RECEIVED
MAY 09 2003
LANCASTER COUNTY
BOARD

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

Tuesday, May 13, 2003 – 7:30 a.m.

Lincoln North Star High School
Commons Area
5801 North 33 Street
Lincoln, Nebraska

AGENDA

1. Minutes of February 10, 2003
2. Busing Routes for Arnold Heights/Highlands to North Star High School (McRoy)
2. Elementary School School Resource Officers and the LPS Budget (Camp)
4. Whittier School Rehab Question Raised by Antelope Valley Team (Zimmer)
5. Continuing Business
6. New Business
7. Future Meeting Date
8. School Tour

MINUTES

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

Tuesday, May 13, 2003
North Star High School

MEMBERS PRESENT: **Board of Education:** Doug Evans-President, Kathy Danek, Jim Garver, 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

Mr. Evans called the meeting to order at 7:35 a.m.

MINUTES

The minutes of the February 10, 2003, joint meeting of the Lincoln Board of Education, the Lincoln City Council, the Mayor, and the Lancaster County Board were approved as distributed.

BUSING ROUTES FOR ARNOLD HEIGHTS/HIGHLANDS TO NORTH STAR HIGH SCHOOL

Larry Worth, StarTran, provided an update on StarTran service to North Star High School, advising that two routes have been changed to access this area, effective May 8. This will help the school and also the large number of apartments around the school. Half-hour service will be provided to North Star so that all areas into North Star could be accessed, although from some areas it would require transfers. Members of the Arnold Heights Neighborhood Association have distributed a survey to residents of that neighborhood regarding the usage of the routes. The results of the survey are unknown at this time. A booster service can be added to routes, if necessary. Direct route service between the Arnold Heights area and North Star is being considered as a part of the budget considerations for next year.

Mr. Garver talked about the difficulties of Arnold Heights students using StarTran to Lincoln High School via the downtown area. This is service, but it's not good service when students have to spend 1 1/2 hours getting where they need to go. Mr. Garver

suggested that StarTran consider zone service. He noted that there could be 400 9th graders in the North Star building, who will not be able to drive, and added that a direct bus route from Arnold Heights would be better for everyone. Mr. Worth reiterated that such a route is included in the City's budget proposal for next year.

Mr. Werner asked if there were any legal obstacles to providing bus service to schools. Mr. Worth noted that StarTran cannot provide school bus service, but it can have a route to a school, as long as it is a route available to the public. Mr. Werner echoed what Mr. Garver said, noting that there is a need for good bus service to North Star, and that it's not practical for students to transfer from the downtown area.

Mayor Wesely reported that he has been discussing with Ms. Seng possible funding for before and after-school routes. He indicated that this should be okay, as it's not particularly expensive.

Mrs. Larsen asked when the routes would be finalized. Mr. Worth advised that the City Council would approve the budget about August 20, but there could be some early indication whether or not the routes would be funded. Mrs. Larsen emphasized the importance of families knowing what service is available ahead of the school start date. Mr. Worth indicated that StarTran staff would be at North Star for its orientation sessions to provide information, sell passports, etc. Mrs. Danek asked if busing information could be provided in students' orientation packages. North Star principal Nancy Becker indicated that this could be done.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS AND THE LPS BUDGET

Mr. Camp cited the cooperation on continuing the funding for the elementary school resource officers last year. He suggested discussion on this issue at this time, as he knows the school district is facing budget constraints.

Mr. Garver indicated that the school district's emphasis has to be on the classroom. He reported that RIF notices have been sent to staff for the first time in a long time, and the district will be down about 100 teaching spots. At a time when the district is forced to increase class size and limit services, the school board can't justify funding this service, which the board feels is a City service. Mr. Garver added that this is a crazy year, and it doesn't look like it will get much better.

Mrs. Danek noted that the money spent on school resource officers equals approximately 12 classroom teachers. Mr. Camp requested more specific numbers on Mrs. Danek's statement. LPS associate superintendent for business Dennis Van Horn reported that the full cost for funding all of the school resource officers is approximately $490,000 a year. The average teacher cost, including benefits, is approximately $43,000. Mr. Evans and Mr. Garver added that the $490,000 is not being put in the school district's budget for next year.

Mr. Camp asked if this amount of money is for elementary and high school resource officers. Mr. Garver responded that it is. He added that the school board is being forced to do things this year that it has not had to do for the last 18 years since he has been on the board.

Mr. Svoboda observed that the school resource officers provide security at the school buildings. If the officers are eliminated, he asked if the school district would be looking at providing some type of in-house security. Mr. Garver advised that the schools would call 911, if warranted. He acknowledged that it would not be a very good situation. He noted that in elementary schools, students learn that the police officers will work with them and can help them. This is particularly important for people new to the United States. Mr. Garver indicated that he thinks the school resource officer program pays big dividends for the city, which would be lost if the schools don't have the program.

Mr. Evans emphasized that the school board's core mission is the classroom teachers and, therefore, it can no longer justify some of the other expenses.

Mr. Werner asked for more specifics on what dividends the City gets from school resource officers. Mr. Evans observed that people who are new to America don't always see the police as a good thing. Having officers in the elementary schools and interacting with children and families helps them to learn that they don't have to worry about the person in uniform. Mrs. Larsen added that school resource officers play a huge role in enforcing the traffic laws around elementary schools. Mrs. Danek noted that it is also a familiarity thing, and that name connection raises the respect level of children with police officers. She indicated that at the high school level, students know the officers' names and are more respectful of them. It is a comfort level for kids.

Mr. Friendt indicated that he understands the need for school resource officers. He noted that during the recent campaign, voters were asking how the city could help the schools. He stated that continuing the school resource officers is one way the city could help.

Mr. Hudkins reported that the county commissioners have funded the DARE program for the county schools for many years. Former students have invited the officers to their weddings, etc., and they have learned respect for the officers. Mr. Hudkins stated that this is a program where the citizens can pay for these types of programs now, or pay later in other costs.

Mr. Svoboda reported that he has been working with a committee on home town security, where one recommendation from the Police Department is not to fund the school resource officers, but put them back on the streets. Mr. Svoboda indicated that at the elementary level, where there is no resource officer on a daily basis, there has been a tendency to deal with a problem student by calling 911. He asked the school board to work with chief of police Tom Casady to set up guidelines on when to call 911, if the school resource officers are lost.

Mr. Evans observed that former school board member Keith Bartels used to compare the size of high schools to cities in Nebraska. He noted that the average high school would be in the top 100 of Nebraska's cities, and no one would think about running a city of that size without some help.

Mr. Camp expressed appreciate for this discussion. He stated that in the City's budget sessions, there is a need to keep priorities in mind and to work through all of this to see how the City can maximize police protection.

Mr. Evans noted that one of the things that makes this community work is the cooperation of these three groups, and the cooperation between the Police Department and the schools.

LPS superintendent Phil Schoo advised that even prior to the school resource officer program, and continuing with it, there has been excellent cooperation between the Police Department and the public schools. He emphasized that this is not always true in other cities. Dr. Schoo added that LPS staff has always worked closely with Chief Casady and his staff. He stated that the school resource officers have been a benefit to the schools and to the City, by having an assigned officer to a building or a number of buildings. This has developed a degree of confidence and trust, which is different than calling for help and getting different officers responding. Dr. Schoo pledged that no matter what is decided, Chief Casady and he, as well as others, will make it work. The schools have good security and will continue to have good security, but the school resource officers provide an increased security level.

Mr. Evans indicated that the school board would appreciate the City helping the schools during this time.

Dr. Schoo reminded everyone that the schools and the city initially got into the school resource officer program because of a federal grant, which has since gone away.

WHITTIER SCHOOL REHAB QUESTION RAISED BY ANTELOPE VALLEY TEAM

Dr. Zimmer stated that the Whittier Building is an item of concern and mutual interest. He reported that the Antelope Valley people have put before the school board that it look at Whittier as a possible site for the school district. He added that Mr. Prettyman chairs the school board's Planning Committee, which will review this issue. Dr. Zimmer reported that the Whittier Preservation Committee, has made a recommendation that the best use of Whittier would be an educational use. The committee would prefer that it be a K-12 building for LPS. The school board is looking at this and has recently toured the building, but it is a question that involves much more consideration.

Mr. Prettyman advised that this issue ties in with the school district's recent comprehensive facility study that will be presented to the school board this month. One of the things in that study is a review of the current administration building and its rehabilitation needs. It's estimated that approximately $6 million would be needed to

rehabilitate the current administration building. One of the things the school board will be looking at is the value of the current building and the amount of money needed to bring it up to current standards. That would then be compared to the cost for fixing up and moving into Whittier. The board is also looking at a number of other projects in the community to handle the growth of the city and the need for new buildings, as well as renovating the current buildings.

Mr. Friendt asked if the cost of renovating Whittier would be $6 million. Mr. Prettyman advised that it would be approximately $12 million to rehabilitate Whittier. He reported that board members toured the facility last Friday, and he added that it's in better shape than one might imagine, but not in very good shape.

With knowledge of the comprehensive plan and more housing in the downtown area, Mr. Werner asked if the school district has other options for K-12 in the downtown area. Mr. Prettyman advised that projections don't currently show the need for schools in that area. Mr. Werner asked about estimates for housing in the downtown area. Steve Hendrichsen, Planning Department, advised that projections are for a couple hundred housing units, but it's difficult to estimate how many of the units would house families with school-age children. He indicated that it would probably not be enough to support a very large school. Mr. Werner stated that he has heard that if a school is put in, families will follow. He asked how this holds true. Mr. Hendrichsen stated that McPhee and Elliott elementary schools are very good schools that attract kids, as well as neighborhood schools in other areas. He indicated that this is not true in other cities. Mr. Evans added that Park Middle School and Everett Elementary School are other good schools in the downtown area.

Mr. Cook asked if the school currently leases the administration building on O Street. Mr. Prettyman advised that the school district owns it. Mr. Cook asked if the school district would sell that building, if it decides favorably on the Whittier Building. Mr. Prettyman responded that it would. What LPS could get for this property would drive what it does at Whittier.

Mayor Wesely advised that Antelope Valley has offered the City the right to the Whittier property for two more years at $1.00 per year. He encouraged the school board to look at this, as it is an opportunity for the next two years to have the building for a nominal amount, and this would be good for the community.

Mr. Evans asked if LPS could get approximately $6 million for its current property on O Street. Mr. Prettyman reported that this was the estimate some time ago. Mr. Evans noted that it would cost about the same ($6 million) to relocate to Whittier as to renovate the O Street building. He emphasized that there are other things located at the O Street building; it is not just an administration building.

Mrs. Larsen reported on her tour of Whittier, noting that a UNL representative said it was a three-year offer at $1.00. Mayor Wesely advised that a year has gone by since the offer. Mrs. Larsen indicated that she thinks the school board has to look at the

economic situation now, noting that LPS is laying off teachers. She also indicated that an exact plan has not been drawn up to renovate the O Street building for $6 million.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

North 27th Street Signal Lights

Mr. Garver requested an update on signal lights on North 27th Street near North Star High School. A representative of the Public Works Department reported that the lights may be in as early as June, but definitely will be in prior to the start of school. The contractor is waiting for the necessary equipment.

NEW BUSINESS

School District/City Interlocal Agreement

A representative from the Parks and Recreation Department talked about an interlocal agreement between the City and school district related to shared facilities. The arrangement eliminates duplication of facilities and tax-supported resources and would establish an asset banking system to facilitate mutual cooperation and an ongoing running total balance sheet or method of accounting for accumulating credits and debits related to shared services, assets, facilities, and property between LPS and the City. Under the terms of the agreement, neither the school district's nor the City's balance would get larger than $300,000. The City Council approved the agreement at its meeting yesterday.

FUTURE MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the Lincoln Board of Education, the Lincoln City Council, the Mayor, and the Lancaster County Board was scheduled for Monday, August 4, 2003, 7:30 a.m., at the Lancaster County Event Center, with the County hosting.

ADJOURNMENT OF JOINT MEETING

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 a.m.