

# **Nebraska Natural Resources Commission**

## **Program Committee Meeting - - Minutes for January 25, 2011**

Committee Chair Clint Johannes called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. Notice of the meeting was posted on the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) website and the State of Nebraska Public Meetings Calendar. Open meetings statutes were posted in the room. All members of the Program Committee were present except Kadlecek.

### **9. Program Committee Report & Possible Action**

#### **A. Nebraska Resources Development Fund (NRDF)**

##### **1. Financial Status Report**

- DAS Budget office released quarterly allotments on December 3, 2010, and staff was able to pay \$443,695.80 to the Lower Elkhorn NRD for partial reimbursement of their request. Other than this payment, activity was limited to a \$1,250 transfer from the NRDF cash fund to the general fund as required by LB 1 / LB 935.
- The next allotment is scheduled for April 1, 2011, for all but four percent of the funds appropriated for FY 2011. If the budget does not change, the remaining four percent is expected to be allotted soon after.
- Obligated funding will be distributed to sponsors as money becomes available in the following order: Lower Elkhorn NRD, Central Platte NRD, Lower Big Blue NRD, Little Blue NRD, and Lower Big Blue NRD.

##### **2. Biennial Review of Project Ranking Worksheet (Policy XIV)**

- No recommendations for change were offered and no action was taken.

##### **3. FY 2012 Obligation Approach**

- After meeting with project sponsors, staff will prepare a draft FY 2012 RDF obligation plan, share it with sponsors and review feed back prior to the June Commission meeting. The following guidelines were stated:
  - If requested funding is not reduced, preference will be given to close out the Lower Elkhorn NRD project.
  - The balance of the FY 2012 appropriation will be split equally among sponsors whose reimbursable expenditures have either exceeded or will soon exceed obligated funding for their projects.
  - If limited by quarterly allotments by the DAS Budget Office, approved reimbursement requests in FY 2012 will be paid in quarterly pro-rata installments to each project.

#### **B. Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund**

##### **1. Status Report**

- Since the November meeting, reimbursements were made to Lower Platte North NRD in the amount of \$497,600 for fee title purchase of two tracts of land; and \$89,300 towards easements. This left \$117,845.50 of approved funding to be reimbursed upon receipt of land sales proceeds later this spring. Other activity since the last report included a \$12,500 transfer to the state's general fund in December (per LB 1 / LB 935) and

accrued interest. Other commitments for FY 2011 include another cash transfer in June, and funding approved for the Nemaha NRD.

**2. Action on Bid from Public Auction of LBNRD Pending Sale – Site 40 Land**

- Mike Onnen, Manager of the Little Blue NRD, reported that the January 18, 2011, auction went well. The land was appraised at \$266,000 a few weeks prior to the sale. The high bid at auction was \$418,301.

***Mercer moved, Van Marter seconded, to recommend the Commission approve the high bid of \$1,300/acre (\$418,301) for the 321.77 acre tract at the January 18, 2011, auction held at the Little Blue NRD.***

**Motion Passed.**

Aye: Deines, Anderson, Reeves, Knutson, Van Marter, Mercer, Hergott, Watermeier, Johannes, Nelson and Rexroth

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Kadlecek

**C. Soil & Water Conservation Program Fund Status Report**

- Except for a transfer of \$10,125 from the program's cash fund to the state's general fund in December as required by LB 1 / LB 935, no unusual business was reported.

**D. Natural Resources Water Quality Fund Status Report**

- Available funds were distributed in August, and a transfer to the general fund of \$31,250 occurred in December as required by LB 1 / LB 935. Another distribution will be made in February, and the second transfer is planned for June.

**E. Water Well Decommissioning Fund Status Report**

- Except for a transfer to the general fund of \$6,021 in December as required by LB 1 / LB 935, no unusual business was reported.
- Receipts have not met budgeted revenue for the past couple years and are declining faster than expected. Even at current reduced levels, receipts may not be sufficient to meet FY 2011 commitments.

**F. Interrelated Water Management Plan Program Fund**

**1. Status Report**

- Business as usual was reported. Although nearly all available funds have been committed to projects, the balance available for reimbursements totaled nearly \$3.2 million at 12/31/2010.
- Commission members agreed that consideration should be given to revising guidelines to incorporate procedures for periodically redistributing committed funds among projects to help those that could proceed faster if funding were available.

**2. FY 2012 Application Process Discussion and Possible Action**

- Projected funding needs are expected to nearly equal the FY 2012 appropriation.
- Commission members agreed that funding available in FY 2012 should be focused on existing projects.

- During project reviews this spring to assess funding needs, staff will evaluate three primary aspects: sponsors' projected needs based on current project plans, project impacts if funding is reduced, and sponsors' ability to progress faster if more funding could be made available.

***Knutson moved, Anderson seconded, to recommend the Commission set the next deadline for filing IWMP applications on March 1, 2012.***

**Motion Passed.**

Aye: Deines, Mercer, Hergott, Watermeier, Johannes, Anderson, Reeves, Van Marter, Nelson, Rexroth and Mercer

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Kadlecek

**3. Action on Project Cost Increase**

- The Upper Niobrara/White NRD requested a \$16,800 cost increase to cover expenses related to expedited data input and quality checking by a college intern. That person has been hired and some of these reimbursements will soon be filed.

***Rexroth moved, Van Marter seconded, to recommend the Commission approve the Upper Niobrara-White NRD's request and instruct the Department to enter into a task order increasing the total IWMP cost share for project # 33 by \$16,800.***

**Motion Passed.**

Aye: Reeves, Hergott, Rexroth, Mercer, Anderson, Johannes, Van Marter, Watermeier, Deines and Nelson

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Kadlecek

**Meeting adjourned at 4:14 p.m.**

  
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Clint Johannes, Chair