

Minutes of the
Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District
Committee of the Whole
Thursday, February 12, 2026 – 7:00 p.m.
Lower Elkhorn NRD
1508 Square Turn Blvd, Norfolk, Nebraska

1. Chairman Matt Steffen informed the Board and those attending of the Publication of Meeting Notice in the Norfolk Daily News on February 6, 2026, and of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act information posted on the wall.

Directors in attendance were Jerry Alleman, Mark Burenheide, Scott Clausen, Mike Fleeer, Roger Gustafson, Andrew Hrabanek, Lee Klein, Gary Loftis, Jay Reikofski, Matt Steffen, and Melissa Temple. Jim Aschoff, Chad Korth, Kris Loberg, and Anthony Wisnieski were absent from the meeting.

2. Public Comment - There were no comments from the public at this time.

3. Projects and Programs

- a. Pender Interior Drainage Project – Village Administrator Glen Gralheer, Utility Superintendent Matthew Smith, and Village Board Chairman Chris Reha addressed the board and answered questions regarding the interior drainage project. Gralheer gave a review of the history of the project which started in 2020 as the result of two flooding events in 2019. The Village has a 2021 interlocal agreement with the LENRD in the amount of \$527,671.88 which will expire in March of this year. The Village is now asking for an additional amount of \$155,012.10 for a total of \$682,683.98, to help with the detention cells, enlarging the culverts, and regrading the creek. The new agreement would end in March of 2031 and is contingent upon approval from FEMA to help fund the project.

Recommended Motion: To accept the terms of the amended interlocal agreement between the Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District and the Village of Pender, contingent on the receipt of funding from FEMA for the Village of Pender, and authorize the General Manager to sign said agreement.

- b. Battle Creek Flood Reduction Discussion – General Manager Brian Bruckner requested direction from the Board in regard to the flooding in Battle Creek. Directors Jay Reikofski and Jim Aschoff, in addition to Assistant General Manager Curt Becker, have contacted the Army Corps of Engineers for information and options. It is planned to have a representative of the Army Corps of Engineers attend a near future board meeting.

Recommended Motion: To instruct staff to contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and to schedule a time for them to attend a future meeting to discuss their programs and possible options for flood mitigation for the City of Battle Creek.

- c. Willow Creek Reservoir Crop Damage Payments – Landowners Jim Herian and Ted Krienke, who have flood easements with the LENRD, both suffered crop damage in 2025. Herian had 43.72 acres affected (corn) for a loss of \$5,414.10 and Krienke had 9.96 acres affected for a loss of \$3,072.97 (beans).

Recommended Motion: To approve the 2025 Crop Damage Agreement on the Jim Herian Easement, Willow Creek Project, and approve payment in the amount of \$5,414.10.

Recommended Motion: To approve the 2025 Crop Damage Agreement on the Ted Krienke Easement, Willow Creek Project, and approve payment in the amount of \$3,072.97.

4. Water Resources

- a. Update and Report on the Processing of Standard Variances for New Irrigated Acres in the Lower Elkhorn NRD – Water Resources Manager Doug Hallum addressed the Board and informed them that notification letters have been sent to producers.

In the Quantity Management SubArea there were 89 applications approved (333 acres and average soil score of 133.43) including 6 applications in the Hydrologically Connected Area. Nothing was approved in the Non-Hydrologically Connected Area of the Quantity Management SubArea.

In the Phase III Area there were 12 applications approved (1,211 acres and average soil score of 142.3) including 6 applications in the Hydrologically Connected Area and 6 applications in the Non-Hydrologically Connected Area.

In the rest of the District there were 71 applications approved (5,741 acres and average soil score of 129.85) including 33 applications in the Hydrologically Connected Area and 38 applications in the Non-Hydrologically Connected Area.

Applications in the Quantity Management SubArea that were not approved totaled 1,434 acres with an average soil score of 143.33 and included 12 from the Hydrologically Connected Area and 2 applications from the Non-Hydrologically Connected Area.

Applications in the Phase III Area that were not approved totaled 2,549 acres with an average soil score of 85.93 and included 5 applications from the Hydrologically Connected Area and 19 applications from the Non-Hydrologically Connected Area.

Applications in the rest of the District that were not approved totaled 4,194 acres with an average soil score of 90.4 and included 12 applications in the Hydrologically Connected Area and 29 applications in the Non-Hydrologically Connected Area.

- b. Status Update on Submittal of Phase 2 and 3 Management Area Reports (which are now due January 15th of each year) – Connor Baldwin provided the Board with an update on the submittal of the yearly Phase 2 and 3 reports and estimates that approximately 75% of the reports

have been submitted. Text messages have been sent out recently to those that have yet to respond with their reports.

- c. Status Update on Submittal of Flow Meter Reports (due December 1st of each year) – As of date, 119 readings have not been reported (42 different entities). The LENRD has made attempts to contact these individuals and has extended the due date to February 20th.

Recommended Motion: To instruct staff to prepare and issue cease and desist orders to landowners who have failed to comply with the submittal of flow meter readings as required.

- d. Pierce County Pilot Project Status Update – General Manager Brian Bruckner and Groundwater Management Area Specialist Connor Baldwin provided a status update on the Pierce County Pilot Project which was provided a five-year extension in March of 2024.

Recommended Motion: To terminate the remainder of the term of the extension for the Pierce County Pilot Project with Dan and John Schmit which was extended in March 2024 for the 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, and 2028 growing seasons.

5. Administrative

- a. Update and Discussion on Bills of Interest in the Nebraska Legislature – General Manager Brian Bruckner provided information on Legislative Bill 1072. The bill involves the transfer of over \$40 million in funds from the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund to various other funds including \$8 million to the Water Resources Cash Fund and over \$32 million to the Water Recreation Enhancement Fund.

Bruckner also noted Legislative Bill 1028 which adds new requirements for large, concentrated animal feeding operations subject to permits from the Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment.

- b. Logan East Rural Water System – Status Update on Proposed System Expansion – On Thursday, February 12, 2026 a meeting was held with the City of Oakland in regard to the proposed system expansion. Representatives discussed the terms of the proposed agreement and agreed to work towards final approval and execution of the agreement by the end of April 2026.

The meeting concluded at 8:11 p.m.