

## **WORK SESSION**

A work session was held by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Norfolk, Nebraska on Thursday, November 20, 2008 beginning at approximately at 5:44 p.m. in the City Council Chambers Conference Room, 309 West Madison Avenue, Norfolk, Nebraska.

Mayor Gordon D. Adams called the meeting to order.

Roll call found the following members present: Mayor Gordon Adams and Councilpersons Brenneman, Coy, Fauss, Lange, Reeder, Saunders, Van Dyke and Wilson. Absent: None. Also present was Mayor-elect Sue Fuchtmann.

Staff members present were City Administrator Al Roder, Public Works Director Dennis Smith, City Attorney Clint Schukei, City Clerk Beth Deck, Wastewater Plant Superintendent Todd Boling, Personnel Officer Sheila Schukei, Information Systems Manager Jim McKenzie and Property/Operations Manager Gary Miller.

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.

City Administrator Al Roder explained the work session is to review with and provide orientation to elected officials on the various issues.

### Internet and E-mail Policy

Personnel Officer Sheila Schukei and Information Systems Manager Jim McKenzie updated elected officials on Sections 17-40 (Internet & E-mail Policy) and 17-50 (Disposition and Retention of Public Records, E-mail, Correspondence) of the City's Personnel Manual. Section 17-40 adds language regarding unacceptable usage of the Internet. Section 17-50 is new to the Personnel Manual and mirrors the Secretary of State's office policy regarding public records disposition and retention. Electronic messages are subject to the same rules and regulations as any other type of record created, used or received and retained by the City throughout the course of business. Staff has visited with City employees about the proposed changes. Elected officials will formally consider the changes at a future City Council meeting.

City Attorney Clint Schukei stated the State of Nebraska hasn't yet issued a formal rule mandating that municipalities archive electronic messages but that may happen in the future. At this time, each City employee is responsible for electronic message retention and disposition.

### Paperless Agenda Packet

City Administrator Al Roder asked elected officials about a timeline for implementation of a paperless agenda packet. Staff is currently submitting agenda items electronically but the Council receives a hard copy of the packet. Training of elected officials and staff will need to be done prior to the conversion. General consensus of elected officials is to complete training in January 2009 and go paperless in February. Roder stated elected officials will be distributed the paperless agenda packet as well as a hard copy for several meetings once the conversion takes place. Roder

complimented Information Systems staff on writing the software in-house and said the Agenda Management Software works very well and saved the City a lot of money.

### Open Meetings & Public Records Law Review

City Attorney Clint Schukei provided elected officials with an update on the Open Meetings Law. A booklet entitled “Nebraska Open Meetings Act” and distributed by the Nebraska Press Association was handed out to elected officials. Schukei also updated officials on the Public Records Law.

Mayor Adams left the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

### Council Meeting Schedule

Elected officials discussed various issues related to City Council meeting schedule, Finance Committee format/time, the use of subcommittees and work sessions.

Roder suggested holding City Council meetings the 1st and 3rd Mondays of each month and having Finance Committee meetings the 2nd and 4th Mondays monthly each beginning at 5:30 p.m. Roder feels the proposed time will help engage people more in City government and help educate staff on issues. Roder stated that, besides Council meetings, if there isn't something pertinent to discuss a meeting won't be held. Roder stated the goal is to eliminate the demand on the Council's time. Roder is not familiar with subcommittee meetings and feels it is more effective to work with the full Council. Roder prefers meeting in a work session.

Councilperson Lange questioned whether Monday is the correct night for a Council meeting. Lange suggested the Council meet on Tuesday evening which would allow a full 24 hour business day prior to the meeting.

Councilpersons Saunders and Van Dyke prefer a Monday evening Council meeting.

Councilperson Van Dyke feels subcommittee meetings work well when trying to work out a compromise with citizens. Van Dyke feels more discussion at Council meetings may be relevant instead of prior to the meeting.

Councilperson Lange feels subcommittee meetings have been reactive and should be proactive instead. However, Lange isn't ready to eliminate the need for subcommittee meetings since they could be used as a planning tool.

Councilperson Brenneman feels elected officials will have fewer meetings by having work sessions instead of subcommittees meetings.

Roder stated that, in conjunction with meetings, one of the roles of the Council President is to appoint subcommittee members (section 2-17.1.5 of City Code). A brief discussion was held regarding President of the Council duties. Schukei distributed copies of State Statutes Section 16-312 and 16-404. Election of a Council President requires five (5) yea votes and the Mayor may vote when the vote will provide the additional vote required to create a number of votes equal to a majority of the number of members elected to the council.

Roder wanted elected officials to “work through the election of a President as a whole Council” and wanted to set the tone to have agreement and discussion but to handle the election professionally.

Schukei explained City Code amendments may be necessary depending on the decision of elected officials regarding meeting dates and subcommittees.

Roder will place an item on the December 1 City Council agenda for consideration by elected officials to “fill in the blanks” regarding meeting dates and times.

#### Council Retreat and Goal Setting Session

Roder would like to have a Council Retreat in January or February 2009 and would like to hold the event in Dennison, Iowa. Roder needs to schedule a facilitator for the retreat and suggested a 24-hour cycle for the event from noon one day to noon the next day. Roder stated the retreat will focus on City goals and a mission statement.

After a brief discussion, the preliminary dates set were Friday, January 23, and Saturday, January 24, 2009 for the retreat.

#### Communications

Roder stated it is important to staff to keep the Council well informed about various issues and questioned how best to connect with the elected officials. Elected officials replied as follows:

Reeder – work sessions are good or stop in any time  
Fauss – in-person visit the best, phone 2nd choice and e-mail 3rd choice  
Coy – prefer phone and then e-mail correspondence  
Wilson – prefers e-mail and then call the Public Schools  
Brenneman – prefers phone calls  
Lange – no preference, phone call, e-mail or in-person are fine  
Van Dyke – stated e-mail or phone calls are preferred  
Saunders – anything works, no preference

Roder stated the next part of the discussion is how to communicate with City staff to avoid problems. Roder does not want to be the “gatekeeper” and wants to make the Council’s job “painless”. However, calls from angry citizens should be routed through Roder. Roder feels the current system is working but IS staff and the City Administrator will continue working on the Customer Service Software (CSM) to keep communications open.

Councilperson Fauss moved, seconded by Councilperson Van Dyke to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 p.m. Roll call: Ayes: Council members Brenneman, Coy, Fauss, Lange, Reeder, Saunders, Van Dyke, and Wilson. Nays: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

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Sue Fuchtman  
Mayor

ATTEST:

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Elizabeth A. Deck  
City Clerk

( S E A L )