



Here We Grow

City of Fremont Update

Date: September 10, 2021

To: City Employees/ City Boards/ Mayor & City Council

Budget Hearing, Appropriation Bill, and State Budget Form

Tuesday evening the City Council held a budget hearing on the proposed 2021/2022 – 2022/2023 biennial budget. Under LB 148, approved by the Legislature and signed by Governor Ricketts earlier this year, the budget hearing must be held separately from a regularly scheduled meeting, so members of the public can speak about the budget.

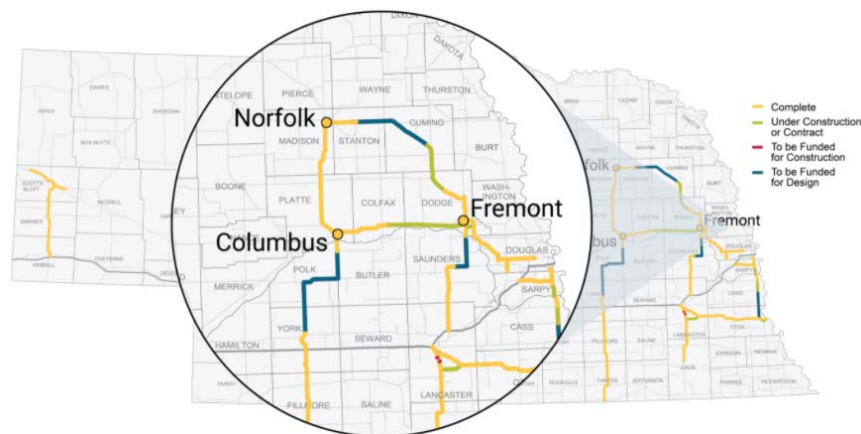
The appropriations bill, or Ordinance 5585, was heard for a second reading this week. The bill sets base property tax request at \$5,827,509.38 for both 2022 and 2023. It also sets the property tax request for debt service at \$515,116.90 for both years too. Total property tax request is then \$6,342,626.28 or a levy of .299410; which is the same levy that is used today. The third and final reading of the appropriations bill will be held next week.

The state budget form is a compilation of all City balances, receipts, and transfers at the end of each fiscal year or September 30th. This is the only time where all the numbers are reported on a cash basis. Otherwise, the utility funds (or what the state calls enterprise funds) are accounted for and reported throughout the year on an accrual basis rather than on a cash basis. On a cash basis, the total receipts available to the City are projected to be \$232,783,033 in 2022 and \$202,536,221 in 2023. Also, on a cash basis, the total disbursements and transfers are budgeted to be \$175,376,224 and \$190,356,167 in 2022 and 2023, respectively.

According to State Auditor, Charlie Janssen, all political subdivisions that ask for property taxes or receive State Aid, are required to complete and file the state file budget form with the Auditor's office on or before September 20th.

Governor Talks Expressways

Governor Ricketts was in Fremont last week to talk about expressways across the state and specifically, expressways in eastern Nebraska. The map on the right shows the status of the expressways in eastern Nebraska.



The expressways were established in 1988 and include 16 corridors and nearly 600 miles of highways. Since 1988, 70% of the expressways have been completed and remaining portions of expressways will cost Nebraska \$1 billion to complete. Portions of Highway 30 (Fremont to Columbus), Highway 275 (Scribner to West Point), and the Fremont SE Beltway are under construction now. Other portions of the expressway, West Point to Pilger, Wahoo to Fremont, and York to Columbus are being funded for design and environmental review.

There is no job so important and no service so urgent that we cannot take the time to do the work safely!

The two means of financing the expressway system are the Transportation Innovation Act (TIA) and the Build Nebraska Act (BNA), approved by the legislature in 2016 and 2011, respectively. The TIA dedicates 2 cents of the fuel tax and the BNA dedicates ¼ of 1% of sales tax receipts to major highway projects across the state. The TIA has generated \$159 million and the BNA has generated \$537 million to date for highway projects. Both acts are slated to sunset in 2033.

Here is a link to the expressways information on the Nebraska Department of Transportation's website: <https://dot.nebraska.gov/projects/tia/cap-improve/expressway-system/>

Lon D. Wright Unit #6 Unscheduled Outage

Unit #6, the oldest and smallest generating unit at the Lon D. Wright Power Plant, was taken offline on August 22, after plant operators noticed some irregularities in how the unit was operating. Specifically, the operators saw the steam pressure go up and down much more frequently than what it should normally be. So, after letting the bunker run out of coal, the unit was taken offline to figure out the cause of the problem.

The picture on the right is the front standard and control valves for Unit #6, which has been partially disassembled in an attempt to locate a problem, possibly in the control valves. City staff has also reached out to an expert who specializes in troubleshooting 1958 vintage coal plants. Unfortunately, unless we can spot a visibly obvious problem, the plant will have to be restarted and operated temporarily on natural gas so the problem can be diagnosed.



The tentative plan is to restart the plant this week, figure out what is causing the problem, and shut it down to make the repairs. Unit #6 will be needed next month when Unit #8 is taken offline for a scheduled outage for repair work.

News in Numbers

49,329,815: The number of people who retired as of July 2021 since the beginning of the pandemic, 2 million more than projected.

1.5 years: The decrease in U.S. life expectancy during 2020. Most experts hold the coronavirus pandemic mostly responsible for the decrease, but many are still concerned about the drop.

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