

**MINUTES
MID-YEAR BUDGET REVIEW
LANCASTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WEST GATE BANK - 6003 OLD CHENEY ROAD
LINCOLN CONFERENCE ROOM
THURSDAY, JANUARY 20, 2005
12:30 P.M.**

Commissioners Present: Larry Hudkins, Chair
Deb Schorr, Vice Chair
Bernie Heier
Ray Stevens
Bob Workman

Others Present: Kerry Eagan, Chief Administrative Officer
Dave Kroeker, Budget and Fiscal Officer
Gary Lacey, County Attorney
Trish Owen, Chief Deputy County Clerk
Gwen Thorpe, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

The Chair reconvened the meeting at 12:38 p.m..

NOTE: Documentation titled *Mid-Year Budget Retreat, January 20, 2005*, is on file in the County Clerk's Office.

AGENDA ITEM

1 MID-YEAR BUDGET REVIEW

g. Department Budget Hearing Schedule for Fiscal Year 2005-2006

Board consensus was to change the departmental budget hearings tentatively scheduled for June 2, 2005 to Tuesday, May 31, 2005.

Discussion took place regarding the schedule for Board of Equalization in relation to property valuation protests. Trish Owen, Chief Deputy County Clerk, stated July 20th through July 22nd are scheduled for Board of Equalization to hear protests, with July 25th being reserved for final action if necessary.

Board consensus was to schedule a budget work session on Tuesday, July 12, 2005 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m..

AGENDA ITEM

4 DISCUSSION ITEMS

b. Autopsy Contract

Hudkins asked if autopsies would be conducted in Omaha if the contract with Dr. Okoye was not renewed.

Gary Lacey, County Attorney, stated he had not contacted Omaha, however, he said it was his feeling they wouldn't be interested. He added that the expense of transporting 50 miles to the Douglas County Hospital may not be cost effective.

In response to a question asked by Workman regarding additional funding and the impact to the budget, Lacey stated it would be an increase of approximately \$200,000.

Schorr suggested asking for a request for proposal.

Hudkins asked if there was someone else in Lincoln who could conduct autopsies.

Lacey stated there are 12 to 14 pathologists employed at Pathology Medical Services and Dr. Okoye. It was noted that Pathology Medical Services has indicated they are not interested.

MOTION: Heier moved and Stevens seconded to increase the autopsy contract by an additional \$100,000 for one year and to request the County Attorney to inquire about autopsy costs in Omaha.

Discussion took place regarding cost of autopsies, microscopic and laboratory testing, transporting and number of autopsies conducted.

Heier called for the question.

ROLL CALL: Heier, Stevens, Workman, Schorr and Hudkins voted aye.
Motion carried.

(Workman exited at approximately 1:30 p.m..)

AGENDA ITEM

4 DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. County Sales Tax

Dave Kroeker, Budget and Fiscal Officer, disseminated and gave an overview of the following documentation (Exhibit 1):

- ▶ Email from Curtis Embree with the Nebraska Department of Revenue, dated January 10, 2005.
- ▶ Copy of Neb. Rev. St. Stat. § 13-319 - County; sales and use tax authorized; limitation; election.
- ▶ Estimated Lancaster County Sales Tax Revenue.

Hudkins asked if villages/cities within the County can decide to enact a sales tax after the County implements one.

Kroeker stated he wasn't sure.

Hudkins stated if the Board wants the villages/cities to participate and support a countywide sales tax services would need to be offered.

Eagan suggested the Board obtain a legal opinion from the County Attorney's Office addressing the following:

- ▶ Who gets to vote?
- ▶ Would a county sales tax cover the fairgrounds?
- ▶ What if other cities/villages enact a sales tax after Lancaster County implements a sales tax?

MOTION: Stevens moved and Schorr seconded to request an opinion from the County Attorney's Office regarding the implementation of a county sales tax, specifically, who votes on the issue, implementation by other cities/villages after implementation by the County, whether it would cover the Nebraska State Fairgrounds and whether the tax is approved with majority of the registered voter or a majority of those voting. Schorr, Heier, Stevens and Hudkins voted aye. Motion carried.

AGENDA ITEM

c. Local Match for State Fair

Discussion took place regarding whether the smoking ban was affecting Keno collections.

Kroeker referred to page 3-2 (Keno Collections) contained in the *Mid-Year Budget Retreat, January 20, 2005*. He stated the average Keno collections reflected for the first six months of the current fiscal year was \$63,000 as compared to \$65,000 one year ago.

Kroeker also discussed page 3-5 (Fiscal Year 2005 Proposed Keno Fund Budget) noting that estimated receipts are \$1,038,835. He added there is also a Contingency of \$57,360.

Discussion followed regarding the rezoning of the 84th Street and Havelock Avenue area.

MOTION: Stevens moved and Schorr seconded to allocate a one time contribution from the Keno Fund, in the amount of \$25,000, to the local City match for State Fair Park with no plan for continued funding. Stevens and Schorr voted aye. Heier and Hudkins voted no. Motion failed.

Hudkins proposed that he and the Vice Chair (Deb Schorr) visit with the Mayor at their next monthly meeting indicating the County may be willing to contribute future funding if the City would be willing to consider assistance with a zoning request for the Lancaster Events Center.

d. Transition Planning for Budget & Fiscal Office

Kroeker stated he would be available during the following year to assist the new Budget & Fiscal Officer if necessary.

Discussion took place regarding the possibility of Kroeker working part-time in the Budget and Fiscal Office.

Eagan stated the Board has the opportunity to review and identify the duties of the Budget and Fiscal Offices with the possibility of transferring some duties to another individual.

AGENDA ITEM

d. Transition Planning for Budget & Fiscal Office continued

Heier suggested that Kroeker visit with the Chair and Kerry Eagan to discuss salary and schedule and bring back to the Board.

e. Mental Health Services

Eagan gave a brief history stating that the County operated Lancaster County Office of Mental Retardation (LOMR) for a number of years, however, as State money leveled off the County could no longer afford to operate it. He stated it is not beyond the realm of possibility that someday the County may not be able to afford the Mental Health Center anymore.

Heier inquired about alternatives.

Eagan stated the County has no statutory obligation to operate a mental health center.

Kroeker referred to pages 063-1 and 063-2 under *Agency Letters* in the *Mid-Year Budget Retreat* stating that Dean Settle, Community Mental Health Center Director, has indicated they will need an additional \$400,000 in their budget.

Discussion followed regarding alternatives, such as privatization, for mental health services.

Stevens and Schorr gave the Board an update regarding a meeting with Maria Lavicky and Jeremy Hohlen, with Health and Human Services, and Sheryl Schrepf and Reneé Dozier, with Families First and Foremost, regarding the possibility of moving Families First and Foremost under Region V. Schorr indicated C.J. Johnson, Regional Program Administrator, would like to discuss the possibility with the Region Governing Board on Monday, January 24, 2005.

Board consensus was to pursue the possibility of moving Families First and Foremost under Region V.

AGENDA ITEM

5 STRATEGIC PLANNING

Eagan disseminated and reviewed the 2001 Goals of the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners Goals for 2001 (Exhibit 2).

Board consensus to further discuss goals for 2005 at a Thursday or a Tuesday morning staff meeting.

(Schorr exited at approximately 3:40 p.m..)

6 STRATEGIC BUDGET PLANNING

Discussion took place on the future construction of a new jail facility.

7 BUDGET WRAP-UP

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Heier moved and Stevens seconded adjournment of the Mid-Year Budget Retreat at 4:01 p.m.. Heier, Stevens and Hudkins voted aye. Motion carried.

Bruce Medcalf
County Clerk