

MINUTES

The meeting of the South Platte Natural Resources District Board of Directors was held Tuesday, November 14, 2023, at the South Platte Natural Resources District Offices, 551 Parkland Drive, Sidney, NE at 5:00 p.m. The public notices were published in the area newspapers. The agenda was compiled, and each member of the Board of Directors and other interested and affected persons were notified of the meeting date within the deadline.

Board Members Present

Bill Halligan, Chair	Marc Sprenger
Chris Meyer, Vice-Chair	Larry Rutt
Jim Johnson, Secretary	Kathy Narjes
Tim Maas	

Board Members Absent

None

Others Present

Kristin Dickinson, NRCS
Thad Kuntz, ARI

NRD Staff Present

Galen Wittrock, General Manager	Ryan Reisdorff, Assistant Manager
Donald Davis, Administrative Manager	Chris Kaiser, Natural Resources Conservationist
Tyler Sanders, Water Resources Coordinator	Travis Glanz, Water Resources Specialist
Yolanda Hruska, Information and Education Coordinator	

Information Material

The following information was provided electronically prior to or during the meeting:

1. Tentative Agenda - Board of Directors, November 14, 2023
2. October 10, 2023, Minutes of the South Platte NRD (SPNRD) Board of Directors meeting
3. October 10, 2023, Minutes of the SPNRD District Operations Committee Meeting
4. October Treasurer's Report and Accounts Payable
5. Kaiser Staff Report dated November 8, 2023
6. Davis Staff Report dated November 14, 2023
7. Keller Staff Report dated November 7, 2023
8. Reisdorff Staff Report dated November 8, 2023
9. Hruska Staff Report dated October 31, 2023
10. Glanz Staff Report dated November 4, 2023
11. Sanders Staff Report dated November 14, 2023
12. NRCS Update October 2023
13. NARD 414 (h) Contribution Levels Memo dated November 8, 2023
14. 2023 SPNRD Water Quality Report
15. Fall 2023 Lodgepole Creek Actively Flowing Segments Report
16. Fall 2023 SPNRD Ground Water Level Report
17. Addendum to City of Sidney-South Platte Natural Resources District Agreement for Payment of JESWA Project
18. SPNRD Master Plan Updates dated October 10, 2023
19. Natural Resources/Projects and Programs Committee
 - o Bullet Points for Board regarding upcoming Rule and IMP Changes
 - o Notice of Violation Aaron and Jason Shepard TIC dated November 7, 2023
23. Per Diem Worksheet

1. Call to Order

Chair Halligan called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

A. Nebraska Open Meetings Act

Chair Halligan stated that this meeting is subject to the Nebraska Open Meetings Act. A copy of the Act is posted in the meeting room.

B. Legal Notices

Chair Halligan acknowledged that the notice of this meeting was published in the area newspapers and the Affidavits/Proofs of Publication are included with these minutes.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Halligan led those in attendance in the United States Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Minutes

A. Minutes of the October 10, 2023, South Platte Natural Resources District (SPNRD) Board of Directors Meeting

With no corrections or additions, moved by Narjes, second by Meyer to approve the October 10, 2023, minutes as distributed. A roll call vote was taken.

Aye: Johnson, Maas, Sprenger, Meyer, Narjes, Rutt, Halligan

Nay:

Motion carried.

B. Minutes of the October 10, 2023, SPNRD District Operations Committee Meeting

These minutes were approved as distributed.

4. *Treasurer's Report for October 2023 and Accounts Payable

Wittrock reviewed the account balances listed on the Treasurer's Report as follows:

<u>Account Description</u>	<u>October 1, 2023</u>	<u>October 31, 2023</u>
SPNRD Checking/Repurchase	\$ 500,049.45	\$ 470,008.05
SPNRD Building/Property	\$ 63,922.96	\$ 63,958.25
SPNRD Vehicle/Equipment	\$ 82,758.89	\$ 82,804.57
SPNRD ORRA Infrastructure	\$ 62,028.09	\$ 62,062.34
SPNRD Machinery & Equipment	\$ 10,049.98	\$ 10,055.53
SPNRD Computer/Server	\$ 25,207.65	\$ 25,221.57
SPNRD FA/OA Project	\$ 165,378.49	\$ 165,469.78
Citizens' Monitoring PWCB	\$ 75,493.89	\$ 64,539.48
Citizens' Monitoring CD FirstTier	\$ 84,543.57	\$ 84,543.57
SPRCC NPAIT Account	\$ 48,552.71	\$ 48,773.77

Wittrock reviewed various items listed in the accounts payable. He encouraged the board members to come to the SPNRD office at any time to review the receipts and/or disbursements or ask any questions. The total amount of accounts payable is \$53,417.57. After discussion, Rutt moved to approve the Treasurer's Report and authorize payment of the accounts payable in the amount of \$53,417.57. A second was made by Maas and with no further discussion a roll call vote was taken.

Aye: Sprenger, Meyer, Narjes, Rutt, Halligan, Johnson, Maas
Nay:
Motion carried.

5. Public Questions, Comments and Concerns

None

6. Director and Staff Reports

Wittrock stated that the new windows are being installed. Four of the seven have been installed but the other three were not correct so they are being remanufactured and will be installed later. The District may hire a consultant to do the ground water management plan updates. One consideration would be Kuntz because he already has the information needed and is already under contract with the District. Wittrock attended the managers' meeting last week with no new updates. He also attended the latest Perkins County Canal Senator's tour.

7. Agency Reports

A. USDA Natural Resources conservation Service (NRCS)

1. NRCS Report

Dickinson stated that they have been busy working on CSP and EQIP applications for the first cutoff date which is November 17th. The Inflation Reduction Act funds that were received means that there is an authorization to continue to fund CSP and EQIP and easement programs beyond the expiration of the Farm Bill. The target of the Inflation Reduction Act funds is climate smart green payment type practices. She then reviewed the funds available and the eligibility process. The expiration of the Farm Bill means the authority for CRP signups has expired.

B. Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD)

1. NRD/NARD Employee Benefits Committee Meeting & NARD Intergovernmental Risk Management Pool Association Loss Control Committee Meetings

2. NARD and November 6, 2023, Board Meeting Report

3. Discussion Regarding NRD/NARD Employee Retirement Contributions

Wittrock stated that the current retirement plan is a 5.5% contribution from the employee with a match of 6% from the District for a total of 11.5%. There is a proposal to change both and move them up 1% each to 6.5% from employees and 7% from the District for a total of 13.5%. Wittrock spoke to the employees about the increase after they were given information about how it would impact on their take-home pay. All employees were in favor of the increase. Wittrock was now asking the board if there were any concerns about the increase. Hearing none he will report back to NARD. It will take 100% participation from all employees and all boards from all the NRDs to make any increase. The health insurance may not see an increase in the next year. Discussion followed.

C. Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NeDNR)

1. NeDNR Natural Resources Commission Report

No report.

8. Preliminary Robust Review Update

Kuntz reviewed the preliminary robust review stating that he is in weekly contact with NeDNR regarding the robust review. He then reviewed the permanent and temporary retirements in the District. The robust review considers depletions and management through 2020 which are any post 1997 development that occurred, and any management actions taken by the District in any of the subareas which is then projected out for 50 years to 2070. Kuntz reviewed the historic run which includes what

happened regarding land use, irrigation pumping, crop types and climate compared to the 1997 development. He then reviewed the subareas and how they performed in the preliminary robust review. The South Platte Valley may have a depletion of up to 150 acre-feet that needs to be made up while the other subareas are not an issue. To make up for the possible depletions Kuntz stated that the District has three main tools to use, increasing excess flows, retiring acres, and allocations. Discussion followed.

9. General Reports

A. 2023 SPNRD Ground Water Quality Report

Reisdorff gave the 2023 SPNRD Ground Water Quality Report stating that this was the thirty-fifth year of monitoring nitrates in the District and that 138 of the 160 network wells were sampled at least once this year. He pointed out that the Sidney Ground Water Quality Management Subarea is in Phase III management control and that the South Platte Valley Ground Water Quality Management Subarea has moved from Phase I to Phase II. He then reviewed the triggers for the three phases within the District. Reisdorff reviewed the subareas pointing out that many of the target subareas have been down this year. He then reviewed each subarea pointing out various wells. None of the subareas in any Phase will change this year and no new subareas will have to be moved into Phase I or higher. Discussion followed.

B. Fall 2023 Report on Actively Flowing Lodgepole Creek Segments

Reisdorff reviewed the fall 2023 report on actively flowing Lodgepole Creek segments pointing out that fall of 2023 has 86.66 miles of actively flowing creek which is 50% of the creek. Compared to the fall of 2022 the creek is flowing 12% more and is only down 5% from the spring 2023 report. The fall 2023 flow of 50% is about average for the fall report. He reviewed the actively flowing segments on the District map.

C. Fall 2023 SPNRD Ground Water Level Report

Kaiser reviewed the fall 2023 Ground Water Level Report stating that the one-year map shows an average of 1.5-foot increase in water levels across the District which is reflective of the lack of irrigation use during the spring and summer. He then reviewed a new map that covers the 8 months between the spring and fall reports. Districtwide the water levels average was down 1.15 feet. Kaiser asked for direction if the 8-month map should be continued to be used. Discussion followed.

10. *Discussion and Action on Addendum to City of Sidney - South Platte Natural Resources District Agreement for Payment of JESWA Project to Address Project Maintenance

Wittrock stated that in September of 2022 the City of Sidney and the District signed an agreement for the loan repayment of the East Sidney Watershed Project. The agreement states that the District will reimburse the city for 20% of the loan. The addendum pertains to the maintenance work that may be needed for the project. The addendum states that any maintenance work needed will be billed at 80% to the city and 20% to the District. Projects are topped out at \$2,000 per project not to exceed \$6,000 annually. If there is a large maintenance project above \$2,000, approval of the project would need to come from both the City of Sidney City Council and the District board. Discussion followed. Following discussion, Narjes moved to approve the Addendum to the City of Sidney - South Platte Natural Resources District Agreement for Payment of the JESWA Project to address project maintenance and have the SPNRD Board Chair sign the document. A second was made by Meyer, and with no further discussion a roll call vote was taken.

Aye: Rutt, Halligan, Johnson, Maas, Sprenger, Meyer, Narjes

Nay:

Motion carried.

11. *Discussion and Action to Approve Updates to the SPNRD Master Plan

Wittrock stated that there have been no changes to the Master Plan since the October board meeting. There were no other changes suggested. Meyer moved to approve the updates to the SPNRD Master Plan as presented. A second was made by Rutt and with no further discussion a roll call vote was taken.

Aye: Halligan, Johnson, Maas, Sprenger, Meyer, Narjes, Rutt

Nay:

Motion carried.

12. Committee Reports

A. Natural Resources Projects and Programs Committee - Meyer, Chair

1. Discussion Regarding Possible Changes to the SPNRD GWMA Rules & Regulations and Integrated Management Plan

Meyer stated the committee discussed the possible changes to the SPNRD GWMA Rules and Regulations and Integrated Management Plan. Discussion was held on any potential allocation changes. They discussed some of the pooling and transfer issues that the committee would like to explore further. Wittrock stated that there will another meeting in December regarding the possible changes. There were no real issues brought other than the South Platte Valley which there may need to be changes made to.

2. Compliance Issue Regarding No Application to Transfer Ground Water

Glanz stated that the violation letter was sent out to Aaron and Jason Shepard and has not been returned yet. Once it is returned Glanz will work with the Shepards to come up with a compliance plan. Discussion followed.

3. *Discussion and Action Regarding Post Budget Approval for Staff to Proceed with Developing a Notice/Bid Package to Purchase a New UTV Including Discussion Whether to Trade-in or Sell the District's Current UTV

Wittrock stated that a new UTV needs to be purchased for Oliver Reservoir and that the District budgeted for the purchase. Any high dollar item needs post budget approval from the board to allow staff to proceed with the bid package. Once the bids come in the decision will be made to either trade-in or sell the current UTV. Meyer moved to approve for staff to proceed with developing a Notice/Bid Package to purchase a new UTV including whether to trade-in or sell the District's Current UTV. A second was made by Maas and with no further discussion a roll call vote was taken.

Aye: Johnson, Maas, Sprenger, Meyer, Narjes, Rutt, Halligan

Nay:

Motion carried.

13. Correspondence

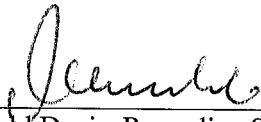
None

14. Upcoming Dates

- November 23-24, 2023, SPNRD Offices Closed, Thanksgiving Holiday
- December 12, 2023, SPNRD Board Meeting
- December 22, 2023, SPNRD Offices Closed, Christmas Eve Holiday (Observed)
- December 25, 2023, SPNRD Offices Closed, Christmas Holiday
- January 1, 2024, SPNRD Offices Closed, New Year's Day Holiday (Observed)
- January 3, 2024, Beginning of 60-Day Nebraska Legislative Session
- January 23-24, 2024, NARD Legislative Conference, Lincoln
- March 19-22, 2023, NARD Washington DC Conference

15. Adjourn

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:27 p.m.



Donald Davis, Recording Secretary

* Denotes Action Item