

## Administrative Services Committee Meeting Douglas County, Nebraska

Tuesday, September 23, 2014

The meeting convened at 11:32 a.m. in Room 903 of the Omaha-Douglas Civic Center, 1819 Farnam Street, Omaha, NE 68183. A copy of the Open Meetings Act is located on the wall near the entrance of the room. A notice of the meeting was published in the September 16, 2014 issue of The Daily Record. County Commissioners present at the start of the meeting were Pam Tusa, Mike Boyle, Clare Duda, and PJ Morgan. Others present at the start of the meeting were Patrick Bloomingdale, Diane Carlson, Joe Lorenz, Marcos San Martin, Catherine Hall, and Kaieva Williams of Administration; Theresa Urich of the County Attorney's office; Wayne Hudson of the Sheriff's office; Jerry Leahy and Jeff McGill of Public Property; and Dan Esch of the Clerk/Comptroller's office. Commissioner Tusa conducted the meeting.

### **1) Discussion regarding Courthouse security.**

County Commissioner Chris Rodgers entered the meeting during this item. Ms. Williams left the meeting during this item. Speaking during this item were Commissioner Morgan, Commissioner Boyle, Capt. Hudson, Mr. Bloomingdale, Commissioner Tusa, Mr. Lorenz, Commissioner Duda, and Ms. Carlson. Highlights from the discussion included the following:

- Commissioner Morgan said the Sheriff is doing a great job with Courthouse security, but he would like to discuss ideas on how to create more efficiencies and savings with Courthouse security, and perhaps reduce the Sheriff's presence at the Courthouse.
  - Commissioner Morgan said there's an average of 25 Sheriff's deputies at the Courthouse per day.
- Commissioner Morgan said there is legislation regarding courthouse security that hasn't been changed since 1879.
  - Commissioner Morgan said the County Board could pursue a change in legislation if the Commissioners and the Sheriff would be supportive of that.
- Capt. Hudson said the Sheriff's office is doing the best it can do for security with the facilities the Courthouse has.
- Capt. Hudson said he has been through some of the best courthouse security training and has reviewed courthouses throughout the country.
  - Capt. Hudson said the mix of Sheriff's deputies and civilian security staff in the Courthouse is in line with other agencies around the country.
  - Capt. Hudson said no other courthouse that he's been through has holding tanks in the same hallway as the prosecutor's office like the Douglas County Courthouse does.
- Capt. Hudson said Courthouse security is divided into two divisions, one for District Court and one for County Court.
  - Capt. Hudson said both of these divisions have had staffing cuts because the Sheriff has had to backfill the road and other places.
    - Capt. Hudson said some trials require two or three Sheriff's deputies and there are days when more than one of those types of trials are going on at one time.
    - Capt. Hudson said Courthouse security can't cut anymore staff.



- Mr. Leahy handed out a [one-page document](#) containing information regarding the public safety and public service operations bond issue.
  - Mr. Leahy said Commissioner Morgan had asked for an informational sheet regarding the bond issue to be put together and made available to voters.
- Mr. Leahy said the plan is to have a County Treasurer's branch, a State DMV branch, 911/Communications, and Environmental Services located at the Fitzgerald Home.
  - Commissioner Duda said the Treasurer's branch at 108<sup>th</sup> and Maple will be relocated to the Fitzgerald Home.
  - Mr. Leahy said after those offices move in, there will be 16,000 square feet left for use at the Fitzgerald Home.
- Possibilities for the Assessor, Register of Deeds, and Treasurer were discussed.
  - Commissioner Duda said Register of Deeds Diane Battiato does not want the offices for the Register of Deeds and Assessor split within the Civic Center, she would like everything located in one spot.
    - Commissioner Morgan said it would be helpful if the Assessor had some of their offices out at the Fitzgerald Home.
    - Mr. Leahy said he had mentioned to Register of Deeds Battiato the idea of having office space at the Fitzgerald Home for the Assessor's appraisers who are covering areas west of 90<sup>th</sup> Street.
      - Mr. Bloomingdale said this would only involve a handful of appraisers and it would make sense for those appraisers to work out west, instead of them having to come downtown.
  - Mr. Leahy said there has been discussion about Treasurer John Ewing having office space for himself at the Fitzgerald Home.
    - Mr. Bloomingdale said Treasurer Ewing would have an office for himself at the Civic Center and at the Fitzgerald Home.
  - Commissioner Boyle asked what is in the Treasurer's branch office in the Civic Center.
    - Mr. Bloomingdale said the Treasurer's administrative offices are in the Civic Center.
    - Mr. Lorenz said accounting is done in one area of the office, and then processing of what is mailed into them is done in another area.
  - Commissioner Tusa said if the Treasurer is not open to the public at the Civic Center, then why not move the Treasurer's office out of the Civic Center and in to the Fitzgerald Home.
    - Commissioner Boyle said he agrees.
    - Commissioner Tusa said there needs to be a discussion with Treasurer Ewing about moving the Treasurer's Civic Center branch out to the Fitzgerald Home.
  - Mr. Bloomingdale said if the Treasurer's Civic Center office was moved to the Fitzgerald Home, then the Assessor could be moved to the Harney Level of the Civic Center.
  - Commissioner Tusa asked Mr. Leahy to put figures together to see:
    - How much space would be freed up at the Civic Center if the Treasurer's downtown branch were moved to the Fitzgerald Home.

- How much more space the Treasurer would need at the Fitzgerald Home, and if there would be any space leftover at the Fitzgerald Home if the Treasurer's downtown branch were moved there.
- Commissioner Tusa asked if Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) or if Metro Area Transit has any plans for a bus route out near the Fitzgerald Home.
  - Commissioner Rodgers said there is not.
  - Commissioner Boyle said the County ought to explore the cost of running a bus line to out near the Fitzgerald Home.
  - Commissioner Rodgers said he thinks the only way to get a bus route to go out that far west is to have a county-wide area transit or a dual-county area transit.
  - Commissioner Boyle said he thinks either the City or the County should take over area transit because he thinks elected officials would be more responsive.
  - Commissioner Rodgers said there will have to be an investment in infrastructure for bus routes west of 108<sup>th</sup> Street because most streets west of 108<sup>th</sup> Street are not conducive for bus stops.
    - Commissioner Boyle said if there were some access for bus stops in the shopping areas out west, like along West Maple Road, perhaps those shopping areas could receive a property tax reduction for allowing bus stops.
    - Commissioner Rodgers said if there is a commitment to bus routes for out west, then there should be a commitment to bike lanes, too.
- Commissioner Boyle said the Election Commissioner's current location is inaccessible and he would like to see the Election Commissioner have a branch or be moved somewhere else, although not to the Fitzgerald Home.
- Commissioner Boyle said he doesn't believe County elected officials are allowed to advocate for the bond issue.
  - Commissioners Duda and Morgan did think it was allowed.
  - Commissioners Boyle and Morgan asked Ms. Carlson to check into this and follow up with the County Board.
- Commissioner Tusa asked Mr. Leahy to follow up with Register of Deeds Battiato and Treasurer Ewing, and that she will schedule an Administrative Services Committee meeting on November 18<sup>th</sup> for follow up discussion on the topic.

### **3) Other Business.**

Speaking to the item were Commissioner Boyle, Commissioner Tusa, Mr. San Martin, and Commissioner Morgan. Highlights from the discussion included the following:

- Commissioner Boyle said there is City property that is very close to County operations, and he'd like to look into whether or not it's feasible for the City and County to join in on some buildings.
  - Commissioner Tusa said she will put this topic on the November 18<sup>th</sup> agenda.

The meeting adjourned at 12:19 p.m.