

Administrative Services Committee Meeting

Douglas County, Nebraska

Tuesday, October 11, 2016

The meeting convened at 10:59 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 October 4, 2016, issue of *The Daily Record*. County Commissioners present at the meeting were Jim Cavanaugh, Clare Duda, Chris Rodgers, Mike Boyle, Marc Kraft, and Mary Ann Borgeson. Others present at the meeting were Tim Cavanaugh, Treasurer's Office; Kent Holm, Environmental Services; Mark Foxall, Amber Michalski, and John Hubbard, Corrections; Patrick Bloomingdale, Joe Lorenz, Karen Cole, Marcos San Martin, Diane Carlson, and Catherine Hall, Administration; Jerry Leahy and Jeff McGill, Public Property; Perre Neilan, Public; Chris Burbach, *Omaha World Herald*; Tim Dunning, Tom Wheeler, and Eric Sellers, Sheriff's Office; and Constance Mierendorf, Douglas County Clerk/Comptroller's office. Jim Cavanaugh chairs the Committee.

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

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

Public Safety Bond Issue Public Information PowerPoint

- Commissioner Cavanaugh began by saying that this meeting is an Executive Summary of the Bond that is on the November 8 ballot.
- Patrick Bloomingdale showed the PowerPoint (See Attachment) and commented.
- Slide 2: Douglas County proposes a \$45 million Public Safety Bond that will be repaid over a 20-year period.
- Slide 3: \$2.8 million of the Bond will be used for purchasing Emergency Communications Radios for the Sheriff, rural law enforcement and Corrections. These radios will replace existing radios that will be obsolete and will not be supported by Motorola in 2018. Omaha Police and Fire already have their radios.
- Commissioner Boyle asked that "rural law" enforcement be replaced with the names of those rural communities: Bennington, Waterloo, etc.
- Slide 4: The next aspect of the Bond is \$8.5 million for Emergency Radio Infrastructure upgrade is to replace 160 base stations at 7 tower sites to insure that law enforcement and fire have the capability for real time emergency communication.
- Slide 5: Other necessary 911 equipment: \$600,000 for dispatch and operator consoles and \$300,000 for servers, routers and data storage.
- Slide 6: \$2 million for a new Fire Station Alerting system. The current system alerts fire personnel and dispatches fire and medical apparatus from over 30 different stations

throughout the City and the County. It is no longer supported and is failing on a weekly basis.

- Commissioner Boyle asked that the term “medical apparatus” be changed to something that is more emergency sounding; “squads” was suggested.
- Slide 7: the picture that is shown is of a FLIR (Forward Looking Infrared) Camera and is from the capture of one of the suspects in the Boston Marathon bombing who was hiding inside a boat covered by a tarp. The FLIR was able to detect the man through the covering. The \$800,000 purchase is for the Omaha Police helicopters. This amount was originally discussed as money for encryption for the City’s radios, but the Police Department expressed the more immediate need for the cameras.
- Slide 8: \$20 million will be dedicated to renovation of the former Thomas Fitzgerald Veterans’ Home at 156th and Maple Streets for use primarily by public safety agencies.
- Slide 9: the 911 Communications Center will be upgraded and improved. The operation has outgrown its current space.
- Commissioner Kraft suggested that the language “without disrupting current operations” be included.
- Slide 10: relocate Emergency Management from the basement of the Civic Center. There have been flooding issues periodically for the offices and the space was never designed for office use. There are also real advantages to co-locating Emergency Management close to other public safety offices at the West Campus.
- Commissioner Cavanaugh suggested that Mr. Bloomingdale note the synergies of public safety communication and partnerships at the renovated West Campus.
- Commissioner Kraft suggested that the language “sub-basement” be added to the description of current Emergency Management offices.
- Slide 11: close the Menke Circle Environmental Services building, sell it, and relocate Environmental Services to the renovated West Campus building.
- Slide 12: close the Maple Street branch location of the Treasurer’s office and relocate it to the newly renovated West Campus. This will save \$102,660/year in rental fees for the County.
- Slide 13: \$10 million of the Bond will provide the Department of Corrections’ needs for critical and much needed renovations and improvements.
- Commissioner Boyle suggested that the language “much needed” be removed.
- Mark Foxall asked that the slides about the Correctional Center be moved up closer to the Fire, Police and radio equipment slides.
- Mr. Bloomberg said it was his intention in designing the PowerPoint to put the equipment first and then move into capital construction slides.
- Slide 14: the text states that manual locking doors would be replaced with automatic doors and plumbing that is corroded and failing would also be replaced.
- Slide 15: pictures of 2 doors. The one on the left is an old, manual locking door and the ones on the right are remotely locking doors.
- Commissioner Boyle said “primarily” and “etc.” should be omitted.

- Slide 16: pictures of rusty plumbing and leaking ceiling in the old side of the jail that must be replaced as soon as possible.
- Slide 17: Bond Repayment explains that interest-only payments will be made on the Bond for the first 5 years.
- Slide 18: the debt service on \$45 million would be \$1.4-\$1.5 million/year for the first 5 years.
- Slide 19: over 20 years, the average annual debt service would be approximately \$3.3 million /year which represents 0.85% of the County's current \$390 million annual budget.
- Slide 20: Commissioners and staff are confident that identified cost savings will enable the debt service to be paid without any increase to the current property tax levy.
- Commissioner Cavanaugh asked that departments post the PowerPoint on their web sites after one more edit and get the word out about the Bond as widely as possible. He asked for comments from elected officials.
- Sheriff Dunning approved of the PowerPoint.
- Tim Cavanaugh suggested that on slide 12, language be added that states that the annual cost savings in rent will result in a total savings of \$2 million over the 20-year life of the Bond.
- Mark Foxall said he would like to see the slides re-ordered as he mentioned and that there could be better pictures that would illustrate some of the conditions at the Correctional Center.
- Kent Holm said more pictures and fewer words should be the goal of a good PowerPoint.
- Commissioner Kraft suggested that the word "current" be added before "rental cost" in slide 12.
- Commissioner Cavanaugh asked Public Properties if they might have some "before and after" pictures of the West Maple campus that Mr. Bloomingdale might use.
- Commissioner Boyle asked who the group of private citizens is that is promoting the Bond issue. He has received a mailing from them and it says "No New Taxes." He also asked how they are being funded. He said he was caught unaware of this group. He also wants to know where the money is coming from.
- Commissioner Cavanaugh answered that he has talked to many people at the Chamber, labor organizations, and businesses. Traditionally, in proposing a public bond, as the City and Omaha Public Schools (OPS) have done, help has come from civic-minded individuals to promote the Bond. Most recently the 2014 \$1/2 billion OPS Bond had a committee to promote the Bond. He has been asked why the County did not reach out to committed individuals to promote the bond in 2014. The committee is represented here today and the individuals who have participated in it should be commended for their civic-mindedness. They are participating in the process of promoting the Bond, which the County Board cannot do.

- Commissioner Boyle questioned who the committee is and asked why the Board was not involved and why it didn't know anything about the Committee. The Board was not consulted. The Committee must be registered with Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure (NADC) and must file today if it has raised more than \$5,000.
- Commissioner Cavanaugh said the Committee should be commended. He introduced Perre Neilan.
- Mr. Neilan said he is helping facilitate a group of citizens who are interested in passing the Bond. The group has a website, saferdouglascounty.com and has great support from individuals, businesses, and unions. The group is Citizens for a Safer Douglas County and it was featured in the *World Herald* article. It is engaged in typical campaign activities: mailings, yard signs, etc. The Committee has raised money from a broad cross section of constituents.
- Mr. Neilan said Citizens for a Safer Douglas County (CSDC) is a registered committee with NADC and filed its report today. Anyone can go online and see where money has been raised and spent. He is glad to be a part of the committee.
- Commissioner Boyle asked Mr. Neilan who told him to put "No New Taxes" on the postcard CSDC sent out.
- Mr. Neilan answered that no one told him. He said he listened to the Board and Committee meetings; he drew on the discussions and Mr. Lorenz's presentations and email, and there is no new tax increase associated with this Bond.
- Commissioner Duda thanked Mr. Neilan and his committee and said that Doug Kagan, who is on the CSDC steering committee, and Jeff Stevens have been present at Bond discussion meetings and have been an integral part of the discussions. They have endorsed the Bond because there is no tax increase. It is not surprising that they would put this front and center. Commissioner Duda complimented Citizens for a Safer Douglas County for its website.
- Commissioner Rodgers said he appreciated the work of the Committee and like the OPS Bond, the help is needed because it is harder to pass a bond these days. All previous Bonds had passed for the County before the 2014 Bond. It's interchangeable and a minor thing, but there is a tax increase just no mill levy increase.
- Commissioner Cavanaugh thanked the civic-minded participants of Citizens for A Safer Douglas County. He believes, based on best estimates that Mr. Lorenz has provided, that there will be no tax increase. Nebraska Taxpayers for Freedom also holds this opinion. This has been the underlying premise of discussions for months and months. With the backing of the Omaha Fire and Police and leaders of business and industry, the County should be able to get the Bond passed.
- Commissioner Boyle said he hopes there will be no tax increase. No vote was taken to say "No New Taxes." Mr. Lorenz said no tax increase in the future could not be guaranteed for 20 years into the future. He does not want to mislead the public.
- Commissioner Duda asked if there was a way to list the groups on the PowerPoint that have endorsed the Bond.

- Mr. Bloomingdale said the PowerPoint that is produced with County resources is an educational piece and that needs to be kept separate from any promotion. If the CSDC wants to add those endorsements, that would be fine.
- Commissioner Duda suggested that Mr. Neilan's group could list the endorsements and added that he and Mark Conrey met with the Douglas County Fire Chief's Association and they went on record with their support of the Bond.
- Commissioner Borgeson said that the Omaha Police Union Board was confident that their membership would support the Bond; they can be added to the list of endorsers.
- Mark Conrey asked if the PowerPoint could provide a link to the Citizens for a Safer Douglas County web site.
- Mr. Bloomingdale said, again, the County piece needs to be totally separate from the promotional piece.
- Commissioner Cavanaugh said what the County puts out is all public information and the citizens' website could link to any other website.
- Mr. Neilan said saferdouglascounty.com is the name of the web site.
- Commissioner Cavanaugh said the Board has elected to go out for the Bond using its excellent AAA credit rating and the low Bond market. \$45 million out of the General Fund would mean a tax increase and he will not vote for a tax increase. Floating a Bond for \$45 million is a responsible course of action that will not result in a tax increase.
- Commissioner Boyle told Mr. Neilan that he appreciates what he is doing. It just caught a lot of people off guard and the "No Tax Increase" language was a big red flag.
- Commissioner Cavanaugh said there are 29 days left until November 8. He appreciates those who are talking to people. He knows Commissioners Duda and Borgeson and others have been attending meetings. He asked to get the PowerPoint up on websites as soon as it is ready.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 A.M.