

NEBRASKA NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES – July 29, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE; NEW MEMBER INTRODUCTION & ROLL CALL

Chairman Wilke called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. in the Holiday Inn Convention Center, Kearney, Nebraska. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Wilke introduced and welcomed Rich Walters to the Commission, the role was called.

Roll Call:

Commissioners		Absent	Present	Commissioners		Absent	Present
Rollie	Amsberry		X	Tom	Mountford		X
Don	Batie		X	Doug	Reeves		X
Lawrence	Bradley		X	Keith	Rexroth		X
Devin	Brundage		X	Lyle	Schroer		X
Lane	Darnall		X	John	Shadle		X
Scott	Dicke		X	Matt	Smallcomb		X
Christopher	Dierks		X	Jeff	Steffen		X
Brad	Dunbar	X		Dennis	Strauch		X
Doug	Iske		X	Rich	Walters		X
Nate	Jenkins		X	Greg	Wilke		X
Steve	Kelly		X	Vacant			
Rick	Kubat		X	Vacant			
Kennon	Meyer		X	Vacant			
Larry	Mohrman		X				

DWEE staff in attendance:

Kent Zimmerman & Emily Rose

Others in attendance were:

Katie Cameron, ENWRA; Eric Gottschalk, LPNNRD & David Holl, Miller & Associates.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- No announcements were made.

NOTICE OF THE MEETING AND PUBLIC MEETING LAWS

Notice of the meeting was published on the State Public Meetings Calendar and on the Natural Resources Commission (Commission) web site at <https://nrc.nebraska.gov>. A copy of Nebraska's open meeting statutes was available in the room.

MINUTES

Batie moved and Schroer seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the April 29th, 2026, Commission meeting.

Motion Passed.

Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent	Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Amsberry	X				Mountford	X			
Batie	X				Reeves	X			
Bradley	X				Rexroth	X			
Brundage	X				Schroer	X			
Darnall	X				Shadle	X			
Dicke	X				Smallcomb	X			
Dierks	X				Steffen	X			
Dunbar				X	Strauch	X			
Iske	X				Walters			X	
Jenkins	X				Wilke	X			
Kelly	X				Vacant				
Kubat	X				Vacant				
Meyer	X				Vacant				
Mohrman	X				TOTALS	22	0	1	1

DWEE UPDATE & PUBLIC COMMENTS

No comments were offered.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

No Committee updates were given. Chairman Wilke asked staff to lead discussion on agenda topics pertaining to program activities. No unusual activity was reported.

Resources Development Fund

The status report showed business as usual. Staff met with each project's sponsor and gave an update on each project's status.

Eric Gottschalk, General Manager, LPNNRD reviewed the Lake Wanahoo project and his request to utilize all remaining funding in component # 20 "Recreation" to build a handicap accessible fire pit, a combination basketball/pickle ball court, and a sand volleyball court.

Staff reported that no additional allocation or obligation was requested, and with the anticipated public benefits expected to be realized from these additions, the request was found to meet the cost/benefit requirement.

Mountford moved and Kelley seconded the motion to approve the Lower Platte North NRD's request to Change the Plan of Development for the Sand Creek Environmental Restoration (Lake Wanahoo) project to include a handicap accessible fire ring, a combination pickleball/basketball court and a sand volleyball court within the Recreation Component.

Motion Passed.

Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent	Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Amsberry	X				Mountford	X			
Batie	X				Reeves	X			
Bradley	X				Rexroth	X			
Brundage	X				Schroer	X			
Darnall	X				Shadle	X			
Dicke	X				Smallcomb	X			
Dierks	X				Steffen	X			
Dunbar				X	Strauch	X			
Iske	X				Walters	X			

Jenkins	X				Wilke	X			
Kelly	X				Vacant				
Kubat	X				Vacant				
Meyer	X				Vacant				
Mohrman	X				TOTALS	23	0	0	1

Soil & Water Conservation Program Fund

The status report showed business as usual. Rose stated that a temporary injunction had been issued on expenditures and transfers of funds from the Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET) which impacts this fund. Currently, the injunction prohibits payments of invoices from the previous year's allocation and does not allow for an allocation this year. The NRDs have been notified of the situation.

Natural Resources Water Quality Fund

The status report showed business as usual.

Water Well Decommissioning Fund

The status report showed business as usual.

Water Sustainability Fund

The WSF status report showed business as usual. Staff noted that projects listed on the last page of the report with an approval date of 2025 were also subject to the same NET lawsuit. These project sponsors were notified that DWEE could not make any additional reimbursements until the injunction is lifted. All applicants that filed applications in March of 2026 were notified that no funds would be available until the injunction is lifted. However, funding remains available to all projects approved prior to 2025.

APPLICATIONS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Chairman Brundage announced the Applications Review Committee had met and scored the applications.

Preliminary Injunction Update

Rose stated that if the injunction is lifted the Applications Review Committee will call a special meeting to rank the applications and proceed to make a recommendation to the full commission. Chairman Wilke reminded Commissioners that none of the scoring information is public, and that nothing regarding the applications is to be shared with anyone. Staff noted that the applications found to be satisfactory by the Chief Water Officer will not be placed on the NRC website until the injunction is lifted.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Batie stated the Committee discussed the injunction and current uncertainty at the state level regarding funding issues for the WSF. The Committee reviewed statutes and rules regarding what to do with the next WSF application filing period in March 2027. The Committee made a recommendation to temporarily suspend taking applications. The Committee wanted to be fair to the applicants and let them know now that we have funding issues so that they would not spend money creating an application that would not get looked at. Brundage noted that with the legislative session around the corner, this group and the people we work with everyday need to become active, in order to continue the good work this fund provides, because we understand the difficulties of defunding and the need for continuation of the \$11 million direct appropriation that was intended when the fund was created.

Batie moved and Mountford seconded the motion to temporarily suspend taking applications for the Water Sustainability Fund due to funding concerns.

Motion Passed.

Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent	Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Amsberry	X				Mountford	X			
Batie	X				Reeves	X			
Bradley	X				Rexroth	X			
Brundage	X				Schroer	X			
Darnall	X				Shadle	X			
Dicke	X				Smallcomb	X			
Dierks	X				Steffen	X			
Dunbar				X	Strauch	X			
Iske	X				Walters	X			

Jenkins	X				Wilke	X			
Kelly	X				Vacant				
Kubat	X				Vacant				
Meyer	X				Vacant				
Mohrman	X				TOTALS	23	0	0	1

OTHER BUSINESS & REQUESTS FOR AGENDA ITEMS

Chairman Wilke asked if there was any other business, none was offered. It was noted the next Commission meeting would be on Tuesday, September 29th following the NRD conference here in Kearney.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:04 p.m.

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