

**WORTHINGTON CITY COUNCIL/NOBLES COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
JOINT MEETING-WORK SESSION, FEBRUARY 10, 2015**

Mayor Mike Kuhle and Commissioner Matt Widboom called the work session to order for their respective Boards at 7:00 p.m. in City Hall Council Chambers with the following members present:

City Council - Diane Graber, Rod Sankey, Scott Nelson, Mike Harmon, Larry Janssen.
County Commissioners - Gene Metz, Don Linssen, Marv Zylstra, Bob Demuth, Jr.

Staff present - City - Brad Chapulis, Director of Community/Economic Development/Interim Administrator; Steve Robinson, Public Works Director; Janice Oberloh, City Clerk.
County - Tom Johnson, Nobles County Administrator; Steve Schneider, Nobles County Engineer.

Others present: Justine Wettschreck, KWOA; Julie Buntjer, Daily Globe.

DISCUSSION

County Aid Streets and Maintenance Within the City - Steve Schneider provided information on turn-back agreements between the state and the County/City including the recent agreement near the old Michael's Steakhouse that resulted from the Highway 60 project, also on the south beltline. He has been visiting with Dwayne Haffield, City Engineer - the agreement has not been looked at for 35-40 years so it is time to look at it again. They will be drafting an agreement to come before the County and the City. Mr. Schneider also provided information on the ditch systems in Worthington, specifically the County 12 Ditch, which is a county ditch, but a large part of city drainage goes into it. There is a legal process that needs to be followed for any improvement to the ditch. Brad Chapulis, Director of Community/Economic Development/Interim Administrator, noted that staff is working on a flood mitigation plan and is seeking preliminary LOMER from FEMA. Mr. Schneider added that, if a watershed is present in the area, the watershed is responsible for the processing any request for improvement.

Possible Annexation Opportunities - A brief discussion was held regarding annexation, with Mayor Kuhle noting two particular areas of potential interest - one south of town and the other on the east side near JBS. County Commissioners noted that it is the townships that lose in annexation. Brad Chapulis, Director of Community/Economic Development/Interim Administrator, said there are two methods of annexation - involuntary or voluntary - and provided an explanation of both. He also noted that if the area is outside of the orderly annexation area the process is more lengthy and complicated. Mayor Kuhle said Worthington wants to be a good neighbor and perhaps we should have some preliminary conversations with the townships.

Tax Forfeitures and/or Board of Equalization Issues - Mayor Kuhle referred to a past Nobles County Board of Equalization decision regarding a major industrial tax payer where the City Board voted to uphold the taxes as proposed, but when appealed, the County granted relief to the company - the City would like to have the County's support on these decisions. The review process was discussed, along with the tax delinquency/forfeiture process. County Administrator Tom Johnson said there have been some recent changes to the three-year delinquency/forfeiture laws, which is a lengthy

process, and moves the delinquency out to the end of the fourth year before the County can act on it. Then it's another six months or so before the County can move to sell the property. There are currently six properties in forfeiture within the city of Worthington, with only one of them considered buildable and that would be of public interest. The County Auditor/Treasurer will provide notice of those properties to the City in April.

Areas of Possible Collaboration - Discussion was held on areas of potential collaboration between the City and Nobles County, including assessing services, County Attorney services, computer systems, and a joint public works building. Steve Schneider said they are constantly working with cities, Worthington included, to share equipment, etc. Discussion also included whether there is an opportunity for collaboration regarding trails. Mr. Schneider said there is currently no agreement in place between the City and the County for trail maintenance. He also noted that collaboration between the City and the County is not new to them.

Library - Commissioner Widboom noted that the County has chosen to step away from any plan to build a new library in the immediate future but have still have identified the lack of space in the current facility, especially in the youth program. Julie Wellnitz, Library Director, has completed an analysis of how to improve the space they have, identifying moving the Historical Society and the Arts Center and reusing the basement for library space. Other improvements to the building would also be made. There is no addition to the facility planned at this time. Commissioner Metz said the short term plan is to move the Art Center out and make room for children's activities. The Art Center and Historical Society are on board with the move but have no money for a different location. Mayor Kuhle said the residents of Worthington want the library located in our community and we have a responsibility to be a partner, but not sure at what level - perhaps looking for funding sources, locations, etc.

Nobles Home Initiative Program - Commissioner Widboom said this program has been a good effort of collaboration and has had quite a bit of success. County Administrator Tom Johnson added that there is a misconception out there that we are losing tax base with the program, that people aren't clear on what taxes are abated, which only includes those on the improvements. We've gone from adding only six or seven units per year to 20 something over the last year. We have increased housing. Everybody in the county is participating - there have been 23 approved county-wide, eight of them in Worthington. He thinks the program has been very successful.

ADJOURNMENT

The motion was made by Council Member Sankey, seconded by Commissioner Widboom and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Janice Oberloh, MCMC
City Clerk