

**STAFF MEETING MINUTES  
LANCASTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
TUESDAY JUNE 4, 2019  
COUNTY-CITY BUILDING  
ROOM 113 - BILL LUXFORD STUDIO  
10:00 A.M.**

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

Others Present: Kerry Eagan, Chief Administrative Officer; Ann Ames, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer; Dan Nolte, County Clerk; Cori Beattie, Deputy County Clerk; and Monét McCullen, County Clerk's Office

*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 June 3, 2019.*

The Chair noted the location of the Open Meetings Act and opened the meeting at 10:02 a.m.

**AGENDA ITEM**

**1) APPROVAL OF STAFF MEETING MINUTES FOR MAY 30, 2019**

**MOTION:** Vest moved and Flowerday seconded approval of the May 30, 2019 Staff Meeting minutes. Vest, Flowerday and Amundson voted yes. Schorr abstained. Motion carried 3-0 with one abstention.

**2) LANCASTER COUNTY VISITORS PROMOTION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION ON IMPROVEMENT FUND GRANT REQUEST FROM LANCASTER COUNTY EVENT CENTER FOR \$4,050,000 – Jeff Maul, Executive Director Convention and Visitors Bureau; Lynne Ireland, Chair, Visitors Promotion Committee**

Jeff Maul, Visitors Bureau Executive Director, said on May 29, 2019, the Visitors Promotion Committee (VPC) had a special meeting to hear the request from the Lancaster Event Center (LEC) for a grant request for \$4,050,000.

Lynne Ireland, Visitors Promotion Committee Chair, said the VPC had a very long and complex discussion on this special request. A number of years ago the LEC received \$3,000,000 from the VPC to help support its bid for the National High School Rodeo Association Finals. In moving forward with the project, some additional unavoidable costs were discovered. LEC has been designated to host the event in 2020-2021 and 2026-2027 and approached the VPC for a second grant. Ireland said the biggest concern to the VPC is setting precedence as other applicants could then request additional funding for the same project. This will also require the VPC to waive current guidelines. She noted LEC's proposal suggests that \$600,000 be paid in years 2022-2024 and \$750,000 in years 2025-2027. There were also concerns about limiting future options for other potential projects.

Amundson asked what the recommendation was of the VPC. Ireland said after careful consideration the committee approved the request for \$4,050,000 by a 4-2 vote.

Amundson asked about the proposal from Amy Dickerson, Lancaster Event Center Managing Director, that suggested using some of the LEC profits to lower the VPC grant. Ireland said there was some consideration given to that proposal but it was determined not to be viable due to the complexity of the record keeping. The LEC is also pursuing other funding sources such as fundraisers.

Schorr asked if there was any additional information on fundraising opportunities or other sources of revenue. Maul explained that was not actually discussed at the VPC meeting. The suggestion by Ms. Dickerson was with the contingency that any profits over \$250,000 would be used to reduce the grant request.

Schorr asked Maul if he knew of any projects coming forward that might not be funded due to this large request. Maul said he was aware of three potential projects which could fall in line with the 2022-2027 timeframe. He added that spreading these amounts out might be a challenge and some requests might be denied.

In response to Schorr's inquiry about the annual lodging tax, Dennis Meyer, County Budget and Fiscal Officer, said he is projecting the fiscal year to end \$100,000 less than estimated. In looking at years 2013 through 2017, the average annual increase was approximately 9%.

Vest asked what the concerns were from the VPC members who were not in favor of this request. Ireland said she wanted to make it clear that the no votes did not reflect a lack of support for the event but rather a concern about how the LEC can be more actively engaged in fundraising, long-term sustainability, limiting future projects and going against the current grant guidelines.

Amundson discussed the economic benefits the event would bring to Lancaster County. She asked if any of the improvements would attract other groups. Ireland said that is the argument of the LEC.

Schorr made it clear that she supported the event but the overriding fact for her is the dollar amount being requested and the long-term impact it could have on other projects. She discussed numerous grant awards received by the LEC over the years and felt there was an unacceptable trend as, to date, of the \$17,000,000 available the LEC has received 35%. If the \$4,050,000 request is approved, that figure will be closer to 50%.

Vest clarified that the funds would be distributed over the course of six to seven years. Schorr agreed and indicated her issue is with the trend. She noted the LEC also receives \$1,000,000 annually in property tax through the Agricultural Society levy. Another concern is changing the grant request policy and how that could impact future requests.

Schorr recommended that a small group of experts in the field take a "second look" at this large request to see if there could be any costs savings. She suggested the following five people: Jeff Maul, Convention and Visitors Bureau; Dennis Meyer, County Budget & Fiscal Officer; Amy Dickerson, Lancaster County Event Center Managing Director (representing the Agricultural Society); community member Nick Cusick and Tom Lorenz, General Manager, SMG - Lincoln. Schorr requested the group

have a discussion with the event organizers about potential cost savings so the County Board can support this and other grant requests.

Amundson supported Schorr's proposal noting that the County Board is on a timeline to make a decision so the group would need to complete its work by June 13, 2019.

**MOTION:** Schorr moved to establish a Second Look Committee to review the \$4,050,000 grant request and to have discussions with the High School Rodeo Association on possible ways to reduce the amount.

Vest asked if the purpose of the Committee would be to partner with the High School Rodeo Association. Schorr clarified that the rodeo would be part of this discussion. Vest then questioned if this group was being created with the understanding of moving forward with the request. Schorr felt it was worth taking a second look at this request due to the amount and the policy concerns.

Vest seconded the motion.

Flowerday said he would support the motion in the interest of transparency. He felt the event would provide a great economic impact to the community and he intended to support it moving forward.

Amundson said she understands the importance of this event and the significance it brings to Lincoln as a destination city. She said she would support the motion but wanted it to be very clear that she is also in support of the rodeo.

Vest thought it was an appropriate offer on the part of the Agricultural Society to share its profits but realized how complicated that would be for the parties. Going forward, he will look at a plan whereby perhaps a percentage of the rodeo's profits can be returned to the Visitors Fund.

Maul said the Agricultural Society and its entire team have done everything they can to reach out to the community to try and lessen the burden on the grant fund.

Schorr clarified that the intention of the Committee was to look at \$4,050,000 and a way to reduce the asking amount. This is not an attempt to go out and look for corporate revenue.

Dr. Tiffany Heng-Moss, University of Nebraska College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources Dean, said she is extremely excited about the expansion project due to the ongoing collaborations between the Event Center and University and she expressed her support for the rodeo.

Meg Kester, UNL Office Project Management, also expressed her support for the project.

Colette Wear, Hampton Inn & Suites General Manager, expressed her support for the event, noting it will generate money for hotels and restaurants and will replenish the VPC fund.

**AMENDMENT:** Flowerday moved and Vest seconded that Commissioners Amundson and Schorr could select another Committee member if one of the original individuals named cannot participate. Schorr, Vest, Flowerday and Amundson voted yes. Motion carried 4-0.

**ROLL CALL ON THE MAIN MOTION AS AMENDED:** Flowerday, Schorr, Vest and Amundson voted yes. Motion carried 4-0.

Eagan suggested the Second Look Committee provide its report at the Staff Meeting on Thursday, June 13, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.

Schorr exited the meeting at 10:45 a.m.

**3) BUDGET HEARINGS – Dennis Meyer, Lancaster County Budget & Fiscal Director**

**A. DISTRICT COURT (624) – Jared Gavin, Lancaster County District Court Administrator**

Meyer said expenditures are just under \$2,900,000 which is roughly a reduction of .66%. Salaries and benefits are only \$1,300,000 or a little more than 46%. Legal services are what primarily drive the District Court's budget.

Jared Gavin, Lancaster County District Court Administrator, provided a brief overview of the budget including legal services. He felt the biggest factor in lowering legal costs is seeing the benefits of the additional attorneys in the Public Defender's Office. He said he would like to create an annual report of how the attorney ratio can be predicted. He also addressed furniture needs in the amount of \$11,000.

Meyer inquired about the courtroom updates. Gavin said he originally submitted a request for \$190,000 for all upgrades but the bid came in lower. The cost will be closer to \$160,000.

Meyer asked about the technology request. Gavin stated District Court is moving to Office 365 which will allow the judges to work more from home. He also requested five new computers.

Meyer ask for clarification on how many County employees were part of District Court. Gavin explained there are 13.75 full-time employees including bailiffs, himself, two staff attorneys and a work release coordinator. The judges and court reporters are State employees. Everyone uses County software and computers and the judges receive a State laptop.

Meyer mentioned that the new HR/Payroll system will be implemented around April 1, 2020. There will also be OpenGov training which will allow for various reporting.

The meeting was recessed at 11:03 a.m. and reconvened at 11:07 a.m.

**B. RISK MANAGEMENT (12,13) – Sue Eckley, Lancaster County Risk Manager**

Meyer provided a brief overview of the Worker's Compensation Fund (Fund 12).

Sue Eckley, Lancaster County Risk Manager, said there is a \$900,000 self-insured retention (SIR) on every claim. Those costs are spread out due to medical being paid out over a specific time frame. In addition, there is also excess insurance purchased.

Eckley discussed employee demographics and how Risk Management partners with clinics and providers to get the best medical services. She added there have been many significant injuries over the last several years and claims are still be paid to former Lancaster Manor employees. Eckley said the biggest driver is indemnity costs but offering modified duty to employees has helped.

Schorr returned at 11:10 a.m.

Meyer asked if there is anything else the County can benefit from on the Worker's Comp side. Eckley said she would like to reevaluate the post offer screenings. Some County jobs require certain physical requirements be met and a number of employees barely pass a physical. It would be helpful to work closer with the clinics conducting the physicals to know if an individual needs additional work in certain areas.

Eckley stated Fund 13 is strong and that is due to having good County Attorneys. She provided an overview of Fund 13's five business units - General Liability, County Attorney Professional Liability, Inland Marine Self-Insurance, County Sheriff Pursuit Liability and the County Sheriff At Fault Liability. Meyer stated the intent on some of these funds is to keep the current balances whereby the funds sit there until needed. The goal is to have \$1,000,000 in the Pursuit Liability Fund. Eckley added because of the pursuit statute they are not able to find an insurance carrier under auto insurance that wants to insure the County.

Meyer asked about annual report information. Eckley said they provide the expenses under Fund 12 and 13 and do it as a percentage of payroll. That information will be duplicated in an annual report. The Risk Management website includes the operational plan, mission, goals and the charts of expenses.

Meyer reminded Eckley of the HR/Payroll system upgrade next year and OpenGov training.

#### **4) CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REPORT**

##### **A. County Board Initiatives Update**

Amundson stated there was a second infrastructure meeting. There will be three public hearings before a vote.

Schorr asked if there were public hearing dates. Amundson said the dates have not been set. The meetings will be in Waverly, Hickman and at the County/City Building.

Ames said a logo will be decided on by Friday and the website team will be here the last week in June.

##### **B. Discussion Items for Meeting with the Mayor (June 11, 2019)**

No comments offered.

**5) DISCUSSION OF BOARD MEMBER MEETINGS ATTENDED**

**A. RTSD – Schorr/Vest**

Schorr said a preliminary budget was approved. There has been a formal request to the County to keep the levy limit the same (2.2217). The annual legal contract was also reapproved.

Vest said the Jamaican North Trail will provide a cycle and foot bridge over the railroad tracks. It has been discovered that there are cost overruns. The original amount was \$1,300,000 and now another \$900,000 is needed. Additional funding of \$300,000 from the RTSD was approved.

Schorr said she contacted Nick Cusick and Tom Lorenz regarding the Second Look Committee that was mentioned in Item 2 and they have both agreed to participate.

**6) SCHEDULE OF BOARD MEMBER MEETINGS**

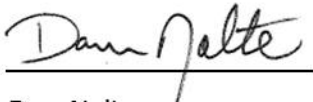
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**7) EMERGENCY ITEMS**

There were no emergency items.

**8) ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Schorr moved and Flowerday seconded to adjourn the meeting at 11:34 a.m. Vest, Flowerday, Schorr and Amundson voted yes. Motion carried 4-0.



Dan Nolte  
Lancaster County Clerk

