

Minutes of the
Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District
Committee of the Whole
Thursday, July 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 July 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, Roger Gustafson, Andrew Hrabanek, Lee Klein, Kris Loberg, Gary Loftis, Jay Reikofski, Matt Steffen, and Anthony Wisnieski. Chad Korth, Mike Fleer, and Melissa Temple were absent from the meeting.

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

3. Projects and Programs

- a. ONE RED Ag Data Bank and Grants Program – Alexa Davis, Soil and Water Programs Coordinator for the Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment presented the ONE Red Ag Data Bank and Grant Program. The program is a \$195 million federal program administered by the State of Nebraska that was developed to incentivize nitrogen and water use efficiency. Producers who enroll would provide field location, yield information, nitrogen use information, water applied, cover crop usage, and tillage information to the database in exchange for a \$2,000.00 payment. Subsequent years producers could receive an additional \$500 to enroll, for a total payment of up to \$3,500.00. Producers could then receive an additional \$9,000.00 for implementing additional soil and water management activities from an approved list. Individual NRDs can receive \$75,000.00 per year for 3 years to assist in administering the program for staffing, field days, or any activities that support the program. Dennis Schueth, General Manager of the Upper Elkhorn NRD, provided input from his NRD. The District would need to fill out a workplan for how they plan to utilize the funds if the District chooses to accept the subaward.
- b. Maple Creek Watershed Project- Design Phase Update – Assistant General Manager Curt Becker updated the Board that the state NRCS office indicated that funding for the design phase for the identified alternative near Nickerson may soon be available. The estimated design phase cost is \$81,700.00, with permitting at \$8,000.00 and land rights at \$25,000.00. Permitting and land rights would be split between the District and Nickerson, with the design costs being fully reimbursed by NRCS. Becker did not feel that the City of Clarkson would be prepared to use design phase funds.
- c. LENRD Forestry Program – Natural Resources Technician Todd Stewart reported to the Board on the LENRD Tree Program. A total of 96,415 trees went through the tree cooler.

Protecting Lives – Protecting Property – Protecting the Future
Agenda subject to change 24 hours prior to meeting.

There were 55 plantings, with over 40,000 trees planted using the planter. 8.86 acres of trees were removed but 167.72 acres were planted.

- d. Willow Creek Dam Artesian Pressures Update – Assistant General Manager Curt Becker reported that the State of Nebraska Dam Safety provided thresholds for the piezometers, and 2 or 3 have exceeded the thresholds. The District will need to do more than the two discharge wells, but exactly what gets done is up to the District. Options would be more pressure relief wells, working with a consulting/engineering firm for additional analysis, and/or conducting a pump test. There currently is no pump in either of the two wells. Staff will evaluate costs and return to the Board at a future date with a recommendation.
- e. Conservation Cost Share Program – Assistant General Manager Curt Becker brought forward recommendations on updates to the Cost Share Docket for Fiscal Year 2027. There was no NRCS cost list provided this year, so most practices do not have suggested changes except for tree planting related practices. After Board discussion, an increase to all practices (except tree planting) of 5% was suggested.

Recommended Motion: To approve updates to the average cost dockets for the Agroforestry, Cover Crop, and Conservation Cost Share Programs as recommended by the staff.

4. Water Resources

- a. Vadose Ad-hoc Committee – Water Resources Manager Doug Hallum updated the Board on the response to the six RFPs and one RFQ. Ten proposals and ten declinations were received. Administrative questions have been sent to NET and staff are waiting for a response. Task 1 had four proposals submitted, and a selection has been identified through the Committee. The other tasks only received one proposal, with one task being split between two proposals. One task received no proposals. Draft contracts and Scopes of Work will be sent out, and a recommendation to sign them brought before the Board.

Recommended Motion: To authorize the General Manager to sign contracts related to the “Observing Water and Nutrient Mobility in the Vadose Zone” project for the following Study Tasks:

- **Study Task 1: Surveying and Mapping, LLC, not to exceed \$73,250.00**
- **Study Tasks 2 and 5: University of Nebraska – Lincoln, not to exceed \$191,423.00**
- **Study Task 3: Vista Clara, LLC., not to exceed \$157,000.00**
- **Study Task 6: Downey Drilling, \$72,590.00**

- b. Meter Maintenance – GIS Specialist Mike Murphy presented the proposed Scope of Work and Flow Meter Maintenance Agreement for maintenance for 561 meters in Colfax, Platte, and Stanton counties. Derek and Austin Becker have been performing maintenance for the District since 2018, and staff would recommend continuing to work with them.

Recommended motion: To accept the Scope of Work and Flow Meter Maintenance Agreement from Derek and Austin Becker which outlines the requirements for the completion of Flow Meter Preventative Maintenance Services within the Lower Elkhorn NRD, and to authorize the General Manager to sign the agreement on behalf of the District.

- c. Water Sampling – Water Resources Technician Rebecca Weixelman updated the Board on water sampling activities including Groundwater for Public Health and Domestic Well Sampling. She also assists landowners with registering their domestic wells in order to be eligible for the District’s sampling and cost share programs. She is beginning summer and statewide water sampling. Monthly and bimonthly she measures piezometers at Willow Creek and conducts weekly stream sampling at six sites. Three beaches across the District also are sampled weekly.
- d. LENRD Monitoring Well Network – Hydrovu Telemetry – Water Resources Technician Dallas Dorey updated the Board on the Hydrovu network. A link has been posted to the District’s website and can be accessed by the public. Dorey demonstrated where the link is and how to view the information.

The meeting adjourned at 8:59 p.m.