

City council one vote short of overriding veto

■ **Community Health**
Endowment measure will be
reconsidered next week.

By **JOSH KNAUB**
Staff writer

The City Council failed to override a mayoral veto Monday but will reconsider the issue next week.

The council voted 4-3, one vote short of the five votes needed, to override Mayor Don Wesely's veto of a measure that would have extended the term of all members of the Community Health Endowment by one year.

The council then voted 4-3 to reconsider the

motion next week, meaning it will hold a public hearing and be able to amend the ordinance before another vote is taken.

The Community Health Endowment was formed in 1998 to invest the interest earned from the sale of Lincoln General Hospital in community health projects and organizations.

According to a press release from Wesely's office, the board currently holds \$41 million in assets. Of that, \$1.2 million is available for distribution this year.

The Endowment board has not made any grants or donations to date.

In a telephone interview Monday, Wesely said he vetoed the measure because a blanket extension is "bad policy."

Wesely said each opening should be reviewed individually.

The mayor said the board has done nothing so far.

"That's why I'm not sure they should have another chance," he said.

Councilman Jon Camp, reached at his home, said the mayor was "politicizing the issue."

Camp said even if the council's measure was enacted, the mayor would be able to appoint a whole new board during his term.

"I believe firmly in an extension for the board," Camp said.

He said it was unrealistic to expect the board to complete the "monstrous task" of organizing and completing its first round of donations in one year.

Camp also said the board had faced an "adversarial process" because the administration had placed roadblocks in its way.

Giving the board additional time would be a

way to show its volunteer members they are appreciated, Camp said.

"It's like a tax extension," he said. "If you don't have the information in time, you can't file."

Wesely said he had offered amendments to the council, including a one-year extension for the four members whose terms expire at the end of August.

"I've tried to compromise," Wesely said.

Both Camp and Wesely said some sort of compromise would have to be made soon.

"This needs to work somehow," Camp said.

Wesely said it was time to "put the issue behind us."

"I hope this is an aberration, not a trend," Wesely said.

He said his office and the council generally had a good working relationship, pointing to the recent unanimous budget agreement.

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