guidance on how to answer questions producers may have regarding their ability to complete projects already planned if the District goes into a stay on drilling new irrigation wells. Discussion was held. Further discussion will be held at the May meeting.

Discussion/Action on Intent of Groundwater Rule 2.9.1.3 – Certified Acres: Discussion was held on how the District handles the addition of certified irrigated acres. Further discussion will be held at the May meeting.

Review 2023 Municipal Water Use Report: Orvis reviewed the 2023 annual Municipal Water Use Report.

Other Business: There was no other business.

OTHER BUSINESS

Nelson mentioned that the Manager's Report was included in their packets. Hoffman thanked the staff for planning and sponsoring the Director's tour held March 19th. Shaw inquired if the two items requiring further discussion during Water Resources Committee report will be on the May meeting agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT

David Endorf thanked the Directors for coming to view the Rural Water Projects during the Director's Tour and asked each of them to put themselves in the shoes of neighboring landowners to the new Water Project.

Sacha Lemke of Southeast Valley Irrigation asked for guidance on answering a producer's question about adding certified irrigated acres.

Tim Alfs inquired if a producer had substantial financial outlay to show their intent of adding a new irrigation system would benefit the producer's chance of the District allowing the completion of the

project. Alfs also asked on rules that apply to acres that have been irrigated in the past but not recently, are they still considered to be certified irrigated acres?

Brian Thomas provided comments about the Rural Water Projects. He is a Rural Water Projects customer and appreciates being able to purchase water from the Project. Thomas inquired if the current Rural Water Projects customers understand the big picture of where the new project’s water is coming from and what could happen in future regarding the quality of their water. He asked if the customers were asked to provide input on the new Project. Thomas discussed the location of the new wells and urged cooperating with the Village of Alexandria to create a shared water project.

CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION # 9 – Hoffman moved, seconded by Taylor to go into Executive Session at 8:00 for the purpose of discussing legal matters. Carried by roll call vote – 15 yes votes.

Executive Session called for the purpose of discussing legal matters. Members of the public left the session.

MOTION # 10 - Taylor moved, seconded by Hoffman to come out of Executive Session at 8:22 p.m. Carried by roll call vote – 15 yes votes.

Wiedel stated no legal action was taken during the closed session.

ADJOURNMENT

Wiedel adjourned the meeting at 7:53 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 April 9, 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.
