

**STAFF MEETING MINUTES  
LANCASTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
THURSDAY, JANUARY 6, 2022  
COUNTY CITY BUILDING, 555 S. 10<sup>TH</sup> STREET  
ROOM 112 - CHAMBERS**

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

Others Present: David Derbin, Chief Administrative Officer; Kristy Bauer, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer; and Leslie Brestel, County Clerk's Office

*Advanced public notice of the meeting was posted on the County-City Building bulletin board and the Lancaster County, Nebraska, website and emailed to the media on January 5, 2022. Notice was also published in the Lincoln Journal Star print and digital editions on January 3, 2022.*

The Chair noted the location of the Open Meetings Act and opened the meeting at 8:30 a.m.

**AGENDA ITEM**

**1. APPROVAL OF STAFF MEETING MINUTES FOR DECEMBER 16, 2021**

**MOTION:** Vest moved and Amundson seconded approval of the minutes. Yoakum, Flowerday, Vest, Amundson and Schorr voted yes. Motion carried 5-0.

**2. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE – Joe Kohout and Brennen Miller, Kissel, Kohout, ES Associates LLC**

Kohout reviewed the weekly report (Exhibit 1) noting that 114 bills, constitutional amendments and interim studies were introduced. He said LB242 (Provide for county bridges under the Political Subdivisions Construction Alternatives Act) is on the priority list. He also noted he has been in discussions with the Douglas County lobbyists and with the Nebraska Association of County Officials (NACO) about the amendment to LB310 (Change inheritance tax rates and exemption amounts) which is anticipated to have a priority status.

Regarding LB73 (Direct a portion of the proceeds from the Nebraska Racetrack Gaming Act to county agricultural societies), Kohout said there is a meeting today with Senator Geist and he will have an update for the Board next week.

Concerning the Tri County Breakfast, Miller stated it will be in Zoom format on January 21. Due to the virtual nature of the meeting, only two members of the Board can attend the meeting, as well as applicable senators and lobbyists. Schorr and Yoakum will attend the meeting.

**3. ELECTED OFFICIAL SALARIES FOR 2023-2026**

Derbin reviewed the report and recommendations (see agenda packet). He said there is a recommended 3% salary increase for all elected positions in 2023 with additional increases for the County Sheriff, County Treasurer and County Commissioners which were found to be out of

alignment with comparable positions. For the cost-of-living formula as it applies to 2024-2026, a cap of 5% for salary increases is recommended.

Derbin thanked the committee members and staff for their efforts on the reports.

Judy Halstead, Elected Officials Salaries Committee Chair, introduced the committee members including Mike Thew, Ginna Claussen, Kerry Eagan and Gwen Thorpe and thanked the staff for their efforts. She stated the committee had to balance the comparability issues. They used the same comparables for the elected positions as the non-elected County positions to determine comparability with like entities. The committee also looked at elected officials' increased duties during the past four years as well as the budgetary impacts of any recommended increases, which resulted in the 5% salary cap within the salary formula. For future elected officials, it is only fair that incremental increases be made to the salaries.

Vest thanked Halstead for her leadership in this process. Amundson also thanked the committee for their efforts and dedication.

**MOTION:** Amundson moved and Yoakum seconded to authorize Derbin to move forward with the recommendations.

Eagan clarified that the salaries are set for positions, not particular individuals. He added that the Board could approve the salaries as recommended or phase in the increases which would minimize the impact to the budget.

**ROLL CALL:** Flowerday, Vest, Amundson, Yoakum and Schorr voted yes. Motion carried 5-0.

**4. UNCLASSIFIED SALARIES** – Doug McDaniel, Director, Lincoln-Lancaster County Human Resources

**MOTION:** Flowerday moved and Vest seconded to increase salaries 4% for the unclassified staff, and include additional adjustments for the following positions due to comparability issues and increased duties and responsibilities:

- Chief Administrative Officer, an additional \$3,000
- Budget and Fiscal Director, an additional \$1,500
- Facilities and Properties Director, an additional \$1,500
- Human Services Administrator, an additional \$3,000
- Emergency Management Deputy Director, to place the salary at 95% of the Emergency Management Director's salary

Schorr noted this would be on the upcoming Tuesday agenda as a resolution.

The Board thanked the Human Resources staff for their efforts.

**ROLL CALL:** Vest, Amundson, Yoakum, Flowerday and Schorr voted yes. Motion carried 5-0.

**5. COUNTY BROADBAND** – David Young, Director, Lincoln-Lancaster County Information Services

Young distributed maps of the project area (Exhibit 3, also in agenda packet) and reviewed the presentation (see agenda packet).

Vest asked how this plan impacts the communities. Young answered this plan builds the core infrastructure that allows private carriers to pull fiber from the conduits to the rural customers. This would drive down the price to allow fiber connection to those rural areas.

When asked about the blue and pink lines on the map (see Exhibit 3), Young said the blue lines provide redundant broadband service within the County and the pink lines are for access to other counties which could allow for partnerships on projects. He explained Bridge Act funding (\$30,000,000 reserved by Governor Ricketts for entities to apply for funding to connect rural communities to better internet access) could be used to build the infrastructure. Additional funds available to entities from the Public Service Act could be used to build fiber lines from the infrastructure to homes. He said the County building the infrastructure allows entities access to the Public Service Act funds.

Todd Hain, Director of Plan Operations at ALLO Communications, was available for questions.

Hain stated the Public Commission awarded ALLO a Nebraska Broadband Bridge program grant to construct a fiber network to the villages of Martell, Sprague and Hallam, which are small projects for ALLO. ALLO intends to partner with the County and use the proposed conduit system. The network to the homes needs to be completed in 2022. He noted ALLO will not build to those communities without the Bridge program or the proposed conduit system due to cost constraints.

Amundson asked what the alternative is if the project were approved and not constructed in a timely manner. Young said the Public Service Commission funds would not be available. He has been working with multiple carriers with the design of the project as well as the County Engineer's Office, the State of Nebraska and various staff and he is confident the project can be completed.

Vest inquired what assurances are realistic that the broadband network continues to expand to the rural areas once the conduit is built. Young answered the County will own the system and all of the decisions will be determined by the Board, including decisions based on the Request for Proposal (RFP), awarded contracts, operations, and accounting tasks. There are estimates for all parts of the project that were not included with the presentation since the project will be going out to bid. Schorr requested Young share detailed estimates with the Commissioners individually.

Concerning additional infrastructure funds at the federal level, Schorr asked if these funds go to communities and municipalities or the State. Young said his understanding was that all funds would go to the State for allocation to the Bridge Act program.

Schorr, Flowerday and Yoakum requested to see the funding before moving forward with decisions.

When asked about the construction and maintenance of the project, Young stated there is an interlocal agreement between City of Lincoln and Lancaster County to operate jointly-owned infrastructure. Regarding staffing, he felt one inspector/locator position would be necessary, whether

it be a Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) or the position could be contracted. The only other project cost is a cost split on the current fiber infrastructure position. That position also manages all the cell towers for the City. Concerning project maintenance, the proposed construction contract requests a 10-year maintenance bond. The County would own the plastic pipes and would be responsible for that maintenance. The fiberoptic carriers would be responsible for the cabling within the pipes.

Schorr requested Young provide the estimated dollar amounts to the Commissioners and continue the discussion at the next staff meeting.

## **6. COUNTY BOARD COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS**

Derbin noted the Juvenile Services Committee/Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice needed to be added to Amundson's committee list.

The committee assignments will move to the next Tuesday meeting.

### **COVID-19 UPDATE AND RESPONSE**

Derbin noted the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidance regarding COVID-19 has been changing and requested direction from the Board regarding the County's COVID 19 emergency response policy with the intent to take any changes to the Personnel Policy Board at their February meeting. He noted the changes would be mostly related to testing and returning to work.

It was the consensus of the Board to update the County's COVID-19 policy to align with the CDC guidance. The policy will go before the Personnel Policy Board with County Board action at a later date.

### **CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REPORT**

#### **A. Chief Deputy Salaries for 2022**

Derbin reviewed the salaries (see agenda packet).

It was the consensus of the Board to move the salary recommendations forward to a Tuesday meeting.

#### **B. Federal Lobbyist**

Derbin stated he felt with all of the funding available through the federal government that it would be helpful for the County to have a federal lobbyist specific to the County.

It was the consensus of the Board for Derbin to move forward with conversations to be brought back to a future staff meeting.

#### **C. Lincoln Chamber of Commerce 2022 Annual Meeting: February 16, 2022, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., at Lincoln Marriott Cornhusker Hotel**

Informational only.

**D. Tri-County Breakfast: Friday, January 21, 2022, 8:00 a.m.**

See agenda item 2.

**DEPUTY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REPORT**

**A. Youth Leadership Lincoln Seminar, January 28, 2022**

The item was removed from the agenda.

**DISCUSSION OF BOARD MEMBER MEETINGS ATTENDED**

**A. New Americans Task Force Meeting – Yoakum**

Yoakum reported there were discussions about the need for interpreters for the Afghan refugees, the Gateways for Growth community work and the informational report from the New American Economy.

**B. Southeast Nebraska Development District (SENDD) Board Meeting – Vest**

Vest stated he did not attend the meeting.

**BREAK**

The meeting was recessed at 9:42 a.m. and reconvened at 9:51 a.m.

**7. SOUTHEAST NEBRASKA DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT HOUSING PROGRAM UPDATE – Ryan Bauman, Housing Coordinator, SENDD**

Bauman reported one approved project has had the roof replaced and the windows are being worked on. He reviewed the proposed replacement of foundation walls project (see agenda packet). Dennis Meyer, Budget and Fiscal Officer, noted this project will be on the upcoming Tuesday agenda.

Concerning contractors, one contractor has removed himself from some projects due to time conflicts. The program now has a foundation contractor (see agenda packet). He noted contractors are difficult to find, especially those who are lead-based paint certified. Becoming lead-based paint certified is a one-day course for \$350. The Board felt assisting contractors with certification would be helpful.

Bauman noted both the City of Waverly and Village of Malcolm were awarded their own Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation (OOR) programs, totaling \$1,000,000. Bauer will compose a press release for these programs.

**8. COVID-19 UPDATE AND RESPONSE**

Item moved forward on agenda.

**9. CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REPORT**

- A. Chief Deputy Salaries for 2022
- B. Federal Lobbyist
- C. Lincoln Chamber of Commerce 2022 Annual Meeting: February 16, 2022, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., at Lincoln Marriott Cornhusker Hotel
- D. Tri-County Breakfast: Friday, January 21, 2022, 8:00 a.m.

Item moved forward on agenda.

**10. DEPUTY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REPORT**

- A. Youth Leadership Lincoln Seminar, January 28, 2022

Item moved forward on agenda.

**11. DISCUSSION OF BOARD MEMBER MEETINGS ATTENDED**

- A. New Americans Task Force Meeting – Yoakum
- B. Southeast Nebraska Development District (SEND) Board Meeting – Vest

Item moved forward on agenda.

**12. SCHEDULE OF BOARD MEMBER MEETINGS**

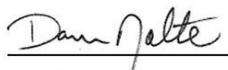
Informational only.

**13. EMERGENCY ITEMS**

There were no emergency items.

**14. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Vest moved and Flowerday seconded to adjourn at 10:01 a.m. Amundson, Yoakum Flowerday, Vest and Schorr voted yes. Motion carried 5-0.

  
Dan Nolte  
Lancaster County Clerk

