

**MINUTES  
CITY-COUNTY COMMON MEETING  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2012**

**Present:** Adam Hornung, Chair; Jane Raybould, Vice Chair; Mayor Chris Beutler (1:50 p.m.); Jon Camp; Gene Carroll; Doug Emery; Carl Eskridge; Larry Hudkins; Deb Schorr; DiAnna Schimek; and Brent Smoyer

**Absent:** Jonathan Cook; and Bernie Heier

**Others:** Brent Meyer, Weed Control Authority Superintendent; Steve Henderson, Information Services Chief Information Officer

Chair Hornung opened the meeting at 12:45 p.m. and announced the location of the Open Meetings Act.

**1. Approval of Common Meeting Minutes of December 5, 2011.**

Carroll moved approval of the December 5, 2011 Common Meeting minutes, seconded by Hudkins.

**Roll:** Hornung, Camp, Carroll, Emery; Eskridge; Hudkins; Schorr, Schimek voted aye.

Raybould abstained; Cook, Heier, Smoyer and Mayor Beutler absent. **Approved: 8 to 0.**

**2. Weed Control Authority 2011 Annual Report & Recommendations**

**Brent Meyer, Superintendent (Attachment A)**

Meyer distributed the 2011 Annual Report and Recommendations of the Combined Weed Program. He stated the 2011 Review of weed abatement and noxious weeds refer to the City, not the County.

Meyer stated he worked with City and County attorneys to make positive changes. First was collection of weed abatement liens. Before did weed abatements throughout the year and filed liens in December. Now file notice of unpaid weed assessment within 5 days of the completed work. Secondly, more people pay quicker, and this year had over \$12,000 paid. Contacted all Lincoln title companies and requested they check the website, as when an assessment is done the lien is quickly posted.

Another change is mowing large properties. On this Board's recommendation went with a one acre size. Owners mow 50 feet from the property edge, keeps weed free, with fall mowing. Received questions from developers on why they had to mow, if parks didn't? Now they will follow and we look for this Board's feedback.

We now post at sites. On the house, or on a lath in the yard. A legal way to make service on the property, and lets neighbors know. Camp asked what type of sign is used? Meyer replied they didn't want duplication, and use a heavier, smoother, shiny paper, which needs to last 5 days. Camp asked if they mow after 5 days? Meyer said usually right after, but up to 10 days.

Meyer explained the 2011 Combined Weed Program graph. On weed abatement did 4,788 initial and follow-up inspections, on 2,158 sites. Found 1,716 violations, additionally 306 found by inspectors, with 1,852 complaints. Violations include 1,128 legal notices, 926 reminder letters, and 15 personal contacts. Before published notices more in the newspaper, but now use the legal notice, more cost effective.

Meyer explained the increase in force cuttings, up 38%. When asked if this was due to a change in policy

he replied his current administration operates along the same lines as the previous.

When the economy gets bad do see more foreclosed properties and more forced cuttings. With budgets have to remember when things get worse the Weed Authority gets busier. Large developers may lose properties and not want to spend money on mowing. Eventually we get our money on forced cuttings.

Meyer stated rainfall effects Weed Control, if timely have growth late in the year. Have had October weed enforced controls. Also, citizens can file complaints on Interline while at the site, and we have a complaint form on our site but calls are the number one way we receive. To some extent a victim of our own success. Neighbors see and with results people spread the word. Hornung asked if receiving more complaints than in the past? Meyer replied yes, up a couple of hundred.

Meyer commented they do receive referrals from departments, and the PRT works on problem properties. Some residents don't understand their responsibilities as a main complaint is property between their line and the street. Many don't mow behind their fence. He then listed enforcement numbers over the last five years.

Noxious weeds do not care if inside or outside the City. Had a lot of Musk Thistle and Leafy Spurge before but now attacked by Phragmites. Phragmites are almost in every wetland, landfill, slough, or lagoon.

Meyer gave the 2011 Noxious Weed inspections numbers. In 2012 have 324 advanced orders, including 65 on Phragmites, 22 on Knotweed. Last year at this time had 6 infestations, now 22 in the City. Have 222 weed abatement orders. Listed the Noxious Weed figures for 2011, and the schedule for the next few weeks.

Meyer said regarding public relations trying to inform the public. Did a 4 page weed insert in the Extension, to about 12,000 residents. Phragmites are the main focus, an explosion over time, up to 344 County sites.

Last year had a Knotweed insert in the water bill, to 73,000 residents, and received lots of calls. Cannot do this year, but will in 2013. Organizations we work with include the UNL Department of Plant Pathology, Neb. Weed Control Association, and the Journal Star. Do a different monthly report to the City and County, attend and present at Private Applicator Trainings, and have articles in UNL acreage owner's newsletters.

Meyer stated various departments, organizations, individuals, have programs which may overlap on weeds. Will meet with everyone dealing with weed issues to discuss who takes care of different elements, and who should be contacted. Important is the Weed Watcher Program. We have 6 inspectors and this is geared for citizens, organizations, to look for Phragmites, and relay the information to us. Hopefully will go State-wide.

Hudkins asked how the Authority is doing with the railroad? Had some lack of past cooperation, but there is a lot of railroad right of way. Meyer stated the railroad was better this last year. The County Board made a motion to allow the forced controls needed on railroad properties. The railroad got their applicators in earlier, but didn't do all lines requested. He added they were not successful on all, with some tumbleweeds blowing. Hudkins appreciated the idea of involving them early and have them attend meetings.

Mayor Beutler asked if involved only in eradication or also control issues at this time? Meyer replied he should point out more success stories. Phragmites is the horror now, but the successes include Purple Loosestrife, Saltcedar. Knotweed, and Musk Thistle. Chair Hornung thanked Meyer for presenting.

### **3. Information Services Update Steve Henderson, Chief Information Officer (Attachment B)**

Henderson distributed a one page handout, and stated he would give an update on the ongoing analysis being done regarding our main frame service, and then general communication comments.

Henderson stated they took a City application, from the Health Department animal control system. Characteristics of the system fit well and large enough to exercise most of what goes into our main frame service, but not overwhelming to work with. We copied the application, took it to the State, tried to confirm if it ran identically at the State as here. Have a couple of findings, as seen in the handout, from that proof of concept. Now close to the end of this proof of concept, and there is nothing which is a technology show stopper. Everything encountered was addressed and rectified and so it runs the same at the State as here.

Henderson said they believe after the analysis conducted, with a bit more to do, can save approximately \$60,000 a year running at the State versus at the City. If we move the service to the State believe we can reduce our staff by 2 FTE's. We are working on a more detailed, thorough plan on how the transition would work. How would it affect the agencies/departments of the City and County? What would be the schedule? What would be the coordination needed to make sure it's in place before we actually use?

Henderson spoke on communication. His personally thinks it's very important to have a number of communication channels open on what is done in Information Services, and how we try to serve our customers in the City and County. On the handout are some main forms of communication used, two new.

We have a Technical Discussion Forum, who are people in the City and County who believe a major part of their daily work has to do with technology. Our organization works with them to carry out details of operational activity on a day to day basis. This forum will probably meet every other month, or quarterly, to hear what they think. If we have new information we share. This is aimed at a very technical audience.

The second is the Advisory Group, formed after community conversations. The membership is City and County government, and private sector members and other disciplines of technology organizations in Lincoln and Lancaster County. This group is being finalized but think to meet quarterly, to share opinions. We can use this group as a sounding board on what we're doing in our operation, getting their perspective on how they approach the same in their organizations. In general a high level technology forum.

Henderson stated he is happy to have discussion or answer any questions.

Schorr asked if he would share the names of the Technical Discussion Forum, and the Advisory group? Henderson said the Advisory Group consists of Kurt Langer, Lincoln Public Schools CIO; Walter Weir, CIO for the University of Nebraska System; Paul Huebner, a partner in Congruiti, a technology consulting firm. Mark Dahmke, a partner in Information Analytics. Henderson stated he has known these individuals a long time and feel they understand what it's like to run an Information Technology shop of our size.

Henderson stated the Technology Discussion Forum is a mailing list of probably 30 or 40 individuals at this time. But would be happy to share the list. Schorr agreed on receiving the list.

Raybould asked if Henderson could speak on his projected savings estimate? What are you looking at? How are you coming up with the number? Heard estimates, what are they based on? Henderson replied really two major components. One would be the cost if we eliminate items, and includes staff reduction. With not

operating a mainframe computer all software, hardware, and associated expenses could stop. On one hand looking at eliminating expenses, and on the other if we become a customer of the State they will bill us for the services we would consume. It is a pretty solid estimate of billing from the State for their services to us.

Raybould stated some software, maybe some hardware, servers, etc., and asked if on the top the possibility of two full time employee positions being eliminated?

Camp asked if two FTE's would be at least \$100,000 each? Henderson replied for these particular two, yes. One is, and one is budgeted at \$70,000 to \$80,000 for compensation. Full cost above that. The compensation was targeted in the \$70,000 to \$80,000 range. Camp asked if this would amount to \$300,000 a year? Henderson answered maybe two fifty or so, on the staffing.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

Chair Hornung inquired as to the date of the next meeting. Schorr replied March 6<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday, at 8:15 a.m.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Camp moved the meeting be closed. Chair Hornung closed the meeting by acclamation of members at 1:40 p.m.

Mary Meyer  
Lincoln City Council Staff