

MAYOR'S NEIGHBORHOOD ROUNDTABLE SUMMARY

July 9, 2018

Tracy Corr opened the meeting on Monday, July 9, 2018 at 5:30 p.m. in the Mayor's Conference Room, City/County/Building, in Lincoln, NE.

Attendance

Twelve residents and four City staff attended:

Tracy Corr – 40 th & A Street NA	Lindsay Limbach – Belmont NA
Jennifer Powell – Country Club NA	Paul Johnson – East Campus CO
Curt Donaldson – Hartley NA	Myrna Coleman – Highlands NA
Dennis Hecht -- Meadowlane Area RA	Mike DeKalb – University Place CO
Keith Roland – University Place CO	Bill Vocasek – West A NA
Russell Miller – Witherbee NA	Mike Renken – NeighborWorks-Lincoln
Lin Quenzer – Mayor's Office	Jon Carlson – Mayor's Office
Wynn Hjermstad – Urban Development	Chris Beutler -- Mayor

Welcome & Introductions

Chair Tracy Corr welcomed attendees and led the introductions. Paul Johnson volunteered to take notes.

Mayor's Comments

Mayor Beutler discussed an overview of the *Proposed 2018-20 City Budget*. The budget summary shared with Roundtable attendees highlighted three goals:

- Increased Investment in Public Safety,
- Keeping Lincoln Growing, and
- No Property Tax Increase.

Eight additional topics described budgetary efforts to support those goals:

- Economic Growth and City Revenues,
- Increased Investment in Public Safety,
- Strong, Safe & Affordable Neighborhoods,
- Taking Care of People,
- Infrastructure that Promotes Economic Growth,
- Creating a City of Innovation,
- New Name and Even Better Game: Department of Transportation & Utilities (formerly Public Works & Utilities), and
- A Budget with the Right Priorities for Lincoln.

Proposed 2018-2020 City Budget

[See Attachment 1](#)

Presented by Rick Hoppe, Administrative Assistant to the Mayor, 402-441-6036; rhoppe@lincoln.ne.gov

Increased Investment in Public Safety: During Mayor Beutler's tenure, the City of Lincoln has annexed land area equivalent to the City of Kearney and added 37,000 people to an already growing population. During those years, the crime level has remained low. The proposed budget aims to keep it that way by including twelve additional police officers. Seven will be connected to Lincoln Public Schools and five will be on the street.

The additional officers will cost \$3 million and increase the Public Safety budget line to over 50% of the overall City budget. The City is also applying for grant matching funds for up to 15 additional firefighters. If grant funding is not received, then fewer firefighters will be added. There will also be one new 911 dispatcher.

The proposed budget also includes \$2 million for up to five new fire engines/trucks, \$300,000 for ambulances and \$600,000 for replacement of the Criminal Justice Information System.

Keeping Lincoln Growing: Continuing investments in streets, infrastructure and technology help Lincoln continue to grow. The proposed budget includes \$65 million for street maintenance and \$50 million for water/sewer line expansion. It also includes local funds to replace \$375,000 of lost State of Nebraska funding which had been budgeted for stormwater improvements.

No Property Tax Levy Increase: The proposed budget does not increase the property tax levy. Increases in property values will provide some additional funds.

Economic Growth & City Revenues: Lincoln's economy is thriving. That economic growth is expected to provide a growth of sales tax revenue of over 3% per year.

Strong, Safe, Affordable Neighborhoods: The proposed budget includes several items that will help keep neighborhoods well-maintained and affordable, including:

- \$3.1 million for sidewalk replacement,
- \$600,000 for Parks & Recreation capital needs,
- \$269,000 for Wilderness Park,
- \$2.3 million for managing the impact of Emerald Ash Borer,
- Rehabilitation of 600 blocks of residential streets,
- Replacement of seven miles of water mains,
- \$200,000 for low-income affordable housing, and
- An additional Animal Control Officer.

Taking Care of People: Many Lincoln residents depend on public health care and transportation. The proposed budget includes additional evening hours of operation on three StarTran bus routes (Bethany, University Place, Heart Hospital) and more frequent mid-day service on a fourth route (Arnold Heights). It also proposes increased funding for Health Department dental services. In addition, the proposed budget increases the Joint Budget Committee Funding for Human Services (City & County) by 3% in 2018-19 and another 3% in 2019-20. Proposed fee revenues will fund a Community Resource Specialist to help connect low-income, uninsured adults to health care.

Infrastructure that Promotes Economic Growth: The proposed budget includes nearly \$65 million annually to maintain and repair city streets, improve safety and expand infrastructure that supports future growth, including: South Beltway, 33rd & Cornhusker, West W Street, Holdrege Street, South 40th Street, Arbor Road, and Green Light Lincoln. It includes \$50 million to expand the water & wastewater systems, \$300,000 annually to fund anticipated increased use of recycling drop-off sites, a Financial Analyst in Urban Development Department, and funding for the Biogas to Vehicle Project, which will produce fuel quality methane from wastewater.

Creating a City of Innovation: Innovation is essential to continued growth. The Lincoln Technology Improvement District is providing more high-speed broadband access and competition, which is lowering costs. The addition of a network technician will improve deployment and operation of Internet access for every home and business in Lincoln. The new technician will not require tax dollars.

A New Name: The Public Works and Utilities Department is changing its name to the Department of Transportation & Utilities (DTU). The new name will better reflect the department's mission & services.

Additional Employees: Since 2007, Lincoln has grown significantly. In those years, the total number of City employees has steadily fallen. The proposed budget will add 14.38 FTE (full time equivalent) positions, but the number of City employees will still be more than 14 FTE's less than when Mayor Beutler began his administration.

The City Council's public hearing on the budget is Monday, July 30th, with adoption scheduled for August 20th. Interested city residents can contact City Council members in support and/or to suggest changes.

Roundtable Questions/Comments:

Q. Does Pershing have any bearing in the budget?

A. No. In the long-term, it will cost \$2.5 million to demolish the building, so any redevelopment will require City participation.

Comment: Affordable housing is becoming critical. All housing developments help to satisfy the housing needs, but the need for more low-income housing needs to be studied and discussed. Twelve percent of Lincoln's residents live in poverty; most of them are working poor. Medicare expansion would help those folks.

Comment: Lincoln's tax rate is lower than other communities in the County.

Announcements

- University Place Farmers Market – There are two more market dates on July 11th & August 8th.

