

MINUTES
LANCASTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COUNTY-CITY BUILDING, ROOM 113
TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2020
10:30 A.M.

Commissioners present: Sean Flowerday, Chair; Rick Vest, Vice Chair; Roma Amundson; Deb Schorr; and Christa Yoakum

Others present: Kerry Eagan, Chief Administrative Officer; Ann Ames, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer; Dan Nolte, County Clerk; and Cori Beattie, Deputy County Clerk

Advance public notice of the Board of Commissioners meeting was posted on the County-City Building bulletin board and the Lancaster County, Nebraska, web site and emailed to the media on March 9, 2020.

The chair opened the meeting at 10:31 a.m. and noted the location of the open meetings act.

1) DISCUSSION OF CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLANS FOR 24/7 AGENCIES:

Flowerday said the Board is seeking input on how the County will function during potential absences resulting from the corona virus and is exploring potential policy changes to address such issues.

Flowerday provided a list of questions that all agencies and offices were to discuss at this meeting:

1. Where does your department interface with the public?
2. Does your department regularly interface with especially vulnerable populations?
3. How can we mitigate contact with those populations and still provide quality service?
4. At first glance, how many essential vs. non-essential staff does your department have?
5. How easily could non-essential staff work from home if the County implemented a telecommute policy?
6. What other problems do you anticipate?
7. What assistance do you need?

The Board asked all agencies to provide a written plan of continuity of operations for their specific agency no later than Friday, March 20, 2020.

Scott Holmes, Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department Environmental Health Manager, provided an overview of the situation. Presently in Lincoln, 41 people are being self-quarantined and monitored for signs of infection. Some of this group had exposure to the virus while attending an event in Fremont recently. Holmes said the Health Department is working with the medical community, schools, business community and childcare providers to keep them updated on the situation with COVID-19 locally.

Doug McDaniel, Human Resource Director, discussed the possibility of employees working from home. He covered some of the issues involved, including measuring productivity, accounting for time at work, handling workers compensation injuries that occur at home and addressing security issues for electronic devices being used outside of the office.

David Young, Information Services Director, said the County will need to address hardware needs and availability to work from home. Use of personal devices for County work can cause potential security issues. Some workers may not have broadband access, and it would cost around \$50,000 to increase the number of connections to the network. He asked that any agency with questions email or call Information Services.

A. Lancaster County Sheriff

Todd Duncan, Chief Deputy Sherriff, and John Vik, Deputy Sheriff Captain, said they have contact with the public daily, encountering vulnerable population with calls for service at accidents and at nursing facilities with coroner services. They have masks and gloves and want to acquire face shields and gowns.

Some of the Sheriff's staff is tied to the court system, so they are working with them on a contingency plan for day-to-day operations. Some civilian staff may be able to work from home, but others need to be in the Sheriff's Office.

Duncan questioned how soon ill employees could return to work and how to reduce the chance of spreading if exposed.

Doug McDaniel said there are several potential issues to address, such as how to handle an employee returning from travel, a vulnerable employee requesting an absence and compensation for employees in these instances.

B. Lancaster County Jail

Alicia Renville, Well-Path Health Services Administrator; Julie Wilkason, Well-Path Nurse Practitioner; and Rick Gray, Jail Administrator, reported.

C. Lancaster County Youth Services Center

Michelle Schindler, Youth Services Center Director, and Danielle Winters, Youth Services Center Health Services Administrator, reported.

D. Lancaster County Crisis Center

Scott Etherton, Crisis Center Director, and Anita Leonard, Nursing Supervisor, reported.

E. Lancaster County Engineering

Pam Dingman, County Engineer, reported. She noted some staff members with low amounts of sick leave and questioned if these employees could be required to stay home. She also asked for clarification on FMLA (Family Medical Leave Act) issues.

F. Lancaster County Community Corrections

Kim Etherton, Community Corrections Director, reported. She said much of what they do is determined by the courts.

G. Lancaster County Emergency Management

Jim Davidsaver, Emergency Management Director, reported. He said they have a small staff but work with many volunteers. His department could assist with problems.

2) DISCUSSION OF CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLANS FOR COURTS:

A. District Court

B. County Court

C. Juvenile Court

Troy Hawk, Clerk of the District Court; Jared Gavin, District Court Administrator; Becky Bruckner, County Court Administrator; and Theresa Emmert, Juvenile Court Administrator, reported. They said there is still a large amount of paperwork to process for both civil and criminal cases, including protection orders. For the courts to close, the directive would need to come from the Nebraska Supreme Court Justice.

Flowerday exited the meeting at 12:22 p.m.

The meeting was recessed at 12:22 p.m. and reconvened at 12:29 p.m.

3) DISCUSSION OF CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLANS FOR COUNTY AGENCIES

A. Lancaster County Administration

Ann Ames, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, reported.

B. Lancaster County Assessor/Register of Deeds

Rob Ogden, County Assessor, discussed network security issues for staff working from home. He also inquired about FMLA issues.

C. Lancaster County Attorney

Pat Condon, County Attorney, gave an overview of issues that would impact his office.

Flowerday returned to the meeting at 12:33 p.m.

D. Lancaster County Budget & Fiscal

Dennis Meyer, Budget and Fiscal Director, outlined solutions for his office.

E. Lancaster County Clerk

Dan Nolte, County Clerk; Cori Beattie, Deputy County Clerk; and Kevin Nelson, Accounting Operations Manager, discussed the scenario for the Clerk's Office. Nelson noted that with the current payroll system, there will be a fair amount of manual calculations necessary if the payroll tax changes.

F. Lancaster County Election Commission

Dave Shively, Election Commissioner, said they may have to look at changing some polling locations that are currently being used in retirement facilities.

Vest exited the meeting at 12:40 p.m.

G. Lancaster County Extension

Karen Wobig, Extension Education Unit Leader, said some of the community outreach programs could be suspended.

H. Lincoln/Lancaster County Human Services

Sara Hoyle, Human Services Director, said her department serves and interacts with a vulnerable population. She noted General Assistance applicants and non-profits organizations as examples. She said some things could be done by mail to reduce contact with people, but they could not eliminate public contact.

I. Lancaster County Property Management

Kerin Peterson, Facilities and Properties Director, said her department serves other departments and agencies.

J. Lancaster County Public Defender

Joe Nigro, Public Defender, said his department could do initial interviews with clients by phone in some instances, but they could not eliminate seeing clients in person. While video visits may reduce the need to interact with clients, it will not eliminate it.

K. Lancaster County Records Management

Brian Pillard, Records Coordinator, asked if the County would make provisions for a voluntary quarantine.

L. Lancaster County Treasurer

Rachel Garver, County Treasurer, talked about her office's public contact and some of the issues they would need to address if the virus becomes widespread.

M. Lancaster County Veterans Services

Rick Ringlein, Veterans Service Officer, reported on how the department would continue to serve veterans if they could not meet directly with people.

N. Lancaster County Weed Control

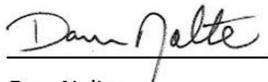
Brent Meyer, Weed Control Superintendent, said their public contact occurs primarily during the summer with landowners in the field. He asked if a sample of a contingency plan could be provided to departments.

Schorr asked Sue Eckley, Risk Management Director, if the County had pandemic coverage. Eckley said they did not.

Amundson questioned if there was an exception to FMLA if an employee is ordered to stay home.

4) ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Amundson moved and Schorr seconded to adjourn at 1:39 p.m. Schorr, Amundson, Yoakum and Flowerday voted yes. Vest was absent. Motion carried 4-0.



Dan Nolte
Lancaster County Clerk

