

Minutes of the
Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District
Committee of the Whole
Thursday, April 9, 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 April 3, 2026, and of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act information posted on the wall.

Directors in attendance were Jerry Alleman, Jim Aschoff, Mark Burenheide, Scott Clausen, Mike Fleer, Roger Gustafson, Andrew Hrabanek, Lee Klein, Chad Korth, Kris Loberg, Gary Loftis, Jay Reikofski, Matt Steffen, Melissa Temple, and Anthony Wisnieski. No members were absent from the meeting.

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

3. Projects and Programs

- a. City of Battle Creek Flood Mitigation - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was in attendance to explain the programs available for Flood Mitigation. Jen Gitt - Acting Chief, Plan Formulation and Project Management Section; Greg Johnson - Acting Chief, Civil Works Branch; and Andrew Barry - Dam and Levee Safety Branch Chief presented two funding options. Section 205 authorizes the Corps to plan, design, and construct small flood risk management projects with a non-federal sponsor. The feasibility study would be covered 100% by federal dollars up to \$100,000, with remaining costs split 50/50. Design and construction would be split 65% federal, 35% non-federal. The federal limit is \$15 million. Congressional authorization is needed for larger projects. Section 22 is for technical planning and engineering assistance only. Cost share is 50/50, but each state is only allotted \$2 million annually. Questions from the Board of Directors and General Manager followed.

At this time, public attendee Terry Boecker addressed the Board with her concerns. Nicole Wall, a Project Planner with Olsson (an engineering and design firm) addressed the Corps with questions.

Additional questions from the Board to the Corps followed. In response to question related to the possible cost of a project, and which of the two programs might provide the best fit, Greg Johnson seemed to suggest that the Section 22 program might be the place to start. The Corps of Engineers would utilize previous studies from JEO Consulting and Houston Engineering where possible, but the economics would undergo a different analysis. The first step would be to submit a letter of request, and templates for that were made available. Greg also suggested that it might be useful to engage in an economic analysis first, prior to any technical evaluation, to see if the required benefits could be obtained before investing additional time and resources.

Recommended motion: To have the Chairman of the Board appoint a group of Directors (less than a quorum) who would meet with the representatives from the City of Battle Creek to define goals and priorities to be considered in formulating a possible recommendation for flood protection for the City of Battle Creek utilizing the programs available from the U.S. army Corps of Engineers.

- b. Update and Discussion on the West Point Levee Project and Corresponding Sinking Fund – The District has received the final payment request from the City of West Point for their levee project. After utilizing the remaining funds from the August 2025 close out of the Frontier Bank West Point sinking fund, and drawing the remaining money needed from the West Point NPAIT account to satisfy the final payment request, \$108,280.49 still remains in the West Point NPAIT account.

Recommended motion: To authorize the General Manager to transfer all remaining funds within the West Point NPAIT investment account into the Flood Mitigation NPAIT investment account.

- c. Urban Conservation Assistance and Recreation Area Development Program Applications – The Lower Elkhorn NRD received one Urban Conservation Assistance application and 10 Recreation Area Development applications totaling \$225,788.25 for fiscal year 2027.

Recommended motion: To approve Fiscal Year 2027 Urban Conservation and Recreation Area Development Program applications as recommended by staff.

4. Water Resources

- a. Vadose Zone Sampling Results – Dr. Dan Snow virtually presented vadose zone sampling results from data collected in Cuming, Colfax, and Dodge Counties. Between fall of 2022 and spring of 2025, 44 continuous cores, down 10-85 feet deep to the water table, were taken. They were analyzed at least every 2-5 feet for nitrate, ammonium, moisture content, and pH. They calculated pore water nitrate equivalent and the mass of stored nitrate in pounds per acre. They also estimated vertical transit rate of water and nitrate or other chemicals.
- b. Nebraska Environmental Trust Grant – Doug Hallum provided an update and progress report on the approved Nebraska Environmental Trust Grant “Observing Water and Nutrient Mobility in the Vadose Zone.” The agreement has been signed with NET. The project will establish new monitoring wells, set up weather stations that will measure precipitation and estimated ET, drill test holes through the aquifer, and collection of geophysical data. Cores and soil samples will also be taken at various depths. Total project budget is \$731,000, with \$545,000 coming from NET. Eight different requests for proposals will need to be developed for the project using an ad hoc committee and volunteers from the Board are needed.
- c. WSF Grant Application – Doug Hallum shared an overview of a proposed project for which LENRD has requested funds from the Natural Resources Commission through its Water Sustainability Fund. The project would update our Groundwater Model, provide Geodatabase and Systems Integration and update our Groundwater Management Plan.