

Human Resources Committee Meeting

**Douglas County, Nebraska**

Tuesday, January 24, 2017

The meeting convened at 2:15 P.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 January 19, 2017, issue of *The Daily Record*. County Commissioners present at the meeting were Marc Kraft, Chris Rodgers, Mike Boyle, Mary Ann Borgeson, Clare Duda, and P.J. Morgan. Others present at the meeting included Paul Johnson, Emergency Management; Patrick Bloomingdale, Joe Lorenz, Diane Carlson, Catherine Hall, and Leia Baez, Administration; Tim Dunning, Kristopher Peterson, Wayne Hudson and Tom Wheeler, Sheriff's office; David Sleeter, 911; Tim McNally and Matt Oberle, Human Resources; and Constance Mierendorf, Douglas County Clerk/Comptroller's office. Mary Ann Borgeson chairs the Committee.

A video recording of the meeting is available on the Douglas County Website:

<http://commissioners.douglascounty-ne.gov/board-meetings/videos>

**Staffing Issues at the Courthouse**

- Captain Wayne Hudson presented the Sheriff's Office analysis of the staffing shortage in the Court Services Bureau that serves both District and County Court Divisions (Attachment A). The 2 divisions total 35 judges and referees. The Sheriff's Office provides 26 sworn deputies for these 35 judges.

- Captain Hudson compared the Lancaster County Sheriff's Office staffing with Douglas County staffing:

<u>Lancaster County</u>	<u>Douglas County</u>
22 judges	35 judges
26 sworn deputies	26 sworn deputies

- The average daily staffing for the Douglas County District Court:

- 14 Sworn deputies
  - 2 Inmate travel
  - 2 Juvenile Court
  - 3 Trial
  - 3 Leave (annual, FMLA, training, etc.)

This leaves 4 deputies to serve 18 judges and answer any and all calls for service in the Douglas County Courthouse.

- Captain Hudson read 3 communications from judges that cited instances where the business of the Court was interrupted or cancelled because of the inability of deputies to get prisoners to the courtroom.
- The increase in caseload in all areas of the Douglas County justice system affects the caseload of the Sheriff's office:
  - Corrections is experiencing on average 200 more bookings per month since May
  - The County Attorney's Office was trending toward an increase of 15-18% in criminal filings at the end of 2016
  - The Douglas County Public Defender's Office reports an increase of 15%
  - The Juvenile Court's caseload has increased to the point that they are requesting a 6<sup>th</sup> Juvenile Court judge.
- The long-term response to the understaffing proposed by the Sheriff's Office is to add staffing and create a new Special Service Division with concentration on inmate transports and juvenile court.
- A new Special Services Division would include: 1 new sergeant, 3 new deputies, 1 deputy re-assigned from the Patrol Division and 2 deputies reassigned from the District Court Division.
- The total cost of the 3 new deputies, 1 new sergeant, and 1 new transport vehicle is \$336,480.20.
- Commissioner Boyle asked about the effect the City's annexations has had on the Sheriff's office. Aren't there fewer people in County jurisdiction as a result of annexation and doesn't that reduce the work load of the Sheriff?
- Deputy Chief Tom Wheeler replied that while the number of citizens has been reduced, the geographical area the Sheriff's Office covers has not. As a matter of public safety, 1 and 2 level calls are answered by the Sheriff's Office even in annexed areas.
- Discussion followed about renegotiating the Interlocal agreement with OPD that dates back to 1996. Sheriff Dunning said he is willing to revisit that agreement.
- Commissioner Duda said the County must provide a secure courthouse.
- Commissioner Rodgers agreed and said the County should not automatically agree to reduce the mill levy to respond to increased valuations. It is a struggle to keep the levy even each year, and added costs like the Sheriff's request as well as costs that are out of the control of the County must be met.
- Commissioner Morgan agreed and noted that the County continuously loses revenue from property that is taken off the tax rolls through TIF (Tax Increment Financing). These exemptions for new building projects cost the County tax revenue. While the City has sales tax revenue and restaurant tax revenue, the County relies solely on property tax revenue to fund the County.
- Commissioner Borgeson said that when an annexation takes place, the County has not gained; it has lost under the existing agreement with the City. When the City annexes without providing services, the County bears the burden.
- Sheriff Dunning said the Sheriff's office answered approximately 950 Interlocal calls in 2016.
- Deputy Chief Wheeler said the ratio of Interlocal calls answered by the Sheriff compared with calls answered by the Omaha Police Department (OPD) is approximately 20:1.

- Discussion followed about the relationship between the Sheriff's office and OPD. The Sheriff's Office said as property is annexed and OPD adds officers, the responsibility for police coverage of the annexations is not necessarily picked up by the City.
- Patrick Bloomingdale said OPD will not respond to calls at County facilities like the Youth Center or the County Corrections Center.
- Commissioner Duda said the problem at the court house is urgent, though the overall problem is a budget issue.
- Commissioner Morgan suggested that the Board put 2 staff on the agenda for the next board meeting. The cost of a quarter's worth of salaries would be approximately \$40,000.
- Sheriff Dunning said that if the budget is approved for 2 people now, they would come on board April 1 and would not be fully trained until 2018. The training is a matter of about 9 months.
- Commissioner Borgeson asked the Sheriff to present the PowerPoint to the Board at the January 31 meeting.

### Legislation

- Marcos San Martin presented a list of Bills that have both a Potentially Negative Fiscal Impact on the County and a Potentially Positive Fiscal Impact (Attachment B). 680 bills were filed in the State Legislature.
- Mr. San Martin also presented a legislative report through January 20 from Kelley Plucker Law Office (Attachment C). Among the potentially negative impacts on the County is LB10, which would add a juvenile court judge in Douglas County. Senator Chambers, who has blocked additional juvenile judges in the past, now supports the bill and advocates adding 2 juvenile court judges (Attachment D).
- Bills that have been introduced on behalf of the County are:
  - LB43 (Hilkemann), Transportation and Telecommunications--change provisions relating to surcharges for 911 service
  - LB322 (Craighead), Revenue—change the Tax Equalization and Review Commission Act
  - LB480 (McCollister), Banking, Insurance, and Commerce—provide requirements relating to health benefit plan coverage for insureds in jail custody
  - LB619 (Wayne), Government, Military, and Veterans Affairs—permit certain counties to conduct elections by mail
- Commissioner Borgeson said the Board needs to prepare resolutions or testimony or both to oppose the negative impact bills. If the Board knows ahead of time what its position is on a given bill, it is best to prepare and present a resolution at a Board meeting
- Commissioner Boyle said the cost of LB163 (Senator Vargas-bill to provide additional polling places) is inflated. The cost of additional voting sites would not be as high as \$300,000. He suggested police assembly points as potential sites.
- Commissioner Morgan said the cost of locations could be reduced by opening voting at the Treasurer's offices, both north and south.
- Commissioner Rodgers said voting at Metro Community College would cover Elkhorn and north and south Omaha.

- Commissioner Borgeson said additional voting sites are not needed and she thinks LB163 is a response to a very small problem, especially in light of the current move to mailing ballots.
- Commissioner Duda reminded the Committee that the \$330,000 projected cost for LB163 is only ½ of the cost since there will be 2 elections this coming year.
- Commissioner Borgeson said discussion will continue with the Election Commissioner and Senator Vargas.
- Mr. San Marcos will prepare resolutions for the next Board agenda.
- Commissioner Borgeson said the Strategic Plan items update will occur at an upcoming Human Resources meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3:40 P.M.