MINUTES OF THE TRI-BASIN NRD BOARD MEETING
Wednesday, September 16, 2026, 1:30 p.m.
Tri-Basin Natural Resources District
1723 Burlington, Holdrege, NE

The regular monthly board meeting of the Tri-Basin Natural Resources District (NRD) was called to order by Chairman, Todd Garrelts at 1:30 p.m. Garrelts noted Public Meeting Law was posted in the meeting room.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken with eleven directors present: Bilka, Garrelts, Grams, Harris, Hinrichs, Larson, Lundeen, Philips, Reynolds, Ryan and Stade. Grimes arrived at 1:40 PM. Bergstrom was absent. Notice of the meeting was published in the Holdrege Citizen, Valley Voice and Minden Courier and announced on radio station KRVN, Lexington.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

There were no excused absences.

MEETING AGENDA

Garrelts presented the current meeting agenda for review.

Moved by Reynolds, seconded by Larson, to approve the agenda for the September 16, 2026, Board meeting. Motion carried.
AYE: Bilka, Garrelts, Grams, Harris, Hinrichs, Larson, Lundeen, Philips, Reynolds, Ryan, and Stade
NAY: None
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT: Bergstrom, Grimes

MINUTES

Thorburn presented the minutes of the August 19, 2026 Board of Directors meeting, and September 1, 2026 Executive Meeting
Moved by Lundeen, seconded by Ryan, to approve the minutes of the August 19, 2026 Regular Board of Directors meeting. Motion carried.
AYE: Bilka, Garrelts, Harris, Hinrichs, Larson, Lundeen, Philips, Reynolds, Ryan, and Stade
NAY: None
ABSTAIN: Grams
ABSENT: Bergstrom, Grimes

Moved by Larson, seconded by Grams, to approve the minutes for the September 1, 2026, Planning Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Ryan presented the financial report for the month of August 2026 as follows:

Accrual Expenditures for Month	$170,490.39
Accrual Revenues for Month	$114,912.91
Actual Expenditures for Month	$185,460.74
Actual Revenues for Month	$35,495.60
Main Checking-August 31, 2026	$688,178.47
Accounts Receivable – August 31, 2026	$153,071.82
Building Sinking Fund – August 31, 2026	$89,186.64
Vehicle Sinking Fund – August 31, 2026	$82,051.81
Water Resources Fund – August 31, 2026	$137,560.14
Whiskey Slough IPA Balance – August 31, 2026	$12,008.36
Fort Kearny-West IPA Balance – August 31, 2026	$15,760.41
South Dry Creek IPA Balance – August 31, 2026	$13,852.28
Fort Kearny IPA Balance – August 31, 2026	$11,015.68
Sacramento Creek IPA Balance – August 31, 2026	$9,235.82
North Dry Creek IPA Balance – August 31, 2026	$11,574.26

Water Jamboree – August 31, 2026----------	$7,721.49
Odessa IPA – August 31, 2026----------	$21,182.64

Moved by Bilka, seconded by Grams, to accept the August 2026 Financial Report, and submit for audit. Motion carried.
AYE: Bilka, Garrelts, Grams, Harris, Hinrichs, Larson, Lundeen, Philips, Reynolds, Ryan, and Stade
NAY: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Bergstrom, Grimes

SPECIAL BILLS

Thorburn presented the VISA and Attorney bills for approval.

Moved by Reynolds, seconded by Phillips, to approve the Visa and Attorney bills. Motion carried.
AYE: Bilka, Garrelts, Grams, Harris, Hinrichs, Larson, Lundeen, Philips, Reynolds, Ryan, and Stade
NAY: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Bergstrom, Grimes

Thorburn provided the Board with current CD rates from Bruning State Bank and NPAIT. He recommended that the board limit CDs to twelve months but suggested that $300,000 could be invested. Lundeen commented that it would be better to divide the funds into multiple CDs, in case funds are needed before they mature.
Moved by Ryan, seconded by Larson, to accept the August 2026 Financial Report, and submit for audit. Motion carried.
AYE: Bilka, Garrelts, Grams, Harris, Hinrichs, Larson, Lundeen, Philips, Reynolds, Ryan, and Stade
NAY: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Bergstrom, Grimes

NRCS REPORT

FSA Farm Plans: There were no plans to approve.

Activity and Progress Report: Koerner provided a review of NRCS activities in the district over the past year. Over 40% of cropland in the NRD is enrolled in the CSP program. Tri-Basin also has 40% of CSP contracts active in the state.

COST SHARE REPORT

Well Decommissioning – Thorburn presented one well decommissioning cost-share application to approve.
Moved by Reynolds, seconded by Stade, to approve one well decommissioning cost-share application. Motion carried.
AYE: Bilka, Garrelts, Grams, Harris, Hinrichs, Larson, Lundeen, Philips, Reynolds, Ryan, and Stade
NAY: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Bergstrom, Grimes

NSWCP & NRD Applications – There were no NSWCP cost-share applications to approve.

GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT

There weren't any items for consideration.

OTHER BUSINESS

The public was given the opportunity to bring other specific business or non-agenda items before the board for comment or discussion. Thorburn introduced NRD Data Clerk, Abigail (Abby) Penny of Loomis.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Set FY 2026-27 tax asking (after hearing) After the public hearing on FY 2026-27 tax asking was closed at 2:38 PM, Garrelts asked the board to take action to determine the tax asking.

Motion by Grimes, seconded by Bilka to approve the FY 2026-27 property tax asking of $1,975,225.15, which will result in a district levy of 0.025529. Motion carried.
AYE: Bilka, Garrelts, Grams, Grimes, Harris, Hinrichs, Larson, Lundeen, Philips, Reynolds, Ryan, and Stade
NAY: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Bergstrom

NARD REPORT

NARD Report: NARD Fall Conference is scheduled for September 27 and 28 at the Younes Conference Center-South in Kearney. Reynolds and Thorburn explained two new resolutions proposed by Lower Platte-South NRD. One resolution proposes to provide revenue bond-issuing authority to NRDs. The other would allow NRDs to aggregate salaries in public notices. Salaries of individual staff are public information, but listing individual salaries in notices is expensive. After discussion, the consensus of the Board was to allow Reynolds and Stade to determine how to vote on these resolutions based on their knowledge of the issues and information provided during the conference.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Planning Committee- Committee recommendations from their most recent meeting will be discussed under "New Business".

Information, Education and Legislation Committee- the committee met Tuesday, September 16. Minutes aren't finished yet, but Thorburn asked the Board to take action on a committee recommendation so it can be acted on in a timely manner. The committee recommends that the Board authorize distribution of the Winter issue of *Tri-Basin Topics* to be distributed to all residential addresses within the District, so that more constituents will be made aware of the NRD and their activities. Wider distribution of the newsletter will result in greater cost. A typical newsletter issue sent to subscribers costs about $2000 to print and mail. The "all residential addresses" list will result in about three times the number of newsletters being printed and mailed. That cost will run about $5000. In past years, the District distributed the Fall issue via newspaper insert, but newspaper subscriptions have declined significantly over the past few years, so that mode of distribution isn't reaching as many constituents as in the past. Staff believe distributing the Winter issue will provide an opportunity for more district residents to order conservation trees.

Motion by Grams, seconded by Phillips to approve the I-E-L committee recommendation to send the Winter issue of *Tri-Basin Topics* to all addresses within the District. Motion carried.
AYE: Bilka, Garrelts, Grams, Grimes, Harris, Hinrichs, Larson, Lundeen, Philips, Reynolds, Ryan, and Stade
NAY: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Bergstrom

STAFF REPORTS & NECESSARY ACTION

Board Directives to Staff: Nothing to report.

Out-of-State Travel: There was no out-of-state travel to approve.

MONTHLY REPORTS

Republican Basin: Little attended the Republican River Compact Commission meeting in McCook on August 27.

Platte Basin: Platte Overappropriated Area Committee will meet on September 29 at the Younes Conference Center, after the conclusion of the NARD Fall Conference..

Sand Creek/Little Blue Basin: The Little Blue Basin IMP Progress Report meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 22 at 1 PM at the Minden Exchange Bank Community Room.

North Dry Creek: Refior shared a paper showing the maintained lengths of the District's various IPAs and cooperative drainage improvement projects. Spraying thistles and shredding.

Odessa IPA: Spraying thistles and shredding.

Sacramento Creek: Spraying thistles and shredding.

Fort Kearny: Spraying thistles and shredding.

Fort Kearny West: Spraying thistles and shredding.

South Dry Creek: Spraying thistles and shredding.

Whiskey Slough: Spraying thistles and shredding.

Middle Lost Creek: Spraying thistles and shredding.

Lake Seldom: Nothing to report

CoHyst/Platte Basin Coalition: Nothing to report.

Rainwater Basin Joint Venture: The next Board meeting will be October 23 at the Whooping Crane Trust Office, south of Alda NE.

Platte-Republican Diversion & Republican Basin Augmentation Well: A meeting of the PRD board scheduled for September 15 was postponed due to lack of public notice. It will be rescheduled for October.

CNPPID Report: Dicke reported that irrigation season is over. Lake McConaughy is at 22.1% capacity. CNPPID plans to deliver a full supply of irrigation water in 2027.

NEW BUSINESS

Consider ONE RED agreement with NDWEE- Thorburn presented a proposed agreement with NDWEE to have the NRD participate in the new ONE RED groundwater protection cost-share program. The District will receive up to $230,000 over three years as reimbursement for administrative costs. There was discussion about various aspects of the new program.

Moved by Reynolds, seconded by Grimes to authorize Thorburn to enter into an agreement with NDWEE to administer the ONE RED cost-share program, with the understanding that no additional staff will be hired to oversee the program. Motion carried.
AYE: Bilka, Garrelts, Grams, Grimes, Harris, Hinrichs, Larson, Lundeen, Philips, Reynolds, Ryan, and Stade
NAY: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Bergstrom

Consider allocating water use on new supplemental-to-surface water well permits- The committee recommends that the board add a condition to all new Supplemental-to-Surface (Commingled) well permits that will require permittees to limit groundwater pumping to 15" per acre over five years. Allocations will be reviewed any time that CNPPID finds that it is unable to deliver a full supply of water. New Commingled well permittees would not be eligible to enroll fields irrigated by these newly permitted wells in the water Conservation Incentive Program (WCIP). The Board discussed the proposal at length. They also considered various alternatives to the recommendation. Thorburn explained that the board has three options to regulate commingled well owners. We can impose additional regulations on new Commingled well permits as the committee proposes, we can add conditions to all commingled well permits issued since 2004 (Approximately 125 wells) or we can regulate all Commingled wells (approximately 700 wells). Reynolds noted that the District's current groundwater management rules provide a process for managing groundwater declines.

Moved by Reynolds, seconded by Bilka to Table discussion on the committee recommendation until February 2027. MOTION WITHDRAWN

At this time, the board went into Executive Session to get clarification from District legal counsel on a legal matter related to the TBNRD Groundwater Management rules.

PERSONNEL AND LEGAL MATTERS

Moved by Ryan, seconded by Bilka to move to Executive Session to discuss legal matters at 3:38 pm. Motion carried.
AYE: Bilka, Garrelts, Grams, Grimes, Harris, Hinrichs, Larson, Lundeen, Philips, Reynolds, Ryan, and Stade
NAY: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Bergstrom

Moved by Grimes, seconded by Grams to move out of the Executive Session to discuss legal matters at 3:52 pm. Motion carried.
AYE: Bilka, Garrelts, Grams, Grimes, Harris, Hinrichs, Larson, Lundeen, Philips, Reynolds, Ryan, and Stade
NAY: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Bergstrom

Consider rescheduling October Board meeting- Garrelts asked the board to consider rescheduling the October meeting on Wednesday, October 28 to allow time for harvest work. There was discussion about whether to hold the meeting in the afternoon or evening.

Moved by Bilka, seconded by Reynolds to reschedule the October Board meeting to Wednesday, October 28 at 1:30 PM. Motion failed.
AYE: Bilka, Garrelts, Philips
NAY: Grams, Grimes, Harris, Hinrichs, Larson, Ryan, Stade and Lundeen
ABSTAIN: Reynolds
ABSENT: Bergstrom

Moved by Ryan, seconded by Grimes to reschedule the October Board meeting to Wednesday, October 28 at 7:30 PM. Motion carried.
AYE: Grams, Grimes, Harris, Hinrichs, Larson, Lundeen, Philips, Reynolds, Ryan, and Stade
NAY: Bilka, Garrelts
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Bergstrom

COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

NEXT BOARD MEETING

TBNRD Regular Board Meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 28, 2026, at 7:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:56 p.m.

DIRECTORS PRESENT

Joe Bilka, Todd Garrelts, Joel Grams, David Grimes, Ed Harris, Rob Hinrichs, Joe Larson, Brad Lundeen, Reed Philips, and Larry Reynolds, Jeff Ryan, and Andrew Stade.

OTHERS PRESENT:

John Thorburn, Tammy Fahrenbruch, Nolan Little, Cammie Kerner, Scott Dicke, Abby Penny, Lisa Schroeder, and Dalton Refior.

Respectfully Submitted:

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John Thorburn, Manager

INDEX OF BOARD DECISIONS
TRI-BASIN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
September 19, 2026

ID	Motion #	Category	Subject	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Motion
