

## FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

The Finance Committee of the City of Norfolk, Nebraska met in the Council Chambers, 309 West Madison Avenue, Norfolk, Nebraska, on Monday, June 16, 2008, beginning at 7:00 a.m.

Mayor Gordon D. Adams called the meeting to order.

Roll call found the following Committee members present: Mayor Gordon Adams and Councilpersons Brenneman, Coy, Fauss, Lange, Reeder, Saunders, Van Dyke and Wilson.  
Absent: None.

Staff members present were Interim City Administrator Gary Miller, Public Works Director Dennis Smith, City Attorney Clint Schukei, City Clerk Beth Deck, Wastewater Plant Superintendent Todd Boling, Transportation, Building & Grounds Director Jim Koch, Park Superintendent Pat Mrsny, Fire Chief Shane Weidner, Information Systems Manager Jim McKenzie, Finance Officer Randy Gates, Housing Director Sheila Miller and Police Chief Bill Mizner.

The media was represented by Greg Wees, Norfolk Daily News.

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.

The first item of discussion was an interlocal agreement with Sanitary and Improvement District No. 3 (**SID #3**) to extend the City of Norfolk's water system to serve **Eastern Heights**. Public Works Director Dennis Smith explained SID #3 wants to improve their water system with ultimate connection to the City's water supply. The interlocal agreement provides for construction of a booster station to provide water pressure to Eastern Heights without a water tower. Smith stated the interlocal agreement has three components: Input main, Booster Station and Outlet main. The City of Norfolk agrees to maintain the Booster Station and inlet main as a City facility. SID #3 will own the outlet main but City of Norfolk agrees to provide maintenance to SID #3 for repairs and maintenance of the outlet main and internal water distribution system within Eastern Heights Subdivision. The maintenance shall not include the repair or replacement of any service line from the water distribution main to any improvements located on individual properties within SID #3. The City shall bill SID #3 for any such repairs or maintenance of the outlet main and internal water distribution system on an actual cost basis incurred by the City for the cost of the use of equipment, materials, and personnel.

Councilperson Reeder questioned when construction of the project will begin.

Smith stated the construction will be performed by the SID and should start fairly soon.

Councilperson Van Dyke questioned ownership of the meters and infrastructure.

Smith explained the City of Norfolk already owns the meters. The infrastructure within SID #3 is owned by SID #3.

Councilperson Brenneman questioned whether the project will have any effect on the City's fire suppression efforts.

Smith stated there won't be any effect on the City's fire suppression.

This item will appear on the June 16, 2008 City Council meeting agenda for formal consideration.

The **Community Health Care Clinic** presented a funding request to the City for the FY 2008-2009 budget. Dr. Bob Smith, Kathy Nordby and Virgil Froehlich spoke to elected officials.

Dr. Smith stated a "free clinic" was established in Norfolk in 1999 with funding from the Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services as well as a grant from the Public School System. In 2003, Faith Regional Health Services (FRHS) provided rent-free space at the hospital for the clinic. Smith explained the clinic no longer is "free" with the establishment of a sliding fee schedule. However, only about 80% of the people qualify to pay a fee and there is only about a 50% collection rate for 20% of the people required to pay for the services. In June of 2007, the clinic closed and the board of directors sought assistance of a sustainable funding source(s) for the clinic. The clinic reopened in February 2008 but for only 2 days per week in Norfolk. Smith explained Senator Mike Flood helped divert some funds for operation of the clinic and the services are now also offered in Madison.

Kathy Nordby, Norfolk Community Health Care Clinic, stated the clinic fills a need in the community and taxpayers will be paying for the services anyway if the people start using the hospital's emergency room. Nordby stated emergency rooms cannot refuse service and the hospital must then write off uncollectable bills which equates to higher bills for paying patients. Nordby feels there is an efficiency factor in keeping the clinic open and it will save everyone money in the long run. Nordby stated the clinic diligently works at getting patients to pay for services. Nordby said the Madison clinic has received funding from the Tyson Plant, \$25,000, and two banks in Madison contributed \$1,000 each. Nordby stated Madison County is contributing \$25,000 to the Norfolk clinic and money has also been received from the United Way and Alegent Health, as well as Elkhorn Logan Valley Health. Nordby stated the clinic is seeking federal funding as well. Nordby estimates the cost of \$350,000 annual to operate the clinic. Nordby requested the City of Norfolk include \$50,000 in the FY 2008-2009 budget for the Norfolk Community Health Care Clinic. Nordby stated the funds would allow the clinic to add another day of service in Norfolk.

Councilperson Saunders questioned whether patients receiving written prescriptions are able to pay for the medication and whether or not the patients have applied for Medicaid assistance. Saunders questioned staffing for the clinic.

Nordby stated the clinic provides patient assistance to get reduced cost medications and helps patients get prescriptions filled. Nordby stated the clinic has one practitioner, a receptionist, an interpreter and coding/billing staff. The clinic is trying to organize a day with volunteer doctors. Staff also helps patients apply for Medicaid.

Virgil Froehlich is on the board of directors for the Norfolk Community Health Care Clinic. Froehlich stated the second part of the funding request is an additional \$50,000 for the next 4-5 years from the City's revenue from Nebraska Public Power District. Froehlich stated the City has provided funding to several non-profits and Northeast Community College and the Clinic is now requesting part of those funds.

Mayor Adams questioned the amount of funding Madison County has pledged.

Nordby stated Madison County has approved funding \$25,000 for two years for the clinic.

Froehlich stated the board would like to keep the funding separate between the Norfolk and Madison clinics.

The next presenter was Vicki Goeken who requested funding for FY 2008-2009 on behalf of the Norfolk Public Transportation. Goeken manages the Norfolk Public Transportation (**Handibus**) and also the Norfolk Senior Center. The Handibus service provides 24,000 rides per year to citizens with the mini-buses traveling approximately 84,000 miles per year. Goeken stated the Norfolk Public Transportation has three mini-buses which operate Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and one bus operates from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on weekends. There is a charge of \$2.50 per trip to ride the Handibus. Goeken stated the mini-buses are all getting older and the main expenses incurred are for gas and maintenance. The Norfolk Handibus operates with 50% federal funding, 25% state funding and 25% local match/fund raising efforts. Goeken stated the City provided \$1,500 per month to the Norfolk Public Transportation in 2007 and that match increased to \$2,000 recently. Goeken requests \$30,000 from the City as the local match. The \$2,500 monthly, or \$30,000 annual, contribution from the City would make the Handibus operations break-even and enable senior citizens to concentrate on raising funds for the Norfolk Senior Center.

Councilperson Reeder appreciates the Handibus service.

Councilperson Van Dyke feels Norfolk needs some type of public transportation and that senior citizens should not have to raise money. Van Dyke feels Goeken's request is reasonable.

Jay Knobbe, Ryan Mean and Patti Knobbe made a presentation on behalf of the **Norfolk Area Recruiters** (NAR). Patti Knobbe appreciates the City's investment in NAR over the last three years. NAR is requesting another \$25,000 contribution for FY 2008-2009. As of November, 2007, Knobbe says NAR has helped recruit 32 families back to the area and 7 more families have come to Norfolk since April. Knobbe stated NAR is "trying to stay as a non-profit" but is growing. Knobbe "hopes elected officials see the investment as a good return." Knobbe stated the "labor force is a strong recruiting tool for Norfolk."

Jay Knobbe stated NAR's biggest challenge is the mass mailings. Hiring an outside source to create a database would cost approximately \$35,000. However, NAR is working with students at the Peter Kiewit Foundation on creation of a database at no cost. NAR also gives personal invitations to all area graduating seniors to move back following college graduation.

Mayor Adams questioned whether NAR has made any long-term plans to be a free-standing organization without the use of taxpayer funds.

Mead stated NAR is funded from various sources. Mead hopes the City sees the long-term benefit of contributing funds to NAR.

Mayor Adams stated there is no question about the long-term benefit for the City of Norfolk. However, Adams understood from NARs initial request that the City's commitment would be decreasing over a 3-5 year timeframe. Adams stated taxpayers don't have a "bottomless bucket" and the more successful the Norfolk Area Recruiters becomes, the more self-sufficient it should become.

Councilperson Reeder agrees about the discussion on decreasing the City's contribution to NAR; however, Reeder feels NAR is an "excellent investment."

Jay Knobbe stated NARs expenses continue to increase and "ideas that get results cost money." Knobbe stated NARs "500 Club" commitment is for three years. However, NAR needs to rethink the commitment amount and will probably need to increase the contribution to raise more funds.

Patti Knobbe stated NAR has also applied for BECA grant funding through NENEDD.

Councilperson Reeder stated the Riverwalk representatives did not have enough time to prepare a presentation for this meeting.

Lonn Atwood, on behalf of the Riverwalk project, stated the group is waiting for HDR to complete the master plan for projected costs.

Councilperson Van Dyke moved, seconded by Councilperson Fauss to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 a.m. Roll call: Ayes: Council members Brenneman, Coy, Fauss, Lange, Reeder, Saunders, Van Dyke, Wilson and Mayor Adams. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

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Elizabeth A. Deck  
City Clerk