

**MINUTES
LANCASTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BUDGET MEETING
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE BOARD OF EQUALIZATION MEETING
COUNTY-CITY BUILDING, ROOM 112
TUESDAY, JUNE 15, 2021**

Advance public notice of the Board of Commissioners meeting was posted on the County-City Building bulletin board, the Lancaster County, Nebraska, web site, emailed to the media on June 10, 2021 and published in the Lincoln Journal Star print edition and website on June 11, 2021.

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

Others present: David Derbin, Chief Administrative Officer; Dennis Meyer, Budget and Fiscal Director; Ron Rohde, Budget & Fiscal Accountant; and Monét McCullen, County Clerk's Office

The meeting was called to order at 9:34 a.m., the location of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act was announced.

AGENDA ITEMS

1) APPROVAL OF THE BUDGET MEETINGS MINUTES FOR JUNE 8, 2021.

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

2) DEPARTMENT BUDGET HEARINGS – Dennis Meyer, Budget and Fiscal Director

See items 3 through 7.

3) COUNTY CLERK – Dan Nolte, County Clerk

Dennis Meyer, Budget and Fiscal Director, said an additional \$53,956 was transferred to the current budget due to a retirement, health insurance increases and finalizing the central payroll team. Kevin Nelson, Accounting Operations Manager, said there should be no additional fund requests for the current budget year, unless the Oracle bill comes in higher than expected.

Meyer said the current budget request is \$1,548,058, which is a 6.76% increase and revenues are budgeted at \$84,900.

Nelson said revenues primarily come from licensing fees and expenses are driven mostly by personnel costs. The 6.76% increase is primarily due to the hiring of three additional payroll specialists. There are currently 13 full-time equivalents (FTEs), two temporary employees and no anticipated retirements. He added there will be turnover in one position and job reclassifications of existing positions.

In response to Meyer's question, Nelson said the pandemic required a reconfiguration of office furniture to protect staff and the public. A better solution is now being requested. Additionally, the technology request includes four laptops which will replace existing desktop computers.

Meyer asked about unfunded and underfunded mandates. Cori Beattie, Deputy County Clerk, said underfunded mandates would include fees for marriage licenses, amusement licenses, tobacco licenses, and special events permits. Unfunded mandates could include property valuation protests.

Beattie provided a brief overview of the proposed office remodel.

4) PROPERTY MANAGEMENT – Kerin Peterson, Facilities and Properties Director

Meyer said the Property Management Fund will not require a transfer of additional funds for the current year.

Kerin Peterson, Facilities and Property Director, said the Property Management Fund consists of the following buildings: Youth Services Center, Driver's License Testing (West O), Motor Vehicle Building (46th & R) and the Election Commission. The operating budget is usually covered completely from the revenue generated by these rents. Peterson discussed the number of FTEs as well as expense increases related to building insurance, natural gas and water.

Regarding the Building Fund, Peterson said the current budget request is \$155,000, which includes various projects at the Youth Services Center, Motor Vehicle Building (46th & R) and Driver's Testing Facility (West O).

Meyer explained that this budget includes \$147,000 in rent for space being reserved for the new District Court courtroom in the 605 Building, along with costs for other construction projects and equipment.

In regard to Schorr's question, Meyer said when departments have a remodel request, it is usually placed in the Building Fund budget and not the individual department's budget. Discussion followed regarding the number of departments who are requesting a remodel or new building.

Meyer said close to \$1,000,000 will be used for the Election Commission remodel. This is a priority based on the most recent facilities study. In response to Schorr's inquiry, Peterson said remodeling the current building would be cheaper than purchasing and remodeling a new building.

Meyer noted the total requested budget amount is \$1,700,000. Revenues primarily consist of a \$510,000 tax request plus rent from CenterPointe for the Midtown and Old Attention Center facilities.

Discussion was held regarding the facilities study completed projects and upcoming projects.

By order of the Chair, the meeting recessed at 10:18 a.m., and reconvened at 10:26 a.m.

5) PUBLIC DEFENDER – Joe Nigro, Public Defender

Meyer said there will be no additional funds needed for the current year budget, but it will be monitored as the current budget is coming close to the requested amount. The current budget request is \$5,416,444 which is a 7.64% increase. Revenues are \$522,290 which is a 5% increase.

Joe Nigro, Public Defender, said every year there are negotiations with the City of Lincoln for services on City-issued misdemeanors. Negotiations usually increase 5% each year and the City then reimburses the Public

Defender's Office. Salaries and benefits are 89.84% of the budget request. Nigro discussed the need for additional attorneys and the increased workload in the office.

In response to Meyer's question, Nigro said employees began working from home during the pandemic. He would like the option to continue teleworking which would require additional laptops.

Meyer asked about underfunded or unfunded mandates. Nigro said the Public Defender's Office, as a whole, could be considered an unfunded mandate.

6) ELECTION COMMISSIONER – Dave Shively, Election Commissioner

Meyer said within the current budget, an additional \$175,000 was transferred due to additional costs associated with early voting.

Dave Shively, Election Commissioner, said his office received grant funds and after the November election, the remaining balance was around \$90,000. Those additional funds would be used for expenses regarding the City of Lincoln election.

Meyer said the current year expenditure request is \$1,711,600 and revenues are \$451,650. Shively said the revenues received are dependent on the candidates listed on ballots.

Shively said one retirement is included in the upcoming budget and three other employees may also retire. There will also be an increase in postage and staffing associated with early voting. Discussion followed regarding an additional position and reorganizing current positions.

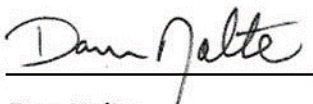
In regard to Meyer's question, Shively said changes due to the pandemic were mostly the costs associated with early voting. Sanitation supplies were funded by the State of Nebraska and the Lincoln/Lancaster County Health Department.

In response to Schorr's question, Shively said 10 years ago the polling places were reduced from 223 to 193. Currently there are 199 locations. There are eight precincts that should be split due to growth. Discussion followed regarding County growth and the adjustments that may be required for additional polling places.

Underfunded and unfunded mandates consist of not receiving reimbursements from the State of Nebraska for items they place on the ballot. He noted the State purchases all voting tabulation machines, all express votes for voters with disabilities, preventative maintenance and cleaning of the ballot machines during the even number of years but not for City elections. The State has also inquired about additional precincts and may provide funding for that purpose.

7) ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Flowerday moved and Schorr seconded to adjourn the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners budget meeting at 11:03 a.m. Amundson, Yoakum, Flowerday, Schorr and Vest voted yes. Motion carried 5-0.



Dan Nolte
Lancaster County Clerk

