

MINUTES OF THE NEBRASKA NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING

January 25, 2006
Embassy Suites
Lincoln, Nebraska

Those in attendance were:

Jim Van Marter, Chair
Garry Anderson, Member
Beverly Donaldson, Member
Dan Watermeier, Member
Joseph Hergott, Member
Richard Jiskra, Member
Arlond Garratt, Member
John Burkholder, Member
Keith Rexroth, Member
Roger Korell, Member
Wayne Madsen, Member
Myron Lembke, Member
Wayne Davis, Member
Richard Hadenfeldt, Member
Clint Johannes, Member

Ann Bleed, Acting Director
Helen White
John Cambridge
Bob Broweleit
Judy Ridenour
Mike Siedschlag
Jack Brummert
Brian Thompson
Cliff Welsh
Lynn Webster
Lyndon Vogt
Rex Gittins
Ann Diers
Tom Pesek
Gayle Starr

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Commission Chair Jim Van Marter in a conference room at the Embassy Suites Hotel, Lincoln, Nebraska, at approximately 1:30 p.m.

NOTICE OF THE MEETING

Notice of the meeting was published in the LINCOLN JOURNAL & STAR on January 18, 2006, notifying the public of the meeting.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIAL

The following items of informational material were distributed during the course of the meeting and a copy of each is attached to the file copy of the minutes:

1. Nebraska Resources Development Fund Present Financial Status.
2. Status of Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund.
3. Soil & Water Conservation Fund – Expenditures by Month 1998-2006.
4. Natural Resources Water Quality Fund Report.
5. Water Well Decommissioning Cash Fund Report.
6. Republican Basin EQIP and Platte-Republican CREP Report.
7. DNR Fund Expenditures for November & December, 2005.
8. Republican River Basin Water Meter Program Status Report and Summary.
9. NRCS Report to the NRC & NARD.
10. Resources Development Fund – Mullen Dam and Reservoir Project Proposal.

MINUTES

Motion was made by Jiskra and seconded by Watermeier to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2005 Commission meeting as distributed. Motion carried.

Aye: Anderson, Burkholder, Hergott, Davis, Jiskra, Watermeier, Donaldson, Korell, Madsen, Lembke, Rexroth, Johannes.

Hadenfeldt, Van Marter

Nay: None

Abstain: Garratt

Not Present: Kramper

EXPENDITURES

It was noted that the expenditures for November and December, 2005, were made available to Commission members.

ADVISOR'S COMMENTS

Steve Chick, NRCS State Conservationist, updated the Commission on the status of the NRCS budget for FY 2006 noting that over \$42 million of financial assistance funds had been made available for Nebraska producers. He specifically commented on the Conservation Security Program and the EQIP program noting that the final sign-up date for the EQIP program was February 28.

ACTING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ann Bleed commented on the report that the department had finalized late last calendar year regarding fully appropriated areas of the state. She also commented at some length regarding the Republican Basin issues and responded to several questions pertaining to the status of water conservation issues in the Republican Basin and the operation of the compact with Kansas and Colorado. With regard to the Platte River Cooperative Agreement she indicated that it was likely that an agreement would be ready for consideration of the three states and the Department of Interior by sometime this spring or summer. She added that the decision by Governor Heineman would be a difficult decision and that the Governor had indicated that he intended to solicit input from all stakeholders. Bleed also commented on LB 933 which contains recommendations of the Water Policy Task Force regarding municipal use as well as some language intended to clarify some issues in LB 962. She and Clint Johannes also commented briefly on the Water Policy Task Force noting that the next meeting will be on February 8.

LEGISLATIVE & BUDGET COMMITTEE

Ann Diers briefly reviewed the various legislative bills being considered in this session of the Legislature that would have some impact on natural resources issues. There was discussion regarding the two legislative bills that deal with the statutory qualifications for the Director of the Department of Natural Resources. Motion was made by Rexroth and seconded by Jiskra that the Commission go on record in support of LB 359, which relates to the qualifications of the DNR Director. Motion carried.

Aye: Burkholder, Hergott, Davis, Jiskra, Watermeier, Donaldson, Korell, Madsen, Lembke, Rexroth, Garratt, Johannes, Hadenfeldt, Anderson, Van Marter

Nay: None

Not Present: Kramper

Gayle Starr briefly reviewed the current DNR budget status and noted that the Governor was recommending including approximately 3.2 million dollars for the department for FY 2006-2007 for implementation of LB 962. He noted that this was slightly less than the Task Force recommendation of 3.5 million dollars. He added that two million dollars of the total was intended to be provided to NRDs to match their efforts on development and implementation of Integrated Water Management plans. He added that of the 1.2 million dollars intended to go directly to the department, \$400,000 is intended for contracting with the NRDs involved in the Platte River Cooperative Agreement.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Tom Pesek distributed the Resources Development Fund status report and briefly reviewed that information for the Commission. Committee Chair, Clinton Johannes, then called on Helen White, Manager of the Upper Loup NRD who, along

with John Cambridge of HDR and several other local people briefed the Commission on the Resources Development Fund project proposal for a recreation dam and reservoir on the Middle Loup River near Mullen. Pesek noted that this item would come back to the Commission for their action at its next meeting.

Pesek distributed the Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund Status Report and briefly reviewed the status of that fund. Gayle Starr then distributed status reports from the Soil & Water Conservation Fund, Natural Resources Water Quality Fund, Water Well Decommission Fund and the EQIP and the CREP programs and briefly reviewed each of them.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Jim Van Marter noted that the next agenda item was the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Commission for the coming year. He asked for nominations for the position of Commission Chair. Roger Korell nominated Garry Anderson. Motion was made by Richard Hadenfeldt and seconded by Wayne Davis to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for Garry Anderson for Commission Chair for the coming year. Motion carried.

Aye: Burkholder, Hergott, Davis, Jiskra, Watermeier, Donaldson, Korell, Madsen, Lembke, Rexroth, Garratt, Johannes, Hadenfeldt, Anderson, Van Marter

Nay: None

Not Present: Kramper

Van Marter then asked for nominations for the position of Commission Vice-Chair. Wayne Davis nominated Wayne Madsen. Motion was made by Myron Lembke and seconded by Keith Rexroth to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for Wayne Madsen for Commission Vice-Chair for the coming year. Motion carried.

Aye: Davis, Jiskra, Watermeier, Donaldson, Korell, Madsen, Lembke, Rexroth, Garratt, Johannes, Hadenfeldt, Anderson, Burkholder, Hergott, Van Marter

Nay: None

Not Present: Kramper

MEETING SCHEDULE

Commission Chair Van Marter called the member's attention to the proposed meeting schedule on the agenda and asked for comments on the schedule. Van Marter indicated that since there were no suggestions for changes the schedule as follows would be adopted:

March 22-23	September 26, Kearney (NARD conf. Sept. 24-26)
May 24-25	November 15-16
July 12-13, Ogallala	January 24, 2007 (NARD Legislative Conf. Jan. 23-24)

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Commission will be March 22 & 23 at the Lower Platte South NRD office in Lincoln.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:00 p.m.

Chair

Director of Natural Resources

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