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LANCASTER COUNTY BOARD

JOINT MEETING
LINCOLN BOARD OF EDUCATION
LINCOLN CITY COUNCIL
MAYOR
LANCASTER COUNTY BOARD

Thursday, August 15, 2002 – 7:30 a.m.

Lincoln Southwest High School
7001 South 14th Street

First Floor Commons Area
(enter through front door)

AGENDA

1. Minutes of May 13, 2001 (attached)
2. School Resource Officers/Budget Requirements (Cook)
3. Traffic Light at North 27th Street and Folkways Boulevard (Garver)
4. Continuing Business
5. New Business
6. Future Meeting Date
7. Tour of Southwest High School

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LANCASTER COUNTY BOARD

MINUTES

JOINT MEETING LINCOLN BOARD OF EDUCATION/ LINCOLN CITY COUNCIL MAYOR LANCASTER COUNTY BOARD

Thursday, August 15, 2002
Southwest High School
7001 South 14th Street, Lincoln, NE

MEMBERS PRESENT: **Board of Education:** James Garver-Vice President, Lillie Larsen, Don Mayhew, Keith Prettyman, Ed Zimmer
City Council: Jonathan Cook-Chair, Jon Camp, Glenn Friendt, Annette McRoy, Coleen Seng, Ken Svoboda, Terry Werner
Mayor Don Wesely
Lancaster County Board: Bob Workman-Chair, Bernie Heier, Larry Hudkins, Ray Stevens

Mr. Garver called the meeting to order at 7:40 a.m., welcoming everyone to the new Southwest High School. He advised that the school would be home to approximately 1,100 high school students this fall, plus it would house Saratoga Elementary School while it is undergoing renovation.

MINUTES

The minutes of the May 13, 2002, joint meeting of the Lincoln Board of Education, the Lincoln City Council, the Mayor, and the Lancaster County Commissioners were approved as distributed.

INTRODUCTIONS

Self-introductions were made by members of the board of education, the city council, the Mayor, the county board, and those in the audience.

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS/BUDGET REQUIREMENTS

Mr. Cook reported that the city council voted to add money to its budget for elementary school resource officers, and it is looking for 25 percent of the necessary funding from the board of education.

Superintendent of schools Phil Schoo advised that a discussion took place at the school board's last meeting regarding this funding. He further advised that the board is

aware of the issues, and he anticipates that this will be on the next school board agenda for action. Dr. Schoo stated that the board knows the importance of the elementary school resource officer program and will consider it carefully. Staff has proposed how it could be funded and will make that case.

Mr. Garver talked about the dynamics of the city and the importance of police officers at elementary schools.

Mrs. Larsen indicated that she endorsed the continuance of the elementary school resource officers at the last board meeting because of the important relationships they build in the community. She feels it is definitely a program that needs to be continued this year and re-evaluated for next year.

Mr. Hudkins observed that the school board and the city council are very wise to pursue this avenue. He reported that this is one of the reasons that the county commissioners continued the DARE program in the rural schools.

Mr. Mayhew asked what would happen, if the board of education did not approve the funding? Mayor Wesely advised that he had a conversation with Dr. Schoo who provided some assurances that the board would approve the funding. He added that the city would find a way to fund the program, but full funding is not in the city's budget right now.

Mr. Cook stated that it would be a difficult position for the city council to be in, and the council is hoping for the board of education's support. Mr. Friendt added that the council funded it in the budget because it had a positive response for keeping these officers. He indicated that he hopes the school board doesn't choose to ignore the issue.

Mr. Mayhew stated that he's not arguing that it is not a good program, but he was just wondering what the effect would be, if the school board didn't provide funding. Mr. Friendt advised that the city council would have to revisit the budget. Mayor Wesely reiterated that the city would find a way to do it, but he emphasized that the city was counting on the good faith of the school board.

Police chief Tom Casady provided a history of the school resource officers, reporting that in 1999, there were no school resource officers in elementary schools, but they did have the DARE program. Due to a shortage of instructors, the DARE program could not be continued. At that time, Chief Casady visited with Dr. Schoo and associate superintendent Marilyn Moore. The Police Department committed to continuing to have officers serve the same number of hours in the elementary schools, and it was decided to do that as general school resource officers. Because of this commitment, the Police Department was able to transition out of the DARE program without a good deal of public outcry. Chief Casady reported that there are bad things that happen in elementary schools today, and emphasized that they need school resource officers. He indicated that they are not just in the schools for public relations nor is it a preventative

program. There are real problems day in and day out. Chief Casady stated that he would not agree to take school resource officers out of the elementary schools, unless he was ordered to do so. He added that he thinks it is a good thing when the schools own part of the program financially, and it is helpful to the city. As long as there is funding to do it, the Policy Department is committed to continuing the program.

Mr. Camp reported that he has talked to board members, and he indicated that he would like to see the elementary school resource officers brought on parity with middle schools and high schools where LPS pays 75 percent of the cost of the officers. He noted the benefits to be recognized by the schools, and stated that he hopes the board of education will consider this being phased in over a period of time.

Mayor Wesely suggested that this be taken one step at a time, and that the board of education support the program this year and help fund it. He added that if the schools do not fund it this year, then the call would go back to Chief Casady to determine where the officers would be placed. Mayor Wesely emphasized that if the school board buys in, it would ensure the officers' focus on the schools.

TRAFFIC LIGHT AT NORTH 27TH STREET AND FOLKWAYS BOULEVARD

Mr. Garver acknowledged the cooperation of the city for the traffic light at South 14th Street and Pine Lake Road.

Scott Opfer, Public Works Department, reported that a traffic light is schedule to be in place at North 27th Street and Folkways Boulevard prior to the start of school next year. The city will be going to construction with the light next spring. Mr. Opfer added that there is the potential for another traffic signal at the entrance of North Star High School, but the city will wait until the traffic and development call for this.

Mr. Opfer provided an update on the following city projects: a temporary sidewalk on South 14th Street through the Thunderbird area; the sidewalk to Roper Elementary School from West G Street; and two temporary traffic signals at Beaver Creek and Pine Lake Road and South 77th Street and Old Cheney Road for kids living south of Pine Lake Road going to Humann Elementary and kids living south of Old Cheney going to Maxey Elementary School.

In response to a question from Mayor Wesely, Mr. Opfer advised that the widening of South 14th Street is scheduled for 2004.

Regarding the discussion of the school resource officers, Mr. Opfer noted that one of the major complaints at the elementary schools is traffic circulation around the school. He reported that school resource officers have provided a tremendous amount of help on this issue.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

There were no items of continuing business discussed at this portion of the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Impact Fees

Mayor Wesely noted that the widening of South 14th Street is two years away. He also noted that the impact fees issue would be before the city council and the county board in the near future. Mayor Wesely observed that South 14th Street is an example of why the city needs to deal with infrastructure in a different way than in the past. He emphasized that the delay in the widening of the street is not poor planning, but about money. Mayor Wesely advised that he is pushing hard to get impact fees to try to address some of this, but things will remain far behind. There is need for additional road construction, as well as impact fees, and this can't be ignored. He reported that discussions on schools and impact fees have brought forth the issue that new growth brings new property taxes for the schools, but property taxes do not pay for infrastructure. Mayor Wesely stated that all of this would, hopefully, be addressed in the near future.

West Nile Virus

Mrs. Larsen advised that she has requested a report on the school district's plan for dealing with the West Nile virus. She noted that Southwest High School is located close to Wilderness Park, and she asked about the plan for preventative measures. Dr. Schoo advised that there has been contact between the County/City Health Department and the school Nursing Office. Information has been distributed to the Health staff and teachers. Dr. Schoo indicated that he thinks the County/City Health Department is on top of this, and the latest memorandum from that department outlined a number of things to protect adults and children. He noted that this is another example of staff at the county/city level and the school level staying on top of things and quietly getting things done. Dr. Schoo advised that he would be sharing additional information on this issue with the board of education.

FUTURE MEETING DATE

Mr. Workman indicated that the county would host the next meeting, and he would let everyone know the date, time, and location.

Budget Issues

Mrs. Seng noted that all three entities have been battered during their budgeting process. She requested that everyone think back, however, where this group met three meetings ago—at a brand new county facility (the Lancaster County Detention Center), the last time they met at the remodeled F Street Rec Center, and now they are meeting

at a new school facility. Mrs. Seng also noted that the city has opened two new libraries. She stated, therefore, that the three entities should not feel bad about their budgets, but look at what has happened in the community—five beautiful new facilities have been provided. Mrs. Seng emphasized that everyone will get through this budget year, also, and she encouraged everyone to remember that they have provided good facilities for the community.

New Facility Operating Expenses

Mr. Garver reported on the discussions of the Greater Nebraska Schools Association and the Nebraska Association of School Boards on the need for operating expenses for new facilities. He noted that the school district would incur an additional $5 million a year for maintaining its new facilities, and he stated that the city and the county have similar costs. Mr. Garver asked the Mayor, the city council, and the county commissioners to get their lobbyists together with the school district's lobbyists to address these expenses, outside of the lid, when opening up new facilities. He noted that if there is no relief, the entities would have to ratchet down the costs of maintaining other buildings. He added that this becomes a bigger and bigger issue.

Mayor Wesely suggested that this be discussed at the next joint meeting, with a discussion topic on lids.

Future Meeting Date

Mr. Workman announced that the next joint meeting would be held on Tuesday, November 12, 7:30 a.m., at the new north library.

Community Cooperation

Dr. Schoo observed that he has had the experience of being at many of these joint meetings during his tenure with LPS. He noted that when he first came to Lincoln, these organizations did not meet together. He also noted that one of the things everyone takes for granted is that these three entities meet on a regular basis, which provides an opportunity to see facilities and stay in touch regarding what the entities are about. Dr. Schoo stated that it is remarkable in this community that so many things are done together, such as the school resource officer program, Parks and Rec programs, Health Department programs, etc. He emphasized that this doesn't happen in other communities, but it happens at the staff level in Lincoln because its elected officials ask that it happen. Dr. Schoo noted that this is a job well done.

ADJOURNMENT OF JOINT MEETING

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:13 a.m., followed by a tour of Southwest High School.