

Finance Committee Meeting Douglas County, Nebraska

Tuesday, April 21, 2015

The meeting convened at 10:14 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 April 14, 2015 issue of The Daily Record. County Commissioners present at the meeting were James Cavanaugh, PJ Morgan, Mike Boyle, Clare Duda, Marc Kraft, and Chris Rodgers. Others present at the start of the meeting were Patrick Bloomingdale, Joe Lorenz, Diane Carlson, Catherine Hall, Karen Cole, and Kaieva Williams of Administration; Tim Dunning, Tom Wheeler, and Kevin Conlon of the Sheriff's office; Allan Jackson of Veterans; Mike Schonlau and Steve Cacioppo of GIS; and Dan Esch of the Clerk/Comptroller's office. Commissioners Morgan and Cavanaugh conducted the meeting.

1. Preliminary 2015/2016 County budget review with selected department heads and elected officials.

Sheriff

- Sheriff's current budget for 2014/15: \$14,702,739
- Sheriff's budget target for 2015/16: \$14,847,350
- Sheriff's budget request for 2015/16: \$15,032,972*

Marcos San Martin and Cheri Albin of Administration entered the meeting during this discussion, as well as Wayne Hudson of the Sheriff's office. Ms. Williams left the meeting during this discussion. Speaking during the Sheriff's budget discussion were Mr. Lorenz, Chief Deputy Sheriff (Chief Dep.) Wheeler, Commissioner Cavanaugh, Commissioner Morgan, Sheriff Dunning, Commissioner Boyle, Commissioner Duda, Mr. San Martin, Commissioner Kraft, Captain (Capt.) Hudson, Mr. Schonlau, Commissioner Rodgers, Mr. Bloomingdale, and Ms. Albin. Highlights from the discussion included the following:

- *Chief Dep. Wheeler said the Sheriff's budget request being \$185,622 over target is due to two requests, one of which the Sheriff's office is withdrawing.
 - \$87,872 for staffing two additional deputies at the Hall of Justice due to LB 482.
 - \$97,750 for additional costs associated with the Anthony Garcia trial, but Chief Dep. Wheeler said due to a recent judge's decision, this request is being withdrawn.
 - After this withdrawal, Mr. Lorenz said the Sheriff's 2015/16 budget request is now \$87,872 over target.
- The costs that were originally expected for the Anthony Garcia trial were discussed.
 - Chief Dep. Wheeler said the defense had asked for sequestration and a change of venue.
 - Chief Dep. Wheeler said this would require a 24/7 operation where the jurors would not be allowed to have any movement without Sheriff's deputies present, which would incur some significant overtime.
 - Chief Dep. Wheeler said the judge recently denied this request, so that's why the Sheriff's office is withdrawing their request for the additional \$97,750.

- Chief Dep. Wheeler said if the judge changes that ruling, the Sheriff's office may have to come back at budget supplemental time if it's something that can't be absorbed.
- Chief Dep. Wheeler said the request to cover costs for staffing two additional deputies at the Hall of Justice is being requested because AM 691 to LB 482 would require the removal of restraints on juvenile offenders during court related escorts and appearances.
 - Chief Dep. Wheeler said when restraints are utilized, one deputy is needed to escort and stand by the juvenile offender during the court proceeding.
 - Chief Dep. Wheeler said no restraints will require the assistance of a second deputy.
 - Commissioner Boyle asked if more doors or some sort of physical barrier could be added in to Juvenile Court as an alternative to additional deputies.
 - Capt. Hudson said there are no secure hallways to get inmates from their holding tank to the courtroom with the way Juvenile Court is set up, so it would take a total remodel of the sixth floor.
 - Sheriff Dunning said Senator Krist had been invited to take a look at the Juvenile Court arena, but he cancelled his visits.
- Handouts were provided and reviewed during this discussion.
 - Mr. Lorenz provided a handout containing Sheriff budget appropriation figures, and budget requests for the Merit Commission and Forfeiture (see Attachment #1).
 - Chief Dep. Wheeler provided an organizational chart (see Attachment #3) and a packet (see Attachment #2) which included:
 - The Sheriff's 2015/16 budget request letter.
 - Annual expenditures, revenues, and payroll information for the Sheriff's office going back to 2010.
 - Annual drug forfeiture expenditures going back to 2007.
 - An analysis of the Sheriff's budget and a report on the Merit Commission's budget.
 - Commissioner Rodgers said he liked the detailed breakdown the Sheriff's office provided, and he'd like to see that for some of the other large departments.
 - Information on population growth in unincorporated Douglas County.
 - Sheriff Dunning said despite annexations by the City of Omaha, the population outside of the City's limits is growing.
 - Chief Dep. Wheeler said the population of unincorporated Douglas County is 83,000.
 - ❖ Commissioner Boyle said he'd like to see a map that shows where those 83,000 people are located in Douglas County.
- The Forfeiture budget was discussed.
 - Chief Dep. Wheeler said the forfeiture budget request is \$1,337,143, which is on target.
 - Chief Dep. Wheeler said the majority of this request will cover costs for the implementation of a records management system.
 - Chief Dep. Wheeler said the forfeiture account currently has a balance of around \$1.6 million.
 - Chief Dep. Wheeler said during the budget process, the Sheriff's office requests a certain amount of that balance for the upcoming budget year.

- Chief Dep. Wheeler said he expects that the Sheriff's office will see less in seized assets because the federal government will no longer adopt cases from local law enforcement.
 - Chief Dep. Wheeler said he's not sure why the Attorney General made this decision, but the Sheriff's office is in uncharted territory with seized assets.
 - Chief Dep. Wheeler said worst case scenario, the seized assets program will die out in about a year or two.
- Chief Dep. Wheeler said the 2015/16 budget request for the Merit Commission is \$24,020.
 - Chief Dep. Wheeler said the Merit Commission's 2015/16 budget target was set at \$14,399.
 - Chief Dep. Wheeler said \$24,020 is being requested to cover costs associated with separate promotional processes for sergeant and lieutenant.
- Commissioner Cavanaugh asked the Sheriff's office to give the County Board some idea going forward if the Sheriff's office is coming up on a lot of senior level retirements.
- The possibility of the Sheriff's office merging with the Omaha Police was discussed.
 - Sheriff Dunning said that he knows of, the only plan that's ever been on paper was one that was done in the early-to-mid 1990's at the request of PJ Morgan.
 - Sheriff Dunning said in the early 2000's there was a task force chaired by Kathleen Jeffries, and it was determined then that the startup costs to "make brown blue" were between \$1.7 million and \$2.3 million.
 - Chief Dep. Wheeler said if there was a full merger, he believes resources would shift east and people who are outside the city limits of Omaha would see less law enforcement.
 - Sheriff Dunning said if there is going to be a consolidation where the Sheriff's people will blend in seniority-wise, and the Sheriff's people with rank will blend into the Omaha system, he'll walk away. But if that doesn't occur, he's going to stick up for his people.
 - Commissioner Boyle said he would never propose any kind of consolidation that would hurt the employees in any way.
 - Commissioner Boyle said their pension and seniority has to be protected.
 - Commissioner Boyle said the Sheriff needs to be part of the deal and a merger can't be imposed on the Sheriff's office, but he thinks it needs to be talked about.
 - Commissioner Boyle said the Sheriff's office has a terrific reputation for cooperating, and is constantly cooperating with the Omaha Police.
 - Commissioner Cavanaugh said if a merger does happen, it's going to have to be with Sheriff Dunning's leadership and input.
- Commissioner Morgan left the meeting during the Sheriff's budget discussion.
- Sheriff Dunning, Chief Dep. Wheeler, Capt. Conlon, and Capt. Hudson left the meeting after the Sheriff's budget discussion.

Veterans

- Veterans' current budget for 2014/15: \$493,868
- Veterans' budget target for 2015/16: \$500,470
- Veterans' budget request for 2015/16: \$496,152

Speaking during the Veterans budget discussion were Mr. Lorenz, Mr. Jackson, Commissioner Duda, Commissioner Cavanaugh, Commissioner Rodgers, Commissioner Boyle, Commissioner Kraft, and Mr. Schonlau. Highlights from the discussion included the following:

- Mr. Lorenz said the budget request from Veterans is under target by \$4,318, but he would ask the County Board to consider funding Veterans at the target amount.
 - Mr. Jackson said Veterans would use that extra \$4,318 to send staff to more training.
- Mr. Jackson said there are a total of six employees at Veterans.
 - Mr. Jackson said since he's been with Veterans (starting in 1999) the staffing level has always been at six.
 - Mr. Jackson said currently five of the six employees are veterans.
- Handouts were provided and reviewed during this discussion.
 - Mr. Lorenz provided a handout containing Veterans budget appropriation figures (see Attachment #4).
 - Mr. Jackson provided:
 - A packet that included an organizational chart and an expenditures summary for each year from FY2010 through FY2015 (see Attachment #5).
 - A line item breakout of Veterans expense accounts 655011 and 656011 for each year from FY2010 through FY2015 (see Attachments #6 and #7).
 - Account 655011 is used for office operational costs, including staff salaries.
 - Account 656011 is used to provide aid to the individuals served by Veterans.
 - ❖ Mr. Jackson said the FY2015 budgeted amount for 656011 is \$12,000.
 - Mr. Jackson said when he first started at Veterans, it was at \$125,000.
- Mr. Jackson said Veterans receives no grants or federal funding, but the State has a program called the Nebraska Veterans Aid Fund, which Veterans uses to help with financial assistance needed for rent, food, utilities, medical costs, burials, and cremations.
 - Mr. Jackson said Veterans uses around \$500,000 from this fund annually.
- Mr. Jackson said the maximum amount Veterans can give someone for rent is \$550.
 - Mr. Jackson said if someone's rent is \$600, the Veterans would make a request to the Nebraska Veterans Aid Fund.
 - Mr. Jackson said a request for the maximum Veterans can provide for rent goes through the Veterans Committee, and then is submitted to the County Board for approval.
 - Mr. Jackson said he asked the Veterans Committee to raise the rent maximum to \$750.
- Mr. Jackson said if Veterans can't fulfill a veteran's need, they will refer them to another agency.
 - Mr. Jackson said sometimes when Veterans can't pay a full amount requested of them, they will pay for some of it and other agencies, such as Together, Inc. or Salvation Army, will help out with the rest of the amount needed.
- Commissioner Kraft said he'd be willing to increase the amount the County Board gives to Veterans for providing services.
 - Commissioner Boyle said he agreed.
- Mr. Jackson said last year Veterans served around 50,000 individuals.

- Mr. Jackson said this number would include widows and dependents of veterans.
- Mr. Jackson said five years ago, it would have been around 40,000 individuals.
- Mr. Jackson left the meeting after this discussion.

GIS

- Current 2014/15 budget for GIS: \$293,067
- 2015/16 budget target for GIS: \$296,455
- 2015/16 budget request from GIS: \$374,612

Speaking during the GIS budget discussion were Mr. Lorenz, Mr. Schonlau, Commissioner Cavanaugh, Commissioner Duda, Commissioner Boyle, Ms. Albin, Mr. Bloomingdale, Mr. Cacioppo, Commissioner Kraft, and Commissioner Rodgers. Highlights from the discussion included the following:

- Handouts were provided and reviewed during this discussion.
 - Mr. Lorenz provided a handout with GIS budget appropriation figures (see Attachment #8).
 - Mr. Schonlau provided the following:
 - A presentation that covered what GIS does, an organizational chart for GIS, and information about the GIS requested budget (see Attachment #9).
 - A handout that showed how many hours GIS spends on County departments (see Attachment #10).
 - A packet regarding the Nebraska-Iowa Regional Orthophotography Consortium and an imagery project (see Attachment #11).
- Mr. Schonlau said GIS currently is made up of four positions, a coordinator and three analysts.
- Mr. Schonlau said the GIS budget request is over target is due to wanting to retain one of the GIS analysts.
 - Mr. Schonlau said this analyst position has been funded the last two and a half years through 911 Wireless for an addressing project.
 - Mr. Schonlau said this project will end on June 30, 2015.
 - Mr. Schonlau said he would like to retain this employee because GIS will be inheriting the maintenance responsibility for the data this employee has been creating over the last two and a half years.
 - Mr. Schonlau said another reason why he wants to keep this employee is to help with the backlog of projects that GIS has.
 - Mr. Schonlau said this employee's salary is around \$60,000.
 - Ms. Albin said this is an employee's salary is currently coming out of the 911 Surcharge budget, so the money to pay for that salary is already in the County's budget, it's just not coming out of GIS' budget.
 - Ms. Albin said for 2015/16, the County would be moving where it pays this employee from, which would be from the 911 Surcharge budget to the GIS budget.
 - Ms. Albin said the 911 Surcharge budget would go down by about \$60,000.
- Mr. Schonlau said funding for GIS from MAPA has shrunk dramatically.

- Mr. Schonlau said funding from MAPA for 2015/16 is budgeted at \$82,000, a decrease of 37% (or \$48,000) from 2014/15.
 - In 2013/14, MAPA funding was at \$160,000.
- Mr. Schonlau said the funding GIS receives from MAPA are federal highway funds, and MAPA has told GIS that pot of money has shrunk.
- Mr. Schonlau said the money from MAPA is to be used for transportation-related projects.
- Mr. Schonlau spoke about a proposed cost-sharing plan between the County and the City of Omaha.
 - Mr. Schonlau said because of the unpredictable funding from MAPA, GIS is trying to come up with a more equitable cost-sharing plan going forward.
 - Mr. Schonlau said since GIS was formed, it's been an even split between the funding provided to GIS by the City and County.
 - Mr. Schonlau said GIS wanted to come up with a cost-sharing plan that reflected the amount of time spent on projects.
 - Mr. Schonlau said GIS implemented a time tracking system to track the amount of time GIS staff spends on projects for the City, County, and Enterprise (projects for both City & County).
 - From May 2014 through March 2015, GIS spent:
 - 44.9% of its time on Enterprise projects.
 - 43.7% of its time on City projects.
 - 11.4% of its time on County projects.
 - Mr. Schonlau said including fringe benefits (approximately \$116,000), the proposed GIS budget for 2015/16 is \$491,000.
 - After the \$82,000 of funding from MAPA, that would leave \$409,000 to be covered by the City and County.
 - Mr. Schonlau said based on the time tracking to date, the cost sharing proposal for 2015/16 would ask for:
 - \$242,797 from the City.
 - \$166,204 from the County.
 - A more detailed breakdown can be found in Attachment #9.
 - Mr. Schonlau said he has spoken to Stephen Curtiss of City Finance about this proposal, and Mr. Curtiss said he thinks the City's costs should come out of the budgets of each City department using GIS services.
 - Mr. Schonlau said he has made presentations to the City departments and he has received a verbal agreement from each department that they will be putting these costs into their budget.
 - Mr. Schonlau said there would probably be an addendum to the interlocal agreement that would spell out what each City department will be charged for that year.
 - Commissioner Cavanaugh asked if the "fee for service" model will be imposed on County departments, as well.
 - Commissioner Boyle said he feels that may make sense.

- Mr. Schonlau said he would leave that up to the County Board to decide, but that GIS is tracking how much time they are spending with each County department.
- Mr. Schonlau said due to changes in technology, GIS doesn't forecast too far out into the future.
- Mr. Schonlau said he has spoken to Diane Battiato about the possibility of integrating the Assessor's GIS function into the GIS office.
- Mr. Schonlau discussed an imagery project using aerial photography (see Attachment #11) and discussed the benefits of using oblique imagery, which involves a bird's eye view of properties at a 45-degree angle.
 - Mr. Schonlau said as a result of this type of imagery in 2012, the Assessor's office found a property that wasn't on the tax rolls.
 - The Assessor's office determined this property to be worth \$480,000, which has brought in approximately \$10,500 in property taxes each year since.
- Mr. Schonlau said it's a \$194,000 proposed project that would be split between the City and County, and Mr. Schonlau said there are other entities who may possibly share in the costs.
 - Mr. Schonlau said the costs wouldn't have to all be paid for in one year.
 - The Register of Deeds Technology fund and the County Road fund were mentioned as possible funding options for this project.
- Jeff Stevens of Nebraska Taxpayers for Freedom entered the meeting during this discussion.
- Commissioner Boyle left the meeting during this discussion.

2. Other business.

There was no other business.

The meeting adjourned at 12:37 p.m.