

# 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 <sup>th</sup> & 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](mailto: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, 33<sup>rd</sup> & Cornhusker, West W Street, Holdrege Street, South 40<sup>th</sup> 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.

- University Place Pool Party has been rescheduled to July 18th.

**Next Meeting/Agenda**

The next meeting of the Mayor's Neighborhood Roundtable will be August 13, 2018 at 5:30 p.m. The topic is TBD.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at about 6:40 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted, Paul Johnson.*

# Mayor's 2018-2020 Recommended Budget Summary

The Mayor's 2018-20 Budget was developed with three main goals:

## #1- Increased Investment in Public Safety

Lincoln has grown by 37,000 people and 7.9 square miles during the Beutler Administration. That's like adding the population of Kearney to Lincoln. The Mayor's budget adds 12 more Police Officers and grant match funding for as many as 15 additional Firefighters to meet this phenomenal growth, keep our crime rate low and maintain a quick emergency response.

That's an additional \$3 million spent on public safety personnel. 56% of our tax-funded budget is spent on our residents' number one priority, safety and security.



## #2- Keep Lincoln Growing.

Maintaining Lincoln's growth doesn't happen by accident. We have to invest in streets, infrastructure and technology. The Mayor's budget recommends an annual investment of \$65 million a year in street maintenance and construction and an additional \$50 million over two years to expand the City's sewer and water system. Technology and innovation are keys to growth, and this budget will help bring high-speed Internet access to every home and business in Lincoln. We are rapidly becoming a Gig city.



## #3- No Property Tax Increase

Mayor Beutler's goal is to keep Lincoln growing without a property tax increase. The Mayor's 2018-2020 budget does NOT increase the property tax levy. The City portion of the levy will remain the same at 31.648 cents.



# Mayor's 2018-2020 Recommended Budget Summary

## *continued*

### **Economic Growth and City Revenues**

Lincoln's economy is booming.

Economic growth creates new tax revenues that need to be reinvested in community needs like public safety and keeping our neighborhoods strong and vibrant.

A robust local economy is helping grow our City's revenues and keep taxes down.

Projected growth in sales tax revenue of over 3% a year and an expanding property tax base help Lincoln keep pace with the inflationary costs of providing service and allow us to invest new dollars in more Police Officers, Firefighters, strengthening neighborhoods and taking care of people.

#### **Highlights:**

- The Mayor's 2018-2020 biennial budget does NOT increase the property tax levy.
- Sales tax revenues are 39% of the budget, and these revenues are projected to increase 3.5% for 2018-2019 and 3.75% for 2019-2020.
- The City receives less than 16 cents out of every property tax dollar allocated to public entities.
- Lincoln's property tax rate is the 5th lowest of the 15 largest cities in the State.
- Property tax revenues are 32% of the budget, and these revenues are projected to increase 4% for 2018-2019 and 4.5% for 2019-2020.
- \$375,000 in State stormwater funding was cut and replaced with local tax dollars.
- The budget includes planned cost of service fee increases for Parks and Recreation, Health and Utility Services.

### **Increased Investment in Public Safety**

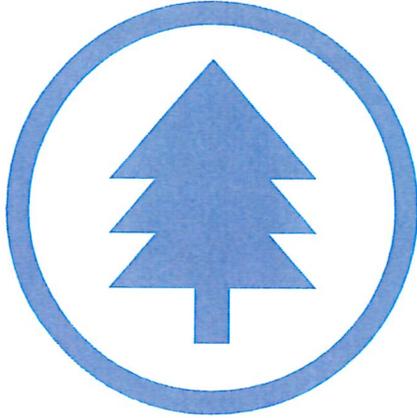
Over \$3 million annually is added to the budget for 12 new Police Officers, including 6 School Resource Officers; grant match funds for up to 15 Firefighters; and the operating costs of two new fire stations. \$2.3 million is added for up to five new fire engines/ladder trucks and a new ambulance. Lincoln is a safe community, and these investments will help keep it safe into the future.

#### **Highlights:**

- Grant matching funds for the City's share of up to 15 new firefighters the City applied for under the federal SAFER program
- \$2.1 million over the biennium to fund the overtime and/or staffing to address a call volume that has increased at a rate three higher than population growth since 2015
- \$2 million for up to five new fire engines and/or fire trucks and \$300,000 for a new ambulance
- \$600,000 to begin replacement of the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS)
- 1 new 911 dispatcher

# Mayor's 2018-2020 Recommended Budget Summary

## *continued*



### **Strong, Safe and Affordable Neighborhoods**

Continued growth means strong, safe neighborhoods that are well maintained and affordable. Families and kids need safe places to play. That's why funds are added to the budget for Parks and Recreation capital needs like a new Air Park Recreation Center for kids, replacing trees killed by the Emerald Ash Borer, fixing current Parks and Recreation buildings and equipment, and maintaining Wilderness Park. Everyone should live in a good home. We can create more affordable housing by using State sales taxes that are returned to the City, allowing us to invest \$200,000 per year in low-income areas for affordable housing.

#### **Highlights:**

- \$3.1 million for sidewalk replacement
- \$600,000 per year for Parks and Recreation capital needs like the Air Park Rec Center
- \$269,000 for increased Wilderness Park maintenance
- Nearly \$2.3 million to fight the Emerald Ash Borer
- Nearly 600 blocks of residential street rehabilitation
- 7 miles of water mains replaced each year
- \$200,000 per year for affordable housing in low-income areas
- \$61,000 annually for a new Animal Control Officer
- \$100,000 for downloadable audio books and Ebooks



### **Taking Care of People**

It's the people that make Lincoln a great community, and our budget should serve their needs. Many Lincoln residents depend on the Lincoln-Lancaster Health Department for health care, and on StarTran to get to school, work and medical appointments. That's why our budget increases funds for access to health care for low-income families and invests \$278,000 to increase StarTran hours.

#### **Highlights:**

- More evening hours for the Bethany, University Place and Heart Hospital routes and greater mid-day service in Arnold Heights
- \$141,000 in dental clinic fees to expand the Health Department's dental service and provide up to 2,000 additional patient visits
- Joint Budget Committee's funding for Human Services is increased 3% to \$515,000 in 2018-19 and an additional 3% in 2019-20 for a total of \$530,000.
- \$60,000 in fee revenues for a Community Resource Specialist to help connect low-income, uninsured adults to health care

# Mayor's 2018-2020 Recommended Budget Summary

## *continued*

### **Infrastructure that Promotes Economic Growth**

The 2018-2020 budget continues our investment in the City's transportation and infrastructure systems, keys to Lincoln's strong growth. The budget includes nearly \$65 million annually to maintain and repair our streets, improve safety and expand infrastructure that supports future growth including projects such as:

- South Beltway
- 33rd and Cornhusker
- West "A" Street
- Holdrege Street
- South 40th Street
- Arbor Road
- Green Light Lincoln

### **Highlights:**

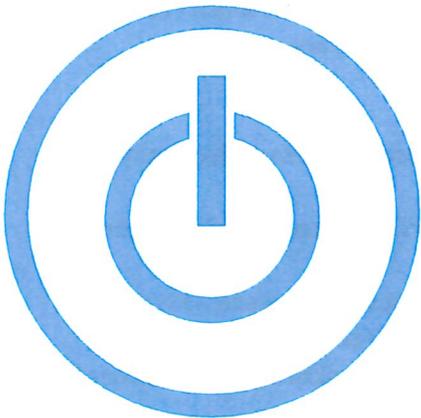
- \$50 million will expand the City's water and wastewater system to promote growth. This includes \$11 million for the Stevens Creek watershed expansion, paid for by 5% rate increases in the Water and Wastewater Utilities.
- The Parking Fund will pay for two additional garages.
- \$300,000 annually is added to address projected increases in the use of recycling drop-off sites.
- A financial analyst will replace a position in the Urban Development Department to increase financial oversight, evaluate TIF projects, assess City land sales and purchases, and review the Department's federal housing programs.
- The Biogas to Vehicle Fuel project will generate \$2 million annually for ratepayers by producing fuel quality methane from wastewater.

### **Creating a City of Innovation**

Innovation is essential to a growing community, and the City's investment in the Lincoln Technology Improvement District has led to more high-speed broadband access and more competition that lowers costs. The new budget will help expand the system to the entire City and bring high-speed Internet access to every home and business in Lincoln. We are rapidly becoming a Gig City.

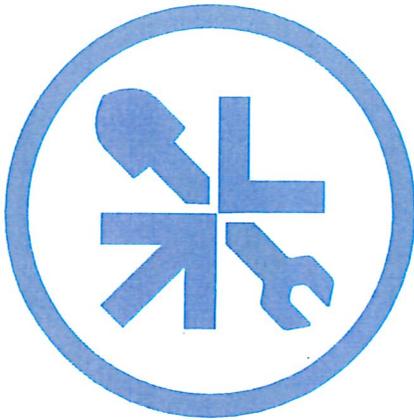
### **Highlights:**

- A network technician is added to the Broadband Fund to improve deployment and operation of Internet-connected devices for the Lincoln Broadband project. The position does not require tax dollars.



# Mayor's 2018-2020 Recommended Budget Summary

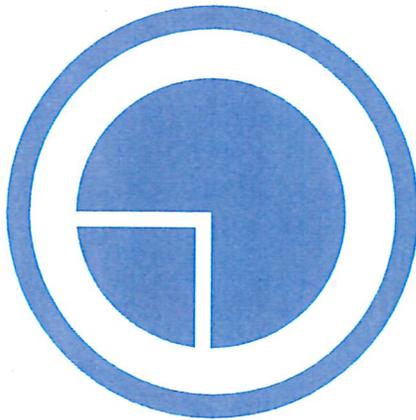
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### **A New Name and Even Better Game: The Department of Transportation and Utilities**

Public Works and Utilities is changing its name to better reflect its mission and services.

The newly named Transportation and Utilities Department is also changing how it organizes its funding, consistent with recommendations made by the Lincoln Citizens' Transportation Coalition.



### **A Budget with the Right Priorities for Lincoln**

Our budget reflects the right priorities for Lincoln. Of the \$205 million-tax funded budget, 56% goes to public safety. That number has grown every year of my Administration. We are putting the most tax dollars into the priority that Lincoln residents have consistently told us is most important: public safety.

The total number of City employee full time equivalents (FTEs) will increase by 14.38 in our proposed 2018-2020 budget. Since 2007, the total City workforce has dropped by 28.56 FTEs despite City growth.

