JOINT MEETING

Lincoln Board of Education
Lincoln City Council
Mayor Don Wesely
Lancaster County Board

Tuesday, November 12, 2002
7:30 a.m.

Loren Corey Eiseley Library
1530 Superior Street

AGENDA

1. **Approval of Minutes from August 15, 2002**
2. **Lincoln Public Schools Comprehensive Plan Process and Expected Outcome** - LPS Staff
3. **Budget Lids**
4. **Legislative Issues**
5. **Continuing Business**
6. **New Business**
7. **Future Meeting Date**

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MINUTES
JOINT MEETING OF THE
LINCOLN BOARD OF EDUCATION
LINCOLN CITY COUNCIL/MAYOR
LANCASTER COUNTY BOARD
Tuesday, November 12, 2002 - 7:30 a.m.
Eiseley Library - 1530 Superior Street

Board of Education Members Present: Kathy Danek, Jim Garver, Lillie Larsen, Keith Prettyman and Ed Zimmer **Absent:** Doug Evans and Don Mayhew

City Council Members Present: Jonathan Cook, Jon Camp, Glenn Friendt, Annette McRoy, Coleen Seng and Ken Svoboda **Absent:** Terry Werner

County Commissioners Present: Bob Workman, Kathy Campbell, Bernie Heier, Larry Hudkins and Ray Stevens

Others Present: Mayor Don Wesely; Mark Bowen, Ann Harrell and Corrie Kielty, Mayor's Office; Jack Moors, City Lobbyist; Phil Schoo, Marilyn Moore, Nancy Biggs, Dave Myers, Scott Weiskamp and Dwayne Odvody, LPS; Dave Teater, MGT of America; Kerry Eagan and Gwen Thorpe, County Board; Deb Schorr, County Commissioner-Elect; Carol Connor, John Dale, Pat Leach, Lincoln City Libraries; Darrell Podany, Library Board; Kent Morgan, Steve Henrichsen and Mike DeKalb, Planning Department; Larry Worth and Mike Weston, StarTran; Lynn Johnson, Parks & Recreation; JoAnne Young, Lincoln Journal Star and Cori Beattie, County Board Secretary

Bob Workman, Chairman of the Lancaster County Board, called the meeting to order at 7:35 a.m., welcoming everyone to the Loren Corey Eiseley Library. Self-introductions were made by all those in attendance.

Minutes

Hudkins moved approval of the August 15, 2002 minutes of the joint meeting of the LPS Board of Education, the Lincoln City Council, the Mayor and the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners; seconded by Svoboda. Motion approved unanimously.

LPS Comprehensive Plan Process and Expected Outcome

Weiskamp indicated Dave Teater of MGT of America will be discussing LPS's comprehensive plan in conjunction with the Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan. Teater said MGT specializes in public sector work concentrating largely on facilities. The primary purpose is to get a good handle on such things as enrollment within the school district, as well as the condition of current facilities. A physical evaluation of all buildings is performed and future

educational suitability is taken into consideration. He noted work will eventually be done on how to integrate the LPS and City-County Comprehensive Plans.

In addition, Teater said interviews are planned with a broad spectrum of individuals and/or small groups in Lincoln to identify future visions for LPS. A series of meetings will also be held with the public. This will help discover what the community expects from LPS.

Friendt asked if a general population survey will be performed. Teater indicated written surveys are typically not conducted, although, public meetings tend to draw hundreds of participants. Critical issues will be discussed with LPS administrators after which MGT will identify the ones to be addressed with the public. Friendt said one could argue that this approach does not lead to a full view of what the community wants.

In response to Workman's inquiry regarding comprehensive planning for LPS, Schoo said they have done internal planning in the past but this is the first time they've used an outside company. Prettyman stated the impetus for doing this study came from months of discussion within the planning committee on such things as projected growth of schools, program capacity, etc. He added it is important to keep in mind that a very broad spectrum of the community will be reached throughout the study. He hoped the public meetings will set a precedent for communicating with the pubic in the future.

Stevens asked about the timeline for the process. Teater said the final comprehensive plan deadline is April 30, 2003. Interviews and focus group meetings should largely be done by Thanksgiving and the public meetings will be held in January. Prettyman added the work plan will be available from LPS Central Administration if anyone would like to review it. **(See Exhibit A.)**

Hudkins questioned if focus groups have been publicly identified. Teater said MGT has a list of names and has also been working with LPS officials to identify others who may be important to the process. Prettyman clarified that names on the list have not been publicly identified. Hudkins said it may be helpful to individual citizens to know who to contact with comments or concerns. Teater said MGT would be willing to share the list with local officials.

Budget Lids

Hudkins said it would be interesting to hear Jack Moors' observation of the Legislature's mood with regard to raising budget lids. Moors stated, in his opinion, local government is up against a very difficult problem. It appears as if cities and counties are going to have to discuss lids. He does not know how local governments are going to be able to meet their budget requirements and needs without considering lids. He added the State will not touch property taxes since that is a local issue. Unfortunately, property taxes will either have to be raised or funds deleted from other areas of the budget.

Garver said if there is no relief from operating expenses, then LPS faces the reality of having to cut other buildings in order to open two new schools. He did not believe this to be what the voters wanted to happen.

Legislative Issues

Eagan summarized Lancaster County's legislative issues for the upcoming year. He noted the main ones are in the areas of mental health and juvenile justice. The County will soon need to find replacement funding to keep the Families First & Foremost (F3) grant program in place. The theory behind this program is that community- based juvenile services are more effective and cheaper than incarceration. Another problem is with post-commitment patients at the Community Mental Health Center which handles crisis situations. Eagan said, unfortunately, both items involve funding and the County is not real hopeful they will get through the Legislature. Therefore, the County plans to protect current revenue sources from the State.

Another budget-related bill which effects the County, City and LPS is the statutory requirement to pay employees comparable wages based on comparable conditions and work. Eagan felt it may be difficult to change this law even though it can have dire consequences during times of restricted funding. He added the County believes employees should receive adequate wages with regard to the work they perform but when under budget lids, it becomes a real burden to raise salaries.

Eagan mentioned support for a clean-up bill dealing with building permits on farmsteads. Currently, any property over twenty acres which produces $1,000 of income is considered a farmstead and is exempt from building permits and other zoning regulations. The County feels all residences should have permits for safety reasons. A current bill exists but contains erroneous wording.

Another issue requiring clean-up language is purchasing. Eagan said the County currently follows strict Purchasing Act Guidelines but would like to be able to purchase in consortiums with other counties, cities or out-of-state entities.

Ultimate fighting is another issue the County would like to see addressed. The County supports a total ban on ultimate fighting and is working with the City of Lincoln in this regard.

Eagan said the County would like to see the number of hotel representatives on the Visitors Promotion Advisory Committee raised from two or three if the total Committee membership is increased to seven.

There have also been some recent liquor license issues in the County. Eagan indicated an original regulation governing nudity in bars was done by resolution. When challenged by a particular establishment, the Nebraska Supreme Court said regulatory laws cannot be done by resolution ignoring the fact that both full due process and legislative process were followed. Therefore, some clean-up language is necessary. The County would also like to have the same regulation power as the City with regard to this issue.

Eagan noted the County is also interested in a couple of clean-up bills with regard to the Assessor. One deals with omitted property values. He noted another problem is a recent Supreme Court opinion which grants tax exemptions to assisted living facilities, potentially leading to a further reduction in the tax base.

Finally, Eagan said redemption of tax certificates is another concern. Out-of-state companies are buying them and guaranteed at least 14% interest with the money leaving the County. He stated the problem could be solved by allowing an extra year to redeem a tax certificate.

With regard to the City's concerns, Moors indicated two priorities - increasing the cities' and counties' share of the gasoline tax and raising it by two cents and an unfunded federal mandate on stormwater sewer.

Moors said the Clean Water Act of 1992 established a need for cities to conform and Omaha and Lincoln have been working toward stormwater runoff regulation. Moors added while this issue is very complex and will require a great deal of funding, it is something that must be done. The City and County have also been working with the Natural Resources District and Senator Schrock on stormwater issues. Senator Schrock has agreed to introduce the bill.

Svoboda asked if governmental entities are exempt from the federal stormwater mandate. Moors said they are not exempt. Those paying water bills will fall under the same concept. When asked if governmental departments or agencies without water bills will be exempt, Moors answered, "not necessarily." Surfaces such as roofs, driveways and parking lots which create runoff water have been targeted. Discussions are on-going as to how to handle this issue. Opposition is expected from retail owners and car dealerships. Schoo added LPS and City staff have discussed the runoff issue as it could be a significant tax liability for public schools. He said this is a classic example of an unfunded mandate passed on to cities.

Camp shifted back to the gasoline tax and inquired about opinions on national trends and related budget difficulties. He added this could be a time in the Nation's history to make some meaningful changes, although, the constituents keep saying, "No more taxes." The poor state of the economy is another consideration. Danek noted the constituents are also saying, "Don't cut my services." She said LPS had numerous public hearings whereby officials looked at everything they could possibly cut. Many people attended the hearings and indicated they did not want services reduced, just for LPS to be efficient. Eventually, the time will come when government and/or schools will have to cut necessary items. Officials will need to better identify which services/items the public finds important. Schoo added it is always difficult to cut established programs and services whether that be in government or schools.

Zimmer noted the legislative approach of the LPS Board is that a three-member committee focuses on a particular issue and brings information back to the rest of the body. The District also employs a staff lobbyist and has part-time contractual arrangements with a couple other lobbyists. He noted there are a long list of issues that LPS plans to monitor next session but, it really comes down to money. It is anticipated there will be changes to the state aid formula and how it will affect each school district. There are also a number of fiscal studies underway as to how Nebraska funds public education. Zimmer added the Lincoln School District works closely with both local agencies and other associations on certain issues.

Campbell asked if LPS will support a change in the aid formula. Zimmer said yes and no. While there are certainly complex issues with the formula, some things make sense but it will be hard to design an ideal formula if there are no dollars available for funding. And, unfortunately, formulas tend to pit school districts against each other.

Hudkins said he hopes LPS takes the lead in working with the State Association of School Boards and others to get state aid to education in Nebraska.

Continuing Business

None.

New Business

None.

Future Meeting Date

It was decided that the next joint meeting would be held on **Monday, February 10, 2003 at 7:30 a.m.**, at a location to be chosen by the City.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:35 a.m.

Submitted by,

Cori R. Beattie

Cori R. Beattie
County Board Secretary

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