

**Kearney, Nebraska**

**July 10, 2025**

**4:00 p.m.**

A Joint City/County Budget Meeting of the City Council of Kearney, Nebraska and the Buffalo County Board of Commissioners was convened in open and public session at 4:00 p.m. on July 10, 2025, in the in the Niobrara Room, Kearney Public Library, 2020 1st Avenue, Kearney, Nebraska. Present were: Mayor Jonathan Nikkila; Council Members Randy Buschkoetter, Tami James Moore, Kurt Schmidt and Alex Straatmann. Absent: None. County Commissioners present: Chairperson Sherry Morrow, Ivan Klein, Ron Loeffelholz, Timothy Higgins, Dan Lynch, Myron Kouba. Absent: Bill D. Maendele. City Staff present: Peggy Eynetich, City Clerk; Brenda Jensen, City Manager; Michael Tye, City Attorney; Kayla James, Director of Finance; Brian Schultz, Director of Finance; Andy Harter, Director of Public Works; Jason Whalen, Fire Administrator; Scott Hayden, Director of Recreational Services; Eric Hellriegel, Director of Parks; Sarah Sawin, Director of Utilities; Shawna Erbsen, Administrative Services Director; Nate Mollring, I.T. Director; Matthew Williams, Library Director; Christine Walsh, Assistant Library Director; Lauren Brandt, Sportsplex Director; Gabe Kowalek, Police Lieutenant, and Taylor Jaeger, Assistant Director of Finance. County Staff present: Neil Miller, Sheriff; Dan Schleusener, Chief Deputy Sheriff; Shawn Eatherton, County Attorney; Heather Christensen, County Clerk; and Lynn Martin, Board Administrator.

Notice of the meeting was given in advance thereof by publication in the Kearney Hub, the designated method for giving notice, a copy of the proof of publication being attached to these minutes. Advance notice of the meeting was also given to the City Council and a copy of their acknowledgment or receipt of such notice is attached to these minutes. Availability of the Agenda was communicated in the advance notice and in the notice to the Mayor and City Council. All proceedings hereafter shown were taken while the meeting was open to the attendance of the public.

Mayor Nikkila announced that in accordance with Section 84-1412 of the Nebraska Revised Statutes, a current copy of the Open Meetings Act is available for review and is posted in the room.

Ms. James introduced new City of Kearney Director of Finance, Brian Schultz.

Kayla James, Director of Finance, presented the following proposed 2025-2026 budget:

Ms. James stated County payments to the City are from July through June, and City payments to the County are from October to September. Ms. James stated that the County's payment to the City will decrease by approximately \$17,521; the City's payment to the County is estimated to increase by \$157,237.

**Bookmobile/Library**

There is \$130,000 in the Bookmobile account that will eventually be used to purchase the next Bookmobile. The County pays the City \$25,399.75 monthly for the operations of the Bookmobile.

**Cottonmill Park**

Ms. James reviewed the Cottonmill Park Agreement, noting that the City and County split the expenses for Personnel, Operations, and Capital Expenses 50/50. The County's share for Cottonmill Park increased by approximately \$8,000.

**Peterson Senior Activity Center**

There were no notable changes.

**Law Enforcement Center**

The Law Enforcement Center Interlocal Agreement includes the shared services of Records, Data Processing, Evidence, Law Enforcement Building, Communications, and Information Technology. The 2025-2026 Budget for these services is as follows: Records - \$728,618; Data Processing - \$718,951; Evidence - \$353,378; and Building - \$177,226.

**Law Enforcement Center Agreement Addendum No. 1**

Addendum No. 1 adds terms surrounding the shared Impound Lot.

**Law Enforcement Center Agreement Addendum No. 2**

Addendum No. 2 adds terms and cost for the shared use of the LEC West building located at 2222 Avenue A.

Mayor Nikkila questioned whether the generator installed and included in the budget at the current LEC would be reappropriated if a new LEC building were constructed. Brenda Jensen, City Manager, stated that they are working on ensuring the generator is transferred; it is currently intended to run the 911 Center in the event of power issues.

**County Attorney Information Technology Agreement**

There were no notable changes.

**Shooting Range Agreement**

There were no notable changes.

**Communications Financing and System Upgrades Agreement**

This agreement provides for the payment of debt services associated with the cost of the Public Safety Communication System and the system upgrade for purchasing a Motorola trunked radio system that the County purchased.

**Prosecution Agreement**

There were no notable changes.

**Emergency Services Unit and Crisis Negotiation Unit Agreement**

This Agreement outlines the rules and responsibilities of the parties when providing mutual aid and assistance through the activation of the Unit in response to critical law enforcement incidents. There are no costs associated with this Agreement.

**SCALES Agreement**

This Agreement pertains to cooperative law enforcement services encompassing the South-Central Area Law Enforcement Services. There are no costs associated with this Agreement.

**Kearney Area Animal Shelter**

The City and County contributions increase by 3% annually; the Agreement pertains to assistance with the care and custody of animals.

**Emergency Management Agreement**

There were no notable changes.

**Vehicle Gasoline Purchase Agreement**

There were no notable changes.

**Kearney Area Solid Waste Agency**

There were no notable changes.

**Airport Road Re-Location Financing Agreement**

The bond payments for the relocation of Airport Road will be completed in Fiscal Year 2028.

A brief discussion was held regarding the safety of the intersection at 56th Street and Antelope Avenue. Council Members and County Commissioners noted the uniqueness of the continued partnership between the City and County and how other communities and counties in Nebraska are amazed by the ongoing relationship. Mayor Nikkila noted Trevor Lee's work regarding the upcoming layoffs at Eatons and noted how everyone is working together to assist the employees affected by this layoff.

Moved by Straatmann seconded by Schmidt to accept the proposed 2025-2026 budget as presented. Roll call resulted as follows: Aye: Nikkila, Moore, Schmidt, Straatmann, Buschkoetter, Morrow, Higgins, Klein, Kouba, Loeffelholz, Lynch. Nay: None. Absent: Maendele. Motion carried.

**ADJOURN**

Moved by Buschkoetter seconded by Higgins that the meeting adjourn at 4:44 p.m. Roll

call resulted as follows: Aye: Nikkila, Schmidt, Straatmann, Buschkoetter, Moore, Morrow, Klein, Kouba, Loeffelholz, Lynch, Higgins. Nay: None. Absent: Maendele. Motion carried.

**ATTEST:**

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**JONATHAN NIKKILA  
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL  
AND EX-OFFICIO MAYOR**

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**PEGGY EYNETICH  
CITY CLERK**