

**WORK SESSION
JOINT GOVERNING MEETING**

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Norfolk, Nebraska met with the Northeast Community College Board of Governors, the Norfolk Public School Board and the Madison County Commissioners on Tuesday, March 10, 2009 beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers Conference Room, 309 West Madison Avenue, Norfolk, Nebraska.

Mayor Sue Fuchtman called the meeting to order.

Roll call found the following members present: Mayor Sue Fuchtman and Councilpersons Brenneman, Fauss, Lange, Saunders, and Van Dyke. Absent: Coy, Reeder, and Wilson.

Staff members present were City Administrator Al Roder, City Clerk Beth Deck, and Waste Water Plant Superintendent Todd Boling.

Other present were: Don Oelsigle, Rita Olberding, John Blaylock, Diane Reikofski, Dr. Marlene Uhing, Nancy Scheer, Dick Johnson, Lee Klein, Richard Uhlir, Dave Ptak, Dr. Bill Path, John Davies, and Clark Froehlich.

The news media was represented by Greg Wees, Norfolk Daily News, and Jim Curry, WJAG/KEXL.

Notice of the meeting was given in advance by publication in the Norfolk Daily News, and notice of the meeting was given to the Mayor and all members of the Council prior to the meeting.

The Mayor presided and the City Clerk recorded the proceedings.

The Mayor informed the public about the location of the current copy of the Open Meetings Act posted in the meeting room and accessible to members of the public.

Mayor Fuchtman stated the joint meeting is to allow for information to be shared by elected officials regarding the various boards' current efforts, future visions of the organizations and the possibility of how all of the entities can better partner together in the future. Fuchtman stated each entity has the same challenges of being accountable for the choices made by the boards. Fuchtman feels the difficult part of decision-making is to be sure choices made are for the betterment, improvement, and advancement of the organizations. Elected officials are also responsible for the entity remaining financially sound. Each goal offers challenges but challenges offer opportunities. Fuchtman feels elected officials have opportunities to benefit from each other. Fuchtman wants the City to be a vital part of the success of each of the other entities present.

City Administrator Al Roder explained the following items for the City of Norfolk:

- (A) Posting of properties regarding the concealed handgun carry law. The concealed carry ban is still in effect in Norfolk.
- (B) The City sales tax collection for February 2009 is the highest since 2005 and the second highest in the last six years. In 2005 there was \$732,000+ collected a

in 2009 there was \$722,000+ collected, which is still \$12,000 over projections and 1.2% above the previous collection rate. Roder feels sales tax collections appear to remain solid. The City of Norfolk would like to see the rate at 4%-5% above the previous year; however, the City is still on the plus side of sales tax revenue. The City budgets approximately \$6.5 million of sales tax and \$1.7 million of property tax revenue each year.

- (C) Space Needs Study for a new Administration office facility, which would include offices for the city attorney and information technology. The analysis projects a need for 26,938 square feet.
- (D) Street projects including 25th Street, Benjamin Avenue to Norfolk Avenue; Highway 35, and maintenance work throughout Norfolk.
- (E) Council Retreat in January 2009 – elected officials identified five (5) primary goals:
 1. Create a Park & Recreation Facility Master Plan
 2. Enhance City Parks, specifically the ball fields including Memorial Field, Ta-Ha-Zouka baseball fields and also including an Aquatic Facility
 3. Create an Arts & Culture Committee
 4. Enhance economic development efforts in the City of Norfolk
 5. Work towards City Administration offices

Roder said City staff will be spending a significant amount of time on the Council's goals during the 2009-2010 budget year. Roder stated another focus this year is to be more pro-active in customer service and engaging the citizens of Norfolk.

Mayor Fuchtman stated City staff participated in the Council retreat; however, the top five goals were set by elected officials.

Councilperson Van Dyke stressed that the goals are priorities but may not be done in that specific order.

Councilperson Brenneman added that elected officials are also going to strive to maintain and improve existing amenities, including Faith Regional Health Services, Northeast Community College, and various industrial sites.

Dr. Bill Path, Northeast Community College, thanked the City for organizing the joint governing meeting and encouraged more meetings in the future. NECC has eleven board members and services a 20-county area. Priorities for NECC during this year are:

- (A) Welcome Center on the NECC campus, approximately 32,000 square feet costing \$5.5 million. The facility will have the one-stop feature with all related services located in the same corridor.
- (B) Adding South Sioux City as a second campus for the college as a joint project between NECC and Wayne State College. This is the first time resources have been used in equal measure for this type of project anywhere in the nation. Bids should be let in May with a projected completion date of December 2010.
- (C) Nursing College on the NECC campus. Bids came in lower than anticipated and the fund drive was reduced to \$11.9 million. The hope is to have the fund drive completed by April 2009 and a completion date so classes can begin in the fall of 2010. The college will have a university feeling and will probably bring more allied health programs to Norfolk. Staff is optimistic about State funding to operate the Nursing College but Senator Flood is working hard on the issue.

John Blaylock, Interim Vice-President of Educational Services, explained NECC created a renewable fuels technician program and is adding a wind energy diploma program and looking at a biofuels program.

Lee Klein, Madison County Commissioner, thanked the City for organizing this meeting. Klein said the main project for Madison County at this time is the new probation office that will service a seven (7) county area. Klein agrees the governing bodies need to meet more often.

Rick Uhler, Madison County Commissioner, stated the county is also working on the Victory Road project. Uhler feels all elected officials need to work together to get industries to locate in the region.

Dick Johnson, Madison County engineer, stated the county receives about \$8 million annually in property taxes. The probation office has a completion date of June 30, 2009. The County has a reasonable solution to the drainage issues and the project will probably be let within 45-60 days. The County repaired the bridge across Spring Branch on Victory Road again. The County may apply for federal aid for the project. Johnson stated the Nucor Road project will be constructed in three phases. The project is a safety issue because the parking lot is located on one side of the road and the factory and offices are located on the other side of the road. The road will be moved about one-half mile south and parallel to the existing road and tie it from Highway 35 to Highway 81 eventually. The first phase will come from Highway 35 and go past Nucor and tie into Victory Road on the east side of the Ethanol Plant. Phase II will be from Highway 81 to First Street and Phase III will be the 1 1/2 miles left in-between Phases I & II. Funding for the project will come from Stanton County, Madison County and the City of Norfolk. It is a federal aid project and the State of Nebraska is also contributing \$1.7 million. If the project is approved for federal aid, it will pay for 80% of the cost.

Dr. Marlene Uhing, Norfolk Public School District, explained the School Board typically works a lot in committees and Clark Froehlich and Alfredo Ramirez will serve on the joint governing committee. NPS recently completed updating the school facilities with a \$25 million bond issue that was approved by voters several years ago. Uhing stated the schools are looking at an Education Plan for the community of Norfolk and not just for the schools. The plan is to involve

the community in the education of students. The school is taking a look at what skills all students need when they leave the school district no matter what they will do in life and will look at a 6-8 year plan for students instead of a 4-year plan. Another goal is to connect youth to the school and community. NPS is starting more career academies for students and is looking at how best to use resources to complete the goals. Staff is working on defining the 21st Century School and the skills students need but articulation of the curriculum. Another project NPS is working on is grade configuration in the District.

Fuchtmann has read a lot of articles about how pre-schools are almost becoming a mandatory class and every child should have the opportunity to attend pre-school.

Uhing stated the State of Nebraska has been trying to use funds for school grants to start pre-school education because the earlier problems are addressed the more successful the school will be in getting the child ready for school. NPS started two pre-schools a couple of years ago.

Councilperson Saunders suggested involving high school students to serve on Advisory Committees. Saunders feels it is important for the Council to hear from the young people of the community.

Dr. Uhing agrees with Saunders' suggestion.

Roder stated the City of Norfolk needs help on projects that could use some collaboration to complete. One of those projects is to bring together a youth coalition. There is a dynamic youth group in Northfield, Minnesota, called the Unity of Youth, is the oldest youth-run, youth organization in the nation. Roder would like to bring the Norfolk Youth Council and the Unity of Youth groups together for a weekend. The challenge is how to bring youth together and define the purpose of the gathering. Roder would like to discuss youth retention but would also like any other suggestions and/or ideas. Roder would like to set a date for the meeting as soon as possible. Roder also mentioned the TeamMates program, which is a youth mentoring program. Roder said the third area "to plant the seed" is enhancing/energizing economic development efforts in Madison County and the surrounding area. The key to making economic development successful is teamwork and partnerships.

Dr. Path suggested collectively that entities could have a much stronger impact on legislative matters. Path suggested having a handout of priority bills to give to senators at the Madison County Day in Lincoln. Path also proposed joint trips from "this group" to lobby certain committee and committee members. Once the group is successful with the State the same efforts could be used in Washington.

Councilperson Van Dyke agreed with Dr. Path's suggestion.

Fuchtmann encouraged everyone to attend the weekly 8:15 a.m. Thursday morning Legislative call with Senator Flood.

Klein also suggested using email correspondence to get updated on each entities' legislative concerns. Klein suggested starting a network to work together on legislative issues.

Fuchtmann questioned the consensus of the group for future meetings. Fuchtmann likes Dr. Uhing's idea of having committees of each body meet on a quarterly basis.

Dr. Path feels a quarterly meeting of a smaller group, or subcommittee of each of the boards, is a good idea. However, Path feels it would be a good idea to have one annual joint meeting where each of the groups is encouraged to have a majority of its members present. The meeting would need to be advertised and minutes taken by each entity. Having the joint annual meeting would demonstrate to the community at-large that there is continuity among all elected officials. Dr. Path stated Dakota County has done this type of thing for years and meets each February. The entities may also rotate the meeting between facilities. The group would decide which entity would take the lead each time but the meeting would be a public meeting; however, no action is taken. Each group could then comment or provide updates on projects of common interest. It is a good opportunity for the general public to attend and hear what is going on in the community.

Roder feels October and November would be a good time to look at the having an annual meeting because it would be prior to the Legislative session.

Klein stated, however, that senators only have so many days to introduce bills and until the end of that time no one knows what issues are going to be considered.

Councilperson Van Dyke feels the idea has merit but would have to be in a better location than the conference room with more room for the public to attend. However, allowing people to speak does become an issue because the meetings could get quite lengthy.

Fuchtman has also been meeting with mayors from the surrounding communities to discuss area-wide issues and strengths.

Councilperson Saunders moved, seconded by Councilperson Van Dyke to adjourn the meeting at 6:42 a.m. Roll call: Ayes: Councilpersons Brenneman, Fauss, Lange, Saunders, Van Dyke, and Mayor Fuchtman. Nays: None. Absent: Coy, Reeder and Wilson. Motion carried.

Sue Fuchtman
Mayor

ATTEST:

Bethene Hoff
Acting City Clerk

(S E A L)