

WEST HAYMARKET JOINT PUBLIC AGENCY (JPA)
Special Board Meeting
April 4, 2024

Meeting Began At: 3:02 P.M.

Meeting Ended At: 3:23 P.M.

Members Present: Leirion Gaylor Baird and Tim Clare were present in Council Chambers, Tom Beckius appeared by videoconference.

Item 1 - Introductions and Notice of Open Meetings Law Posted by Door.

Gaylor Baird advised that this is a public meeting subject to the open meetings act posted at the back of the room.

Item 2 - Public Comment and Time Limit Notification.

Gaylor Baird advised members of the public are given five minutes for public comment on specific items listed on today's agenda and those testifying should identify themselves for the record.

Item 3 – Approval of the minutes from the JPA meeting held January 25, 2024.

Clare moved approval of the minutes. Gaylor Baird seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Item 4 – Bill No. WH 24-18 Resolution to approve a Contract between the West Haymarket JPA and Douglas Food Stores, Inc. dba Douglas Equipment for a kitchen combo oven and steamer, for the Pinnacle Bank Arena, for a total amount not to exceed \$47,687.38, pursuant to Bid No. 24-043.

Chris Connolly, City Law Department, stated this item is replacing equipment that is ten years old and has aged out. Douglas Food Stores was the lowest bid and Tim Savona, General Manager of Pinnacle Bank Area, is here to answer any questions.

Jane Kinsey, Watchdogs of Lincoln Government, stated this is an out of state company from West Virginia and asked how many bids were made on this item. Connolly explained he is not sure how many bids were received, but stated this was the lowest bid. Kinsey commented that in the past it has not always been the lowest bid that was taken. Connolly stated that he is unaware of a time when the lowest bid was not accepted unless it was for a specific reason. Kinsey asked if this was something new and Connolly stated it was a replacement. Kinsey asked what this machine will do. Connolly stated it is kitchen equipment in general that includes an oven.

There being no further discussion or public comment, Clare moved approval of the resolution. Beckius seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Item 5 – Bill No. WH 24-19 Resolution to approve an Agreement Between West Haymarket Joint Public Agency and Lincoln Youth Complex for Additional Contribution to Ballfields Project to grant additional funds to the Lincoln Youth Complex to construct the Lincoln Youth Complex Sports Fields in an amount not to exceed \$4,500,000.00.

Connolly explained that back in 2006, there were some very bright and capable people in this

town that came up with a plan and wonderful vision for a baseball and softball complex. Some of those people are here today. They worked very hard to gain support from the community. This group of visionaries later became known as the Lincoln Youth Complex, a non-profit corporation. When the West Haymarket Joint Public Agency was formed in 2010, one of the things the Board expressed its support for was this project. They moved forward with building the Pinnacle Bank Arena. There has always been ongoing support for this project and the site for this complex is now in the JPA footprint area and has been since nearly the beginning. In 2022, this Board did contribute \$4,500,000 to help the project. Following that contribution, LYC began to experience the same kind of inflation problems that the rest of the country is seeing and as a result there were significant increases in construction costs that created a funding gap. For the last couple of months, we have been working with LYC to provide further funding for the project and are pleased to bring this agreement to the Board today. The agreement calls for a contribution of an additional \$4,500,000 from the JPA through three annual installments of \$1,500,000 each starting in 2026 and ending in 2028. LYC will provide 50% match and they will also create a reserve fund by 2029 in the amount of \$2,000,000 to fund the replacement of the synthetic turf. The JPA has seen robust occupation tax revenue, sound financial management, and is in a good position to make this contribution. Connolly then presented a picture of the site plan for the ballfields. He explained there will be five youth fields for baseball and softball, one championship baseball field, one championship softball field for use by Nebraska Wesleyan and others, and Homer's Heroes Field to be used for children with physical and intellectual disabilities. Construction is expected to be completed in the spring of 2025.

Clare commented that as a dad who had kids that played baseball and a daughter that briefly played softball, this is truly a long time coming. He was involved in this from the very start and there are a lot of people to thank, especially Sand Hills Global and private donors who contributed financially to this project. From the Lincoln Youth Complex, a special thanks to Brad Korell, Rich Claussen, Joel Pedersen, the Lincoln Chamber, Charlie Colón and others who were involved to really bring this project together. He also thanked his colleagues who were here and participated in part of the vision Connolly discussed. This was not an idea that somebody came up with a few years ago and said we got to build a baseball complex. This was something that from the inception of the JPA where the footprint goes out to First and Cornhusker, this was the vision. It goes back to the vision when we were trying to get approval of the arena vote. This was part of the process. The colleagues who came before us, including Dan Marvin, who always had this on the radar. This is a great project that will bring a competitive baseball/softball facility, but from a revenue standpoint it will bring people to the city renting cars and hotels, eating at our restaurants all of which contributes back to the occupation tax. This will be a great project for Lincoln. It is much needed as far as having competitive venues to play. He finds it unconscionable that the USSSA ball, state series championship is played in Council Bluffs because there are no fields to play baseball here in Nebraska. He hopes to get some of these fields used for our state championship venues or bring it back to Nebraska at least. Lastly, this is great, he wishes his kids could've played there because they all played baseball but now his grandkids can hopefully play there. Let's play ball!

Kinsey commented that it is always amazing how when public officials want to convince the public that what they are doing is in the best interests of the community the mantra always is oh its going to bring so much money into this community and it will pay for itself or more. You know after awhile people turn that off. Maybe you need to find something else to say to convince people or prove it. How is it going to do that? The myriad of projects that have never

been proven. The same thing is going on with the idea of the event center, the convention center. Lincoln at this time is flush with money from COVID from the feds. Why isn't that being used for this? The federal government, in the situation that it is, it would be reasonable and kind and honorable to return some of that money to the federal government. Now maybe that's an ideal and that's why you want to hang on to it. Then give it to the people. Let them have lower property taxes. It just seems like there is a lot of greed here. There is a lot of me me me and what I want and not what is fiscally sound. It's a lovely idea. There is no doubt about that. People have a lot of lovely ideas that they can't afford or that they misuse their money for. We would call for more prudence in this matter. Maybe you need to wait until this other money is raised before you hand this money over. You almost wonder if when you gave the money before that they come back with their hands open again. We have great concerns about the finances and how they are handled and the transparency to the community and to fiscal accountability and good sense.

Brad Korell, a Board member of the Lincoln Youth Complex, explained that the Board Chair, Charlie Colón, was to be here today and he ended up getting called away this morning so he is here on behalf of the LYC Board. He stated, on behalf of the Board and Charlie, how much they appreciate the JPA considering this request. The JPA was there at the beginning. ARPA money was used from the City and County to help with this project. The JPA helped launch this project. They would not be here without the support of the team consisting of Chris Connolly, Lyn Heaton, and Riely Slezak who have helped them put together and craft the terms of the agreement. They are very fortunate. He thanked Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird for her help. He stated public private partnerships are hard. They are difficult and this project has been no exception. Without the Mayor's steadfast support they would not be here today. This dates back to at least 2018 or 2019, and because of the Mayor's support and the JPA's support is why they are here.

Joel Pedersen, Legal Counsel for the Lincoln Youth Complex, presented a picture and stated this picture will make a connection with the JPA's project area. He pointed out the Pinnacle Bank Arena and the ballfield project location at First and Cornhusker. This connection is strong and has been enduring. It's important for the team. It's not just the team at Lincoln Youth Complex. It includes the JPA, the broader community, and the public private partnership and the transformative opportunity that this project presents. They are very grateful for the JPA's support and they continue to welcome all of the help they can get. It will take more effort to get to the finish line, but he is one for getting done on time and on budget.

Gaylor Baird stated that we are pleased to be arriving in this moment when we can move forward and that much closer to the finish line. This is going to be a topflight amenity for youth, for Wesleyan, for Homer's Heroes, for children all across our community, but for those that will come and visit and stay in our town and eat in our restaurants and shop in our stores. It is not just an amenity, it is an asset. Thank you for your work to help make it a reality. We are very grateful for the public private partnership that has helped to get this done.

There being no further discussion or public comment, Clare moved approval of the resolution. Beckius seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Item 6 - Next Meeting Date.

The next meeting will be Thursday, April 25, 2024 at 2:30 p.m. in Council Chambers, First Floor of the County-City Building.

Item 7 – Motion to Adjourn

Clare moved to adjourn. Beckius seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 3:23 p.m.