

**STAFF MEETING MINUTES  
LANCASTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
THURSDAY, JULY 13, 2023, AT 8:30 A.M.  
COUNTY CITY BUILDING, 555 S. 10<sup>TH</sup> STREET  
ROOM 112 – CITY COUNTY CHAMBERS**

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

Others Present: David Derbin, Chief Administrative Officer; Kristy Bauer, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer; and Courtney Lyons, Deputy County Clerk

*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 July 12, 2023. Notice was also published in the Lincoln Journal Star print and digital editions on July 10, 2023.*

The Chair noted the location of the Open Meetings Act and opened the meeting at 8:32 a.m.

**AGENDA ITEM**

**1. APPROVAL OF STAFF MEETING MINUTES**

- A. Staff Meeting Minutes for June 27, 2023**
- B. Staff Meeting Minutes for July 6, 2023**

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

**2. 2022-2023 LEADERSHIP ACADEMY CAPSTONE PROJECT** – Brandon Noordhoek, Sergeant, Corrections; Debra Haeffner, Medical Records Technician, Mental Health Crisis Center; and Melissa Hood, Administrator, Youth Services Center

Kristy Bauer, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, introduced the project participants. Noordhoek, Haeffner, and Hood described the project, which includes coordinating the painting of a mural in the walkway between a County parking lot and the County/City Building (see agenda packet). Other topics covered include project benefits, how an artist will be chosen, and project next steps. Hood thanked the Board for supporting the Leadership Academy. Board members thanked the project participants and commended the project.

Yoakum asked how an artist and design will be chosen. Saige Walker, project participant and Administrative Secretary to the County Board, answered project participants will choose a design and present it to the Board to finalize.

The Board presented Walker with a Certificate to mark completion of the Leadership Academy due to an upcoming planned absence. Haeffner commended Walker for her work on the project.

**3. BUDGET UPDATE: SHERIFF'S OFFICE** – Dennis Meyer, Budget and Fiscal Officer, and Ben

Houchin, Chief Deputy County Sheriff

Meyer summarized the new position requests from the Sheriff's Office and noted other budget requests, including the purchase of a new air handler.

Houchin discussed Office staffing and noted there are several upcoming retirements. Meyer stated the request for staff would not affect the Office's overall budget amount. Flowerday stated he is in support of the request for staff.

Houchin reviewed staff vacancies and that he wants to prioritize filling the civil position first.

Flowerday distributed a list of proposed new County full-time equivalent (FTE) positions (Exhibit #1). He stated he supports adding a deputy to the Sheriff's Office but advocates waiting to hire a programmer and records specialist. Houchin stated he prioritizes hiring a programmer so they are trained on a new data system. Yoakum asked how much the cost will be for training and Houchin said he did not know. Meyer proposed waiting until mid-year to discussed hiring a programmer, but Terry Wagner, County Sheriff, said he would rather hire the programmer now before hiring a new deputy. Amundson stated she would support that.

Flowerday asked how long the Office would have two programmers. Houchin answered about two years and that the current programmer plans to retire once the new data system is running. Flowerday stated a two-year overlap seems long, but he would approve if the Office waited to hire a new deputy. Vest asked if two people would be doing the job of one person, and Wagner answered the current programmer would be working within the current data system and a new person would begin training for the new system. Derbin clarified the timeline of implementing the new system. Vest commended the Office, and said he supports hiring the programmer.

Schulte asked about the salary comparison between the two positions, and Meyer answered.

Meyer proposed using the County building fund to fund the new air handler and allocating \$140,000 from the County sinking fund to the Sheriff's Office.

#### **4. ANNUAL REPORT – Matt Kasik, Chief Executive Officer, Region V Services**

Kasik distributed the annual report (Exhibit #2) and introduced Michelle Scholz, Region V Services Chief of Staff, who was also in attendance. He thanked Yoakum for her service on the board of Region V Services.

Kasik provided a history of the organization and disability services. He described the organization's structure and that it is a public entity. Other topics discussed include the organization's services, statistics on those served and the organization, and programs working with community employers. He noted the organization will be moving locations to 70<sup>th</sup> and Pioneers and will also be updating its name.

Yoakum asked about the turnover rate of program participants placed with local employers. Kasik said participants tend to have long tenures and are monitored by organization staff. He said the State of Nebraska completed a study that showed that employment of people with disabilities is underutilized, and he is working on increasing their involvement in the workforce. He described

successful placements in the program and that they will be featured in an upcoming documentary on Nebraska Public Television. Scholz said staff continue to support the employer and employee even after the program ends. Amundson noted a program participant who worked with her son.

Vest commended the organization's services and asked how many people are being serviced. Scholz answered 61. Kasik said about 25 percent of those served are able to be employed. Scholz recounted a story from the annual report about a program participant. Yoakum thanked the organization's volunteerism for Ukraine.

## **5. BUDGET UPDATE: BUILDING FUND – Dennis Meyer, Budget and Fiscal Officer**

Meyer provided an update on the Building Fund and described plans for the Fund for this budget year. The Corrections Department will need funding for two studies, a needs study and a building study. The County Engineer will also need funding for County buildings. Aging Partners will need funding for their new facility. District Court requested to replace courtroom chairs, but Meyer suggested replacing one third this year.

Meyer stated other upgrades may need to be put on hold, including upgrades to an Emergency Management building and County Extension upgrades. Meyer said upgrades to County Extension bathrooms may be feasible. Amundson asked about the request from County Extension and Kerin Peterson, Facilities and Properties Director, said the upgrade would be to staff bathrooms.

Flowerday stated he prioritizes upgrades for Aging Partners. Meyer said allocations will depend on the results of planned building studies. He noted the building needs are more than what the County can fund annually.

Schulte asked how the Building Fund is funded. Meyer said \$510,000 is levied each year.

Meyer provided an update on the Countywide Sinking Fund (see agenda packet), which currently has an \$8.7 million balance. A total of \$259,000 is currently unobligated. Meyer described options for allocation, including upgrading software in the Public Defender's Office, new radios for the Sheriff's Office and a microfilm project in the Clerk of the District Court Office.

Meyer stated some requested budget items from Departments are built into their budgets, so will be funded but not from the Building Fund or Sinking Fund. Schulte asked about the cost of the facility study for the County Engineer and Meyer provided an explanation. Amundson said the study was needed to know where to place new facilities.

## **6. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- A. Pending Litigation;**
- B. Potential Litigation (Which is Imminent as Evidenced by Communication of a Claim or Threat of Litigation to or by the Public Body);**
- C. Union Negotiations; and**
- D. Legal Advice.**

**MOTION:** Vest moved and Amundson seconded to enter Executive Session for the purposes of pending litigation, potential litigation, union negotiations, legal advice and to protect the public

interest at 9:30 a.m. Flowerday, Vest, Amundson, Schulte and Yoakum voted yes. Motion carried 5-0.

Yoakum restated the purposes for entering Executive Session.

**MOTION:** Amundson moved and Flowerday seconded to exit Executive Session at 10:23 a.m. Schulte, Flowerday, Vest, Amundson and Yoakum voted yes. Motion carried 5-0.

## **7. BREAK**

The break occurred immediately following the Executive Session.

## **8. NOTICES OF ASSESSED VALUATION CHANGE** – Briam Grimm, Chief Field Deputy, and Phillip Hughes, Real Property Appraiser, County Assessor/Register of Deeds: and Dan Zieg, Chief Deputy County Attorney

Vest was absent for the remainder of the meeting.

Zieg provided an update on a group of properties under Section 42 whose valuations are being protested, including discussion during hearings in front of the Tax Equalization and Review Committee. The goal is to value all the Section 42 properties at the same time using the same methods. Schulte asked how many properties are affected, and Hughes answered three projects with 17 properties.

Amundson noted some properties increased by a large amount and asked about the case in Lincoln County. Zieg stated there will be additional cases in front of the Supreme Court on the issue, and that Great Plains Appraisal agreed with the valuation of the properties.

Flowerday stated he wished there was more guidance from the Legislature and suggested working with the Legislature to resolve the issue. Zieg said he has spoken with the Nebraska Association of County Officials (NACO) and counties are following the law but still losing cases.

Hughes described a group of the properties. Schulte asked about the list of properties provided, and Zieg explained it was a list of properties to be added to the grouping of valuation changes under this area of law. Amundson asked if other counties are encountering issues, and Zieg answered yes.

## **9. BUDGET UPDATE** – Dennis Meyer, Budget and Fiscal Officer

Meyer discussed the list of potential new FTE positions to fill under the current year's budget (see agenda packet). Flowerday referred to his previous list (Exhibit #1) and his reasons for including those positions. The list represents 14 new FTE's out of 33 requests. Schulte said he supports funding the two new juvenile detention officers to staff transportations. He noted the total estimated cost of \$1,146,809.65 only represents the County's share of the costs, not the total cost.

Schulte said a new Communication and Marketing Coordinator position is a low priority for him. Flowerday, Amundson and Yoakum provided reasons to include the position in the budget. Schulte asked if other Department positions would be eliminated if that position was added, and Flowerday said no. Amundson stated this position would be committed full-time to communications, unlike other Department positions. Schulte asked if current contracted services for communications would be

canceled, and Yoakum answered they would go away depending on the skillset of the person hired.

Amundson noted there could be a cost savings by hiring an additional attorney in the Public Defender's Office. Flowerday and Yoakum agreed. Schulte stated the Board needs to be able to measure the cost savings. Kristi Egger, County Public Defender, stated she would prefer hiring an Attorney II based on staffing needs. She noted there will be cost savings in an upcoming software upgrade.

Flowerday reviewed the list of recommended additional FTE's as discussed, which included a programmer for the Sheriff's Office, an Emergency Management Exercise Training Officer, seven correctional officers, a jail administrator, two juvenile detention officers, a Communication and Marketing Coordinator, an Election Commissioner Clerk and an Attorney II in the Public Defender's Office.

**MOTION:** Amundson moved and Flowerday seconded to approve the list of FTE recommendations as discussed, which were: a programmer for the Sheriff's Office, an Emergency Management Exercise Training Officer, seven Correctional Officers, a Jail Administrator, two Juvenile Detention Officers, a Communication and Marketing Coordinator, an Election Commissioner Clerk and an Attorney II in the Public Defender's Office.

Schulte repeated he disagreed with hiring a Communication and Marketing Coordinator, but that he will vote in favor.

**ROLL CALL:** Amundson, Schulte, Flowerday and Yoakum voted yes. Vest was absent. Motion carried 4-0.

## **10. DISCUSSION OF BOARD MEMBER MEETINGS ATTENDED**

### **A. Reducing Racial & Ethnic Disparities**

Yoakum reported she attended, and topics of discussion included data collection and implementation of an implicit bias training.

### **B. Region V Services Committee Meeting**

Yoakum reported that neither this meeting nor the following took place this month.

### **C. Region V Systems Governing Board Meeting**

No report given.

### **D. Youth Crisis Response Coalition**

Amundson reported the meeting was canceled.

### **E. Public Building Commission**

Amundson reported the main point of discussion was how to implement LB77 the Legislature recently

passed.

**F. Lincoln-Lancaster County Board of Health**

Flowerday reported the Board did not meet.

**G. Lancaster County Mental Health Crisis Center Advisory Committee**

Yoakum reported topics discussed included Board membership changes, total admissions from last year and lengths of stays and facility staffing. She toured the facility after the meeting.

**H. NACO Board of Directors**

Yoakum noted Vest was currently attending.

**I. Other Meetings Attended Since Last Staff Meeting**

Yoakum reported that she and Vest attended a tour hosted by Lincoln Industries.

Amundson stated the Realtors' Association will not meet in July.

Yoakum stated she plans to attend a media conference on local food sources on Monday.

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

See agenda.

**12. EMERGENCY ITEMS**

None.

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

Flowerday moved and Amundson seconded to adjourn at 10:50 a.m. Amundson, Schulte, Flowerday and Yoakum voted yes. Vest was absent. Motion carried 4-0.



Matt Hansen  
Lancaster County Clerk

