

**LANCASTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
ZELLE RETREAT  
TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2020  
COUNTY-CITY BUILDING  
ROOM 113 - THE BILL LUXFORD STUDIO  
11:30 A.M. TO 1:30 P.M.**

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

Others Present: Chad Thies, President, and Kate Abendroth, Specialist, Zelle Human Resources Solutions; Kerry Eagan, Chief Administrative Officer; Ann Ames, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer; and Cori Beattie, Deputy County Clerk

*Advance public notice of the Board of Commissioners Staff Meeting was posted on the County-City Building bulletin board and the Lancaster County, Nebraska web site and provided to the media on March 6, 2020.*

The Chair noted the location of the Open Meetings Act and opened the meeting at 11:37 a.m.

Flowerday thanked Eagan for his leadership during the recent events surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic.

**AGENDA ITEM**

**1. DISCUSSION OF SURVEY RESULTS SENT OUT BY ZELLE**

Thies noted that a four-question survey was previously sent to the County Board, Eagan, Ames and Dennis Meyer, Budget & Fiscal Officer. The questions were:

1. Please list the skills, talents and abilities that are important for the candidate to possess in order to be successful in the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) role.
2. What are the most important responsibilities you see this role fulfilling?
3. Are there aspects of this role as it is today that you see as "non-essential" to the success of the candidate?
4. Please list any other items that are important to you in this search process.

Predominant themes emerging from those surveyed were presented (Exhibits 1-4).

Additional skills, talents and/or abilities were outlined as follows: politically astute, proactive research for solutions to current problems, integrity, trustworthiness, confidence/courage, learner, versatility and humble (Exhibit 5).

Individuals were asked to pick their top four skills/talents/abilities from the list. Results included: (1) strong, effective communication, (2) trustworthiness, (3) strong facilitation skills and (4) ability to think big picture.

Discussion followed on most important responsibilities (Exhibit 6). Eagan explained that the CAO is the full-time eyes and ears of a part-time County Board. Additional common themes included: accessibility – both internal (departments) and County Board, providing resources/support and facilitating special advisory committees and other county programs. Flowerday added the CAO also prepares legislative testimony for Board Members.

Non-essential tasks were reviewed (Exhibit 7). It was noted that some items could be delegated to the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer or other administrative staff. There was consensus to retain the CAO's involvement with the retirement program and Emergency Management. It was noted that the County Attorney's Office could be asked to assist with General Assistance appeals or a hearing officer could be hired. It was also mentioned that the grants manager position may need to be resurrected in the future and supervision of Records Management could be transferred to the County Clerk's Office.

Other important items were discussed (Exhibit 8) including the desire for the CAO to have greater visibility and ICMA (International City/County Management Association) credentials (or to attain them in a timely manner) and to be politically neutral. Amundson added that the strategic plan is a hot button for her.

Discussion followed on director evaluations and how the traditional format does not fit the County's Open Meetings structure. Eagan noted that small group evaluations can be unfair and stressed the importance of continuing to seek a legislative solution so that these evaluations could be performed by the entire County Board in Executive Session. Schorr asked Eagan to draft proposed language prior to his departure.

## **2. SWOT ANALYSIS (STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS) FOR THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER (CAO) POSITION**

Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were prioritized (Exhibits 9-12).

## **3. CREATION OF ACTION PLAN FOR CAO SEARCH**

Thies said they will finess the CAO job description based on the information gathered today prior to releasing it to the general public. He noted that a copy of a previous job description was forwarded to Zelle (Exhibit 13). The search will be conducted nationwide with the position being advertised on various websites and/or job boards. Candidate flow will be tracked weekly with results being forwarded to Ames.

Thies said Zelle will actively seek out individuals and Commissioners can also forward names of potential candidates to them. Once candidates are identified, Zelle will perform phone screenings followed by phone interviews. An assessment tool using 25 different competencies will be utilized. A report on these scores will be compiled, as well as a profile, prior to bringing in the top candidate(s) for a personal interview.

Schorr reminded Thies that personal interviews would be public and that the COVID-19 situation may impact how the interviews are conducted, i.e., a virtual meeting may be necessary.

Regarding a possible hiring date, it was estimated to be on or about July 1. Eagan said the Board will also need to determine the amount of overlap between him and the incoming CAO.

Thies said Zelle will keep the position posted at the top of their job list. It will also be posted on the County's website.

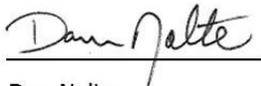
Vest inquired about the salary range. It was noted the previous salary range would remain but it would not be posted.

#### 4. QUESTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

See Item 3.

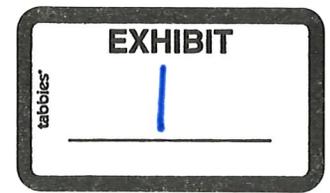
#### 5. ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION:** Schorr moved and Vest seconded to adjourn the meeting at 1:47 p.m. Amundson, Yoakum, Schorr, Vest and Flowerday voted yes. Motion carried 5-0.



Dan Nolte  
Lancaster County Clerk





**Question 1: Please list the skills, talents, and abilities that are important for the candidate to possess in order to be successful in the CAO role.**

- Extensive knowledge of Nebraska laws/statutes
- Strong writing abilities (doesn't have to be an attorney)
- Strong facilitation skills
- Ability to remain neutral on political issues
- Strong, effective communication
- Ability to work with a board and build consensus when needed
- Listening skills
- Understands basic principles of accounting
- Ability to prioritize and time manage
- Ability to think big picture
- Strong interpersonal skills

**Question 2: What are the most important responsibilities you see this role fulfilling?**

- Voice and face of County Board
- Develop and implement policies established by the board
- Point person and administrator of the Board's legislative agenda
- Facilitate Board's Thursday staff meetings; gatekeeper of agenda
- Administrator of County's Contribution Pension Program
- Oversee County's Visitor Promotion Program
- Assist Human Services Director with administration of General Assistance Program
- Facilitator of the Justice Council
- Facilitator of special advisory committees and task forces
- Oversee the Board's policy on obtaining legal opinions from County Attorney

**Question 3: Are there aspects of this role as it is today that you see as “non-essential” to the success of the candidate?**

- Improvement Fund Grant Contracts
  - Could be done by other staff with oversight
- Monitors technology purchases
  - Could be done by administrative staff
- General responsibilities as Director of the Administrative Services Department
  - Could be delegated to administrative staff
- County Pension Fund
  - Others to assist
- Staff Meeting Agenda
  - Less emphasis on administrative work
- General Assistance Appeals, Retirement and Deferred Compensation, Admin to Budget and Fiscal
  - Possibly move?
- Supervision of Records Management, Emergency Management Liaison
  - Possibly remove?

**Question 4: Please list any other items that are important to you in this search process.**

- Political neutrality
- CAO works for the entire board
- CAO is providing Board members with timely and accurate information they need to fulfill statutory duties
- CAO should be more visible with county government employees, within the community, and a resource across the state
- Changes in terms of supervision of department heads
  - If made, clear parameters and expectations need to be made to department heads
- Does the CAO need certain credentials? ICMA, etc.
- Development and administration of strategic plan
- Open communication with commissioners

# Skills, talents, abilities = Success MOS

EXHIBIT  
5

- Extensive knowledge of Nebraska laws/statutes
- Strong writing abilities (doesn't have to be an attorney)
- Strong facilitation skills
- Ability to remain neutral on political issues
- Strong, effective communication
- Ability to work w/a board and build consensus when needed
- Listening Skills
- Understands basic principles of accounting
- Ability to prioritize tasks and time manage
- Ability to think big picture
- Strong interpersonal skills

- **politically astute**

- **proactive research for**

**Solutions to current problems**

- **INTEGRITY**

- **TRUSTWORTHINESS**

- **CONFIDENCE; COURAGE**

- **LEARNER**

- **VERSATILITY**

- **HUMBLE**

# Most Important Responsibilities

- Voice and face of County Board
- Develop and implement policies established by the Board
- Point person and administrator of the Board's legislative agenda
- Facilitate Board's Thursday Staff meetings, gatekeeper of agenda
- Administrator of county's Contribution Pension program
- Oversee County's Visitor Promotion Program
- Assist Human Services Director w/ administration of General Assistance Program
- Facilitator of the Justice Council
- Facilitator of special advisory committees and task forces
- oversee the Board's policy on obtaining legal opinions from County Attorney

+writing

~~point of first contact~~  
- accessible for internal contact

• Increase accessibility to the board  
initial

• RESOURCE and SUPPORT

• Special Advisory committees  
+ all above

# "Non-essential" Tasks

- Improvement Fund Grant Contracts
  - ↳ could be done by other staff with oversight
- Monitors technology purchases
  - ↳ could be done by administrative staff ✓
- General responsibilities as Director of the Administrative Services Department
  - ↳ could be delegated to Deputy CAO  
or admin. assistant ✓
- Tracking and keeping published list of policies up to date
  - ↳ could be delegated to administrative staff ✓
- County Pension Fund
  - ↳ others to assist
- Staff Meeting Agenda
  - ↳ less emphasis on administrative work
  - ↳ legal background helpful
- General Assistance Appeals, Retirement and Deferred Comp., Admin to Budget and Fiscal.
  - ↳ possibly move?
- Supervision of Records Management, Emergency Management Liaison
  - ↳ possibly remove?

move

leave

# Other Important Items

- Political neutrality - **OK w/background**
- CAD works for the entire board ✓
- CAD is providing Board members with timely and accurate information they need to fulfill statutory duties
- CAD should be more visible w/ county government employees, within the community, and a resource across the state

Ann?

- **ongoing** changes in terms of **facilitation** ~~supervision~~ of department heads  
↳ If made, clear parameters and expectations need to be made to department heads

- Does the CAD need certain credentials? ICMA, etc.
- Development and administration of strategic plan
- Open communication w/ commissioners

Required or  
Obtain in  
timely manner

# STRENGTHS

- work w/committed individuals in public service
- never boring
- high level of trust in this role
- part of shaping the community
- unique blend of interpersonal and individual work
- great benefits! competitive pay
- work/life balance
- work w/good people
- good retention
- pride in local government

# SS WEAKNESSES

- working for 5 people
- ~~mandates~~ challenging to navigate
- aging workforce
- limited funding for staff  
(Responsible growth)
- Not a decision maker (normally)
- Modernization

problems

EXHIBIT

11

● INTEGRITY

OPPORTUNITIES

- Lincoln has a bright future
- Growth in Lincoln
- County / city Development and Collaboration
- Opportunity to influence Lincoln Community
- Guide and shape upcoming work force
- Lifetime of learning

# THREATS

- Aging workforce
- County infrastructure / county jails
- Funding Stability
- Mandates from State  
/ unfunded
- Increase in population



Kerry P. Eagan  
Chief Administrative Officer  
Primary Duties and Responsibilities

Introduction

The Chief Administrative Officer to the Lancaster County Board is responsible for implementing and coordinating the policies and procedures established by the County Board. This position also acts as the department head of County Administrative Services. In general terms, the Chief Administrator is the full-time eyes and ears of the County Board; and is responsible for providing timely and accurate information to the Board.

Primary Duties and Responsibilities

1. Administer the County's Legislative Program

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) performs a number of key functions in the development and implementation of the County's legislative program:

- a. Prepare the annual legislative proposals to be considered by the Board;
- b. Draft the County's annual list of legislative priorities;
- c. Facilitate and chair the annual legislative retreat involving County elected officials and department heads, state senators, NACO representatives, and other officials invited by the Board;
- d. Act as the primary liaison with the County's legislative consultant;
- e. Coordinate the County's legislative program with other County elected officials and department heads;
- f. Prepare legislative testimony and letters for Board members;
- g. Testify at legislative hearings as directed by the Board; and
- h. Review all fiscal note requests and direct to the appropriate official.

## 2. Visitors Promotion Committee

The CAO serves as an ex officio member of the Lancaster County Visitors Promotion Committee (VPC). In this capacity, the CAO must be well versed in the state law governing tourism at the county level. The VPC advises the County Board on the use of the Visitors Promotion Fund and the Visitors Improvement Fund. Some of the key functions include:

- a. Advise the VPC on County Board policies and the VPC's statutory role as an advisor to the County Board;
- b. Advise the VPC on questions involving procedure and the Bylaws;
- c. Monitor the VPC to guarantee adherence to state law and performance of state law responsibilities;
- d. Administer the Improvement Fund Grant Program:
  1. Help administer the Improvement Fund Grant Program Guidelines;
  2. Draft all County Board resolutions involving Improvement Fund expenditures;
  3. Ensure all statutory requirements are followed when the Improvement Fund is used for promotional purposes;
  4. Draft all contracts for the award of grants from the Improvement Fund, complete execution of the contracts with grant recipients, and work with the County's grants manager to monitor performance and completion of contract responsibilities by the recipients;
- e. Act as the Board's liaison with the Lincoln Convention & Visitors Bureau with regard to the CVB's administration of the Visitors Promotion Fund under their contract with the County.

## 3. General Assistance

The CAO serves three roles in the administration of the County's General Assistance program: hearing officer for all appeals filed from the denial of General Assistance; chair of the General Assistance Monitoring Committee; and member of the subcommittee which reviews and updates the Lancaster County General Assistance Guidelines. These duties require a

thorough understanding of the General Assistance Guidelines and the state statutes governing General Assistance

Appeals from the denial of General Assistance often involve complex legal issues and can result in potentially large fiscal impacts on the County. The CAO acts in a quasi-judicial capacity in deciding these appeals.

The second function performed by the CAO for the General Assistance program is to chair the General Assistance Monitoring Committee. Based on recommendations from this committee, the County Board has made a number of improvements to General Assistance. As a direct result of the committee's work the County Board decided to terminate the contract with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services for operation of the Lancaster County General Assistance program, and place it under the County's Veterans Services Officer. This change resulted in increased efficiency and cost savings. The committee also monitors budgetary issues and proposes effective solutions, such as mandatory client participation in the National Drug Assistance Program and authorizing cremations instead of burials. Before the Drug Assistance Program was adopted, General Assistance pharmacy costs averaged almost \$130,000 per month. Through participation in this program pharmacy costs have dropped to an average of less than \$30,000 per month.

Finally, the CAO is heavily involved in the review and update of the Lancaster County General Assistance Guidelines. State law requires that the General Assistance Guidelines be updated every two years. The CAO works with the General Assistance Director and the County Attorney's Office to comply with this mandate. Serving as the chair of the General Assistance Monitoring Committee and as the appeals hearing officer assists the CAO in identifying areas in the guidelines which need to be amended.

4. Administer the Lancaster County Employees Retirement and Deferred Compensation Plans

The Lancaster County Board of Commissioners serves as the trustee for the County's 401(a) Employees Retirement Plan and the 457(b) Deferred Compensation Program (referred to herein as the County's pension plan). In this capacity, the Board has a fiduciary duty to

guarantee that the pension plan is operated in strict compliance with federal law, that investments offered under the plan are adequate, and plan fees are reasonable.

The CAO plays a key role in helping the Board to honor its fiduciary duty with regard to the pension plan. The CAO works closely with the County Attorney's Office to assure the plans are legally up to date and are being applied correctly. Although the County's 401(a) plan received a favorable determination from the Internal Revenue Service in 2010, IRS regulations require the plan to be reviewed every 5 years. To address this ongoing responsibility, the CAO and the County Attorney's Office worked with the County's pension provider, Prudential Retirement and Annuity Company, to become a part of Prudential's "volume submitter" program. Prudential will now take care of all future plan updates and IRS reviews.

The CAO serves as the facilitator and chair of the Pension Review Committee. This committee was established by the County Board in the mid-1990's to oversee the performance of the County's pension provider and to review the investments offered to employees under our defined contribution pension plan. The committee also serves the purpose of giving a voice to all county employees, including both union and unrepresented, in how their pension plan is operated. As chair of the committee, the CAO is responsible for drafting all committee reports and recommendations. The County Board has made numerous improvements to the pension plan as a result of recommendations generated by the Pension Review Committee. The importance of the committee continues to grow. Some of the main functions the committee now performs include:

- a. Advise the County Board on the administration of the County's Investment Policy for the Employee Retirement Plan and the Deferred Compensation Program;
- b. Make specific recommendations to the Board for investment changes;
- c. Review and advise the Board on plan upgrades and new products;
- d. Review the bi-annual investment reports from Prudential and the annual investment report from our pension consultant, Segal Marco Advisors; and
- e. Advise the Board on the performance of the County's consultant and whether their services should be retained.

In addition, the CAO is designated as the primary administrative contact under the County's contract with Prudential. In this capacity the CAO performs the following duties:

- a. Assist with the preparation of investment reviews produced by Prudential;

- b. Execute routine administrative actions consistent with our contract with Prudential, the pension plan, and County Board policy;
- c. Work closely with the County Attorney on contract issues and amendments;
- d. Advise the County Board on important issues involving Prudential; and
- e. Administer the expense account with Prudential to assure all expenditures are for the exclusive benefit of plan participants and comply with federal law.

The CAO must have an excellent working relationship with the pension provider to perform these duties.

The CAO is also the liaison between the County Board and our pension consultant to help guarantee our plan design is up to date, our investment array is meeting its benchmarks, and plan fees are reasonable.

In order to meet these challenges, it is imperative that the CAO stay abreast with state and federal pension laws, regulations, and best practices in the pension industry.

#### 5. Facilitate the County Board Staff Meeting

The County Board's weekly Staff Meeting plays an important role in the Board's discharge of its administrative and executive functions. The Staff Meeting not only provides an opportunity for extensive discussions regarding policy and issues facing the County, but also provides the Board with an opportunity to give clear guidance and directions to staff on conducting County business. It is the CAO's job is to facilitate the Staff Meeting by preparing the agenda and following up on actions taken and directions given by the Board at the meeting.

As the gatekeeper for the Staff Meeting, the CAO is often required to exercise professional judgment on who is invited to the meeting and whether a particular topic is appropriate for discussion at the meeting. In performing this function, the CAO must work closely with County Board members to make sure their concerns and priorities are being addressed.

As the Board's administrator, the CAO is required to research, make recommendations on, and implement projects assigned by the Board. Most of these projects are generated at the Staff Meeting. Some of these projects can be accomplished quickly, while others may require

extensive time and research to accomplish. Regardless of the nature of the project, the CAO is responsible for completing the County Board's business professionally and expeditiously.

#### 6. Administrative Services Department Head

The Department of Administrative Services was established by the County Board at the time the Board decided to create the position of Deputy Chief Administrative Officer. The Board wanted to hire this new position in the unclassified service, and the civil service statutes governing Lancaster County do not provide for a deputy administrative officer in the unclassified service. However, the civil service statutes do allow for a department head and a deputy department head in the unclassified service. Pursuant to advice from the County Attorney, the position of Chief Administrator Officer was made the department head of the newly created department of administrative services, and the new Deputy Chief Administrative Officer was hired in the unclassified service as the deputy director for the administrative services department.

As director for the Department of Administrative Services the CAO is responsible for the business operations of the County Board Office. Most of these functions are performed by the position of Administrative Assistant to the County Board, and this position is supervised by the CAO. The only other person directly supervised by the CAO is the County's Records and Information Manager. The CAO does not provide direct supervision of the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, as this position is hired by the Board, and works at the pleasure of the Board.

#### 7. Legal Opinion Policy

The CAO oversees the County Board's policy for obtaining legal opinions from the County Attorney's Office. The CAO helps identify legal issues faced by the Board; and helps determine when advice should be sought from the County Attorney. Also, the CAO is responsible for drafting legal opinion requests which clearly state the legal questions being asked, thereby assisting the County Attorney in providing the legal answers sought by the Board.

8. Joint Budget Committee

The CAO is a member of the Lincoln-Lancaster County Joint Budget Committee (JBC). Working with United Way and Region V, the JBC plays an important role in evaluating and prioritizing human service needs in Lincoln and Lancaster County. The JBC then makes recommendations to the County Board and City Council on which human service priorities should be funded. The JBC also provides oversight on the administration of the Keno Human Services Prevention Fund. The CAO assists in drafting guidelines and policies for the JBC.

9. Emergency Management Liaison

The CAO acts as the County Board liaison during activations of the Lancaster County Emergency Operations Center. To serve this function the CAO needs to be familiar with the National Incident Management System and other general principles of emergency management. The CAO also participates in various exercises sponsored by Emergency Management.

10. Administer the County Board's Microcomputer Purchase Policy

The purpose of the County's Microcomputer Purchase Policy is to help guarantee County employees have the technology they need to do their jobs, while and at the same time containing costs and preventing unnecessary purchases. The County Board carefully monitors and controls the purchase of computers and related equipment by County agencies. Computer purchase estimates prepared by Information Services must be included in department budgets, and any purchase over \$500 made by Information Services on behalf of a County agency requires approval by the Board. The CAO works closely with Information Services and the County's Budget and Fiscal Officer to facilitate acquisitions under the Microcomputer Policy. Requests for approval of computer purchases are directed to the CAO by Information Services. If funding for the requests is identified in agency budgets or the Microcomputer Fund, they are immediately approved. If funding is not available in the budget, the requests are referred to the County Board for additional consideration.

11. Lancaster County-City of Lincoln Justice Council

The CAO is responsible for facilitating Justice Council meetings, assisting in the preparation of reports and correspondence, and following up on actions and directions given by the Justice Council.

12. Elected Officials Salary Review Committee

Neb. Rev. Stat. §23-1114 requires the County Board to set salaries for all County elected officials prior to January 15<sup>th</sup> of a year in which a general election is held. The Elected Officials Salary Committee was established by the County Board to provide recommendations regarding appropriate salaries for County elected officials. The CAO facilitates meetings and prepares the final report from the Committee.