

Pursuant to the Open Record's Act: The minutes of the Rural Water District No. 17, LeFlore County are available to its members upon request. Copy rates are posted at the RWD No. 17 LC office and on file with the County Clerk. Approved minutes will also be available at our website

<https://lcrwd17.myruralwater.com>

Rural Water District No. 17, LeFlore County

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

August 26, 2025

6:00 PM

- Call to Order: Vicki Cearnal called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.
- Prayer: Vicki Cearnal led the meeting with prayer.
- Roll Call: Vicki Cearnal, Chairperson, present. Jean Conklin, Vice-Chairperson, absent. Deborah Butler, Treasurer, absent. Kendle Ortiz, Secretary, present. Ronny Blake, Member at Large, present. Billy Page, Water Operator, present and Shelly Anderson, Office Manager, present. Others present were Buck Roba, Kelly Pipkins, Bernadine Himes, Kenneth Winkenwerder, Catherine Furney, Bob Cruse, Tia Pollick, Dave Conklin and Brian Knox. Sign In Sheet will be filed with meeting minutes.
- Approval of Agenda: Vicki Cearnal asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Kendle Ortiz made a motion to approve the agenda. Jean Conklin seconded the motion. Vicki Cearnal voted aye. Jean Conklin voted aye. Kendle Ortiz voted aye. Ronny Blake voted aye. Motion carried.
- Secretary's Report: Kendle Ortiz stated that she had emailed the minutes for the July 1<sup>st</sup> and August 8<sup>th</sup> meetings to the board earlier in the month. Kendle Ortiz stated she had emailed the minutes for the August 19<sup>th</sup> Special Called meeting to the board earlier that day. Kendle Ortiz asked if there were any questions or amendments. There were none. Jean Conklin made a motion to approve the minutes from the July 1<sup>st</sup>, August 8<sup>th</sup> and August 19<sup>th</sup> meetings. Ronny Blake seconded the motion. Vicki Cearnal voted aye. Jean Conklin voted aye. Kendle Ortiz voted aye. Ronny Blake voted aye. Motion carried.
- Treasurer's Report: Vicki Cearnal stated that she would present the Treasurer's Report that Deborah Butler had prepared. Vicki Cearnal stated that Deborah Butler was absent due to illness. Vicki stated that Deborah Butler had been doing all the office duties including billing and bookkeeping and that in our audit all our financial procedures were in line except we had an issue with needing to separate the billing and bookkeeping duties from the board. Vicki Cearnal stated that she wanted to introduce Shelly Anderson, the new office manager who Deborah Butler was training to take over those roles. Vicki stated that this Friday would be the last day of training for Shelly as Deborah was resigning and Friday would be her last day on the board. Vicki stated that Deborah had said it had been her honor to serve on the board for District 17 and that she would be available to answer questions for Shelly if she needed assistance. There was a discussion regarding the qualifications for being the Treasurer. Kendle Ortiz made a motion to

approve the Treasurer's Report. Ronny Blake seconded the motion. Vicki Cearnal voted aye. Jean Conklin voted aye. Kendle Ortiz voted aye. Ronny Blake voted aye. Motion carried.

- **Silk Purse Project Update:** Jean Conklin handed out to the members an update report that included a list of needs for the project. The report will be filed with the meeting minutes. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the project. There was a discussion regarding the electrical damage and the resulting repairs to the office building. Jean stated that since the repairs were not in the budget that a Choctaw grant application is in process. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the electrical repair and the grant application. Jean stated that the board is planning a special gathering to acknowledge all our donors in October, especially Choctaw Nation. Jean stated that we are very grateful for all the wonderful help we have received. Jean stated it was especially nice working with people who are interested in investing in our community and our water district and to those of you who help and support and encourage us, we offer a sincere thank you. Jean stated that the Silk Purse Project still has some needs and that in the report she passed out at the bottom was a list of needs and if anyone wanted to donate any money, materials or in-kind labor we would be very happy to accept the assistance. Vicki Cearnal stated she wanted to thank Jean Conklin for all her work on this project. Vicki stated that anytime you have contractors and others working in the building there needs to be someone on hand to oversee that and Jean had been overseeing all of that as well as doing a lot of work herself. Vicki stated that Jean had been working very hard on this project, asking for donations and cutting the bills from the contractors and really stretching the money for the office repairs to get as much done as possible. Vicki stated that the project should be completed in about a month or so. Kendle Ortiz stated that she also wanted to thank Jean for taking on this project. Kendle stated that Jean had put so much work into it, and it truly was an amazing transformation, and she was so thankful for Jean.
- **Grants Update:** Vicki Cearnal stated she would be giving an update on current grants that have been awarded and grants that have been applied for. Vicki stated that the Standpipe project was due to begin very soon probably in 2 to 3 weeks, and the first load of materials had been delivered. Vicki stated we had the first invoice for those materials that would be addressed later in the meeting. Vicki stated that the Stand Pipe Project would take approximately 1-1/2 years to be completed. Vicki stated that we had received a USDA grant for \$149,000 to correct the river bore at River Road but that we probably would not receive that money until the end of the year. Vicki stated we had also received a \$41,000 grant for the electrical at booster 1 and that project probably would not start until the end of the year. Vicki Cearnal stated that we were applying for the Choctaw Development Fund the electrical repair at the office and the ADA ramp. Vicki stated that the First Baptist Church had volunteered to install the ramp once it was obtained. Vicki stated we were applying for a REAP grant for new office computer equipment and a printer. Vicki Cearnal stated we were applying for a RIG for no more than \$30,000. Vicki Cearnal stated that we were still waiting to hear back regarding the ARPA \$1 Million grant for Pipe Springs. Vicki Cearnal stated she was also communicating with Choctaw Health and Human Services regarding Pipe Springs as well.
- **Stand Pipe Project Update:** This was discussed in the Grant Update.
- **New Business:**

- 2024 Audit Approval: Vicki Cearnal stated that the 2024 Audit had been completed and there was a copy here at the office and it was filed with the Court Clerk's office in July as required. Vicki Cearnal asked if there were any questions regarding the audit. There were none. Kendle Ortiz made a motion to approve the 2024 Audit. Jean Conklin seconded the motion. Vicki Cearnal voted aye. Jean Conklin voted aye. Kendle Ortiz voted aye. Ronny Blake voted aye. Motion carried.
- Hardship Approvals: Vicki Cearnal stated that the board had three hardship applications to approve. Vicki stated it was accounts 297, 363 and 395. Kendle Ortiz made a motion to approve the hardship applications for accounts 297, 363 and 395. Jean Conklin seconded the motion. Vicki Cearnal voted aye. Jean Conklin voted aye. Kendle Ortiz voted aye. Ronny Blake voted aye. Motion carried.
- Review and Approval of Stand Pipe project draw for SUDA grant – Materials: Vicki Cearnal stated that the Lone Hickory Cattle Company in Buffalo Valley had been awarded the Stand Pipe Project and we had received the first invoice from them for materials in the amount of \$22,381. Vicki stated that the materials were stored locally. Vicki stated that the invoice once approved by the board would go to the engineers for review and approval and once returned to the board it would be sent to Choctaw Nation for payment. Kendle Ortiz made a motion to accept and approve the invoice for payment. Ronny Blake seconded the motion. Vicki Cearnal voted aye. Jean Conklin voted aye. Kendle Ortiz voted aye. Ronny Blake voted aye. Motion carried.
- Resolution for RIG 4 grant application for water operator equipment: Vicki Cearnal read the resolution into the meeting minutes.

#### RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING RESOLUTION FOR OKLAHOMA RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT

WHEREAS, Rural Water District #17 in LeFlore County has a water loss ratio consistently over 50% monthly due to poor installation of the water line 25 years ago that has depleted their resources; and there is danger of loss of water service for customers and WHEREAS, Rural Water District #17 in LeFlore County is financially incapable of remedying the situation which threatens the public health and welfare of the people of Big Cedar, Oklahoma and

WHEREAS, It is justifiable and in the best interest of the citizens of Big Cedar, Oklahoma, in LeFlore County, to expedite the preparation and submission of an application for financial assistance to improve the water line and seek an Oklahoma Rural Water Association Rural Infrastructure Grant for no more than \$30,000.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that a situation is hereby recognized and declared to exist in LeFlore County, Oklahoma and Vicki Cearnal, Chairperson of the Board and/or Kendle Ortiz, Secretary of the Board are hereby authorized and directed to sign an application and related documents necessary to file and process the grant on behalf of the Rural Water District #17 in LeFlore County, Oklahoma.

Jean Conklin made a motion to accept the Resolution as read into the minutes. Ronny Blake seconded the motion. Vicki Cearnal voted aye. Jean Conklin voted aye. Kendle Ortiz voted aye. Ronny Blake voted aye. Motion carried.

- Resolution for KEDDO REAP grant application for office computer equipment: Vicki Cearnal read the Resolution into the minutes.

## RESOLUTION

### AUTHORIZING APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE RURAL ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN

WHEREAS: The Rural Water District No. 17 desires to seek funding from the Rural Economic Action Plan Fund(s) for the acquisition of office computer equipment to include external hard drives, printer and desktop set up.

WHEREAS: It is in the best interest of the Rural Water District No. 17, LeFlore County, Oklahoma to expedite the preparation and submission of an application or applications for financial assistance from the Rural Economic Action Plan fund(s), in the form of a grant.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, Vicki Cearnal, Chairman of the Board and/or Kendle Ortiz, Secretary of the Board be hereby authorized and directed to sign any and all applications and related documents necessary to file and process any and all grant applications through the Rural Economic Action Plan fund(s) on behalf of the Rural Water District , No. 17, LeFlore County, Oklahoma.

- Kendle Ortiz made a motion to accept the Resolution as read into the minutes. Ronny Blake seconded the motion. Vicki Cearnal voted aye. Jean Conklin voted aye. Kendle Ortiz voted aye. Ronny Blake voted aye. Motion carried.
- Action on resignation of Deborah Butler: Vicki Cearnal stated that Deborah Butler had submitted her resignation from the board effective August 31<sup>st</sup>. Vicki Cearnal stated we were saddened by her resignation. Vicki Cearnal stated a statement that she wanted to read in front of the members present. Vicki Cearnal stated we are saddened to accept the resignation of Deborah Butler from the Board, but we cannot let this moment pass without expressing our deepest gratitude. Over the past four years, Deborah has given thousands of hours to this District, always with dedication, vision and a willingness to do the hard work that often goes unseen. When she joined, progress seemed impossible. We were told that grants were out of reach and that too many hurdles stood in our way. Deborah proved otherwise. She strengthened our financial records, organized years of paper files, and successfully guided the Governor's Sustainability Program to completion. Because of her leadership and determination, doors that once seemed closed are now wide open. Thank you, Deborah, for your tenacity, your diligence, and your vision. The largest project ever undertaken by this District will break ground in the coming weeks – a lasting testament to your commitment to stable, sustainable water for generations to come. Kendle Ortiz made a motion to accept Deborah Butler's resignation. Jean Conklin seconded the motion. Vicki Cearnal voted aye. Jean Conklin voted aye. Kendle Ortiz voted aye. Ronny Blake voted aye. Motion carried.

- September 9<sup>th</sup> regular meeting will be postponed until September 16, 2025: Vicki Cearnal stated that we would be moving the regular board meeting from September 9<sup>th</sup> to September 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Ronny Blake stated that he had a question before the meeting adjourned. Ronny stated that he had received an email from a customer regarding their bill. Ronny stated the customer had a large leak and was wondering what could be done about her bill. Ronny stated that he did not know the policies here regarding leaks. Ronny stated that in other districts sometimes they would sell the customer the water at cost but that he was unsure about this district's policies. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the district's policies regarding leaks and payments. There was a discussion regarding hardship agreements and other options for repayment. There was a lengthy discussion regarding Servline leak insurance. Kendle Ortiz stated that we should add a discussion regarding adding the Servline leak insurance at the General Membership Meeting in January. Vicki Cearnal stated that would be a great idea.
- Adjournment: Vicki Cearnal made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Kendle Ortiz seconded the motion. Vicki Cearnal voted aye. Jean Conklin voted aye. Kendle Ortiz voted aye. Ronny Blake voted aye. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:28 PM.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Seal: \_\_\_\_\_