

WORK SESSION

The Mayor, City Council and City staff of the City of Norfolk, Nebraska met on Monday, August 1, 2022, beginning at 4:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 309 N 5th Street, Norfolk, Nebraska.

The following elected officials were present: Mayor Josh Moenning, Councilmembers Frank Arens, Shane Clausen, Corey Granquist, Kory Hildebrand, Gary L. Jackson, Andrew McCarthy, Thad Murren and Rob Merrill. Absent: None.

Staff members present were City Administrator Andy Colvin, City Attorney Danielle Myers-Noelle, City Clerk Brianna Duerst, City Planner Val Grimes, Finance Officer Randy Gates, Economic Developer Candice Alder, City Engineer Steven Rames, Assistant City Engineer Anna Allen, Communications Manager Nick Stevenson, Director of Administrative Services Lyle Lutt. Also present were Doug Burkink with Davis Design, Seth Lange with Olsson and Jerry Guenther with Norfolk Daily News.

Notice of the meeting was given in advance by publication in the Norfolk Daily News, the designated method of giving notice, as shown by affidavit of publication, 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 accessible to members of the public.

November 2022 ballot initiative updates

Andy Colvin said the purpose of this meeting is to provide an update to Council on several city projects. Later this month, Council will be considering putting on the November ballot, a vote for a half-cent sales tax to pay for certain capital improvements for a variety of areas that have been identified as needs in the community. These areas include recreation improvements – indoor aquatic center recreation pool and competition pool and improvements to Ta-Ha Zouka Park. Have seen a master plan to do a series of improvements to baseball and softball facilities. Plan overall includes soccer fields, tennis courts, horseshoe, basketball, as well as reconfiguration of the drive and parking facilities. Improvements to Ta-Ha-Zouka Park can be over time. Can do as much or as little as we want and can phase over a number of years. Recommendation would be to focus on events we know we have today that are drawing tournaments – baseball and softball. Third component would be the expansion and renovation of the Police Station, plans for expansion and renovation of Police Station have been reviewed. Lastly, street improvements. Norfolk is pretty far behind on street maintenance. Additional funding through a local option sales tax would help speed up some of those improvements and get streets to the quality we want them to be. Colvin said he does not foresee a great deal of complete reconstruction. Goal is not to do a reconfiguration of streets, but to do maintenance and repairs of what is already there. Work similar to what was done recently on 18th Street as well as recent mill and overlay projects.

Councilmember Jackson discussed the possibility of streaming and recording the regular work session meetings. Staff will work on getting that available for the next meeting.

Doug Burkink, Davis Designs, focused on the interior of the aquatic center and presented renderings of the ground and second levels with optional features. Second level has seating for up to 600 spectators for the competition pool. Have been looking at features and gathering input from a steering committee, stakeholders and coaches. Competition pool is a 25 meter x 25 yard pool. Set up very well for a competition pool but have also considered what else could be done with pool for recreational purposes. Burkink discussed several potential features and options.

Councilmember Jackson asked about an interlocal agreement needed prior to the question being placed on the ballot. Colvin said the city entered into an interlocal agreement with Madison County when the library expansion issue was placed on a ballot. Colvin explained there is no financial obligation on the part of County. An interlocal agreement for this ballot issue has been sent to Madison County for review and approval.

Councilmember Jackson also asked about costs and length of the local option sales tax.

Colvin discussed preliminary numbers – for the indoor aquatic center structure, the estimated cost is \$28 million. With escalation built in, closer to \$34 million. Colvin said he thinks that is high but have built in cost escalations. If increased sales tax passes, will go through final design, which will take several months. Building enough into the budget to be sure we can capture potential increases. For the local option sales tax, currently planning to capture \$70-72 million over 20 years. That number not factoring in sales tax growth. Planning just like what was done with Memorial Field improvements, which was paid off 9-10 years early because revenues came in stronger than was planned. Try to budget conservatively with the goal of trying to pay off sooner than that. Increased sales tax would really go as long as it would take to pay the debt service off.

Council will have to take action to put this on the ballot by the end of August. From that point on, can get as much information out to voters as possible. Will be having more open houses and town hall meetings to let people come in and see what is going on. Trying to find things we think will help community grow.

Jackson said he has heard concerns about things moving too quickly and said the community needs more time to digest the information and stressed the importance of getting dollar amounts out to public.

Moening asked about estimated annual revenue generated from the extra half-cent sales tax. Colvin said the estimate is about \$3.6 million. Moening said the library renovation and expansion was also funded through a local option sales tax, which collected about \$2.8 million.

Moening asked about the number of competition pools in Nebraska and how many are publicly owned verses being part of the public school system. Burkink said almost all, if not every Class A school in Nebraska has their own competition pool, but there are some with local partnerships. Moening said the public school has a significant property tax levy in the city and asked about what conversations have been had with Norfolk Public Schools related to a partnership on a competition pool that they would primarily use. Colvin said the conversations he has had with

Dr. Jami Jo Thompson and Bill Robinson have been primarily about the use of the facilities. They have expressed interest in amending the existing agreement for use of city facilities and adding this in. There would be an increased amount of money to help with ongoing costs and maintenance of facilities. Fair to say it will be substantially more than what is being paid now. Colvin did ask at one point if there was an interest in a capital contribution, but said there was no interest at that time. It was indicated these things weren't on the radar screen of the school board as part of their long term priority planning.

Merrill asked about future discussion with the school. Colvin said he is confident the school will move forward with helping. These improvements will bring value to the community, so regardless of an outside partnership, they have merit. Conversations will be continuing. Colvin briefly discussed research done by the Norfolk Area Visitors Bureau – additional nine tournaments expected; an average of two days each; number of teams estimated at 22, most of which would travel from further than 50 miles away.

Hildebrand asked about the steering committee. Burkink said there has been steering committee and stakeholders meetings for both the aquatic center and Ta-Ha-Zouka improvements. Steering committee has consisted of the public school, NECC, YMCA, and baseball, softball and soccer representatives. Stakeholders are the coaches and family members passionate about sports programs.

McCarthy said the area around the indoor recreation pool seems tight with not a lot of seating. Burkink said they tried to pack in as much water as possible, but that could be addressed in final design.

Granquist asked about comments and suggestions received from the public at the open house and other meetings. Burkink said he has that information from the meetings to use moving forward. Granquist asked that that information be provided to elected officials to give them a better idea of what the comments have been.

Merrill asked about the impact on staff. Colvin said there has been discussion on adding part time staff, maybe one full time lifeguard. Currently set up pretty well with full time staff to be able to work this. Aquatic center will be the location of Park & Recreation offices. Will have space in future for about half dozen offices at this location so there would be staff on site on a daily basis.

Hildebrand asked about staffing for Ta-Ha-Zouka Park. Colvin said with some of the efficiencies that have been made with equipment in the Parks Department, there is an ability to reallocate staff time. Hildebrand also asked about economic impact. Colvin said the Visitors Bureau is working on that right now.

Merrill asked about the ballot initiative needing to be ready by the end of this month as it is difficult to make decisions until the final numbers are known and asked about upcoming public meetings. Colvin said he would like to have at least one public meeting per month. Merrill suggested two public meetings per month as it is important for citizens to know what they're voting for.

Moenning said it will be the citizens who decide if they want to move forward with this or not. The more input and communication in the process, the better. Moenning noted that a lot of the things being packaged together in this initiative was the result of a community survey done in 2017 that asked citizens what they want to see in the community. Youth sports and aquatics were consistently at the top of the list. Need to determine how to invest public dollars in the most efficient way to enhance quality of life. Moenning also discussed the power in partnerships with this kind of investment. In this case, it behooves taxpayers to have a shared partnership for the competition pool with the school district. Suggest a public meeting in front of school board to ask what they might potentially be willing to contribute. Worthwhile to ask the question of what is the partnership going to look like.

Murren asked about the location of the indoor aquatic center. Colvin discussed the synergies with Winter Park, as it is close to the high school and the YMCA, and ability to share parking with the high school. Colvin feels Winter Park is a good location barring some unforeseen issue and noted that the City already owns it. Burkink said six different locations were considered, each has good and bad – size, location, infrastructure, etc. Winter Park has some really good features to it.

Ta-Ha-Zouka

Burkink provided a master plan rendering, which looks at everything from Hwy 81 to 1st Street. A detailed budget was worked up but would be a huge ask to do it all. Focus would be on roads, infrastructure, parking, and baseball and softball fields to get things setup for future. Looked at camping, dog park, basketball, volleyball, etc. that can be considered down the road. Budget includes pavilions, concessions, and restrooms for the three different sections. Phases of the project are yet to be determined, but initially looking at roads, infrastructure, parking and baseball and softball fields.

Arens asked for a detailed breakdown of costs.

Seth Lange, Olsson and Associates, discussed sizes and multi-use features of the baseball and softball fields.

Colvin discussed having another special meeting next Monday to just discuss the budget for the indoor aquatic center and Ta-Ha-Zouka improvements.

Hildebrand discussed concerns with the Elkhorn River bank. Rames said we are waiting for remapping, which has come to a halt. Lange said any structure would have to be one-foot above the base flood elevation once the maps are certified.

Moenning asked about the campground space. Lange said the initial discussion was on how to expand RV camping. The camping piece put in as placeholder for now but configuration will likely change.

Hildebrand asked about budget. Colvin said, all in, including soccer, construction after 15% contingency is estimated at almost \$24 million. Have baseball and softball tournaments now, so that has been the focus. Without including soccer component, will reduce that number.

Moening noted the importance of connecting the trail system to the surrounding neighborhood, as there are no sidewalks currently connecting.

Clausen said these are two community driven projects, something that has been asked of the Council to look at as an option. The rest of the bond issue, about \$22 million, is to fund the police station renovation and expansion and improvements to street. After CHAF dollars, there is no other way to fund major street repairs that are desperately needed. Street repairs is a council driven initiative. Projects are lumped together, but at this point, don't know how to break it all apart. Now, will go to a vote. This is a way for the people in the community to decide what they want to see. Council is an avenue for these things to go through.

Moening said this, as compared to the Water Park that was funded through an occupation tax, the funding source is an additional local option sales tax that cities have the right to capture for special projects. Moening said he likes that a local option sales tax is more spread out than an occupation tax on just food, beverage and lodging, as well as the fact that the community gets to vote. Moening discussed how important growth has been to the city budget, allowing us to do more improvements and be in a position to offer some of the things that have been discussed in the community. City revenues are largely dependent on sales tax. Within the City of Norfolk, the city collects only 13% of the property tax ask. Compels us to be open to business and make strategic investments on how we grow business community.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:18 p.m.

Josh Moening
Mayor

ATTEST:

Brianna Duerst
City Clerk
(S E A L)