

Norman Board of Parks Commissioners
December 5, 2024

The Norman Board of Parks Commissioners of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in a Regular Session in the Executive Conference Room of the Norman Municipal Building, on the 5th day of December 2024 at 5:30 p.m., and notice of the agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray and on the City website at least 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Sheriff and Commissioners Isacksen, Ross, Sallee, and Usry

Absent: Commissioners Davison and Wright and Two Vacancies

City Officials

Present: Shannon Stevenson, Assistant City Manager
Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation
James Briggs, Park Development Manager
Bethany Grissom, Park Planner
Mitchell Richardson, Recreation Manager
Karla Sitton, Administrative Technician IV

ITEM 1, being:

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDED AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF MINUTES FROM THE JUNE 6, 2024, PARK BOARD REGULAR MEETING AND MINUTES FROM AUGUST 6, 2024, PARK BOARD SPECIAL MEETING

Commissioner Isacksen made the motion, and Commissioner Sallee seconded to approve the Regular Park Board minutes of June 6, 2024, and the Special Park Board minutes of August 6, 2024. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chair Sheriff and Commissioners Isacksen, Ross, Sallee, and Usry

NAY: None

ITEM 2, being:

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDED AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF PREVIOUSLY APPROVED COUNCIL ACTIONS

Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, highlighted the previously approved Council actions pertaining to the Parks and Recreation Department as follows:

- Contract K-1920-133 with Crossland Construction Co., Inc., for the Norman Forward Senior Wellness Project and Final Acceptance and Payment.
- Contract K-2122-81 with Crossland Construction Co., Inc., for Griffin Park Phase VI of the Griffin Park Remodel Project and Final Acceptance and Payment. The Municipal Complex Renovation Project and Final Acceptance and Payment.
- Contract K-2425-49, with Center for Children and Families, Inc., in the amount of \$150,000 for use in the Boys and Girls Club of Norman.
- Resolution R-2425-41 Transferring \$70,000 from the Facilities Assessment Project to the City Hall Executive Conference Room Update Project within the Capital Fund.
- Contract K-2021-97 with GE Johnson Construction for the NF YFAC Project
- Contract K-2425-60 with Musco Lighting in the amount of \$145,000 for the YFAC Outdoor Sports Court Lighting System

- Resolution R-2425-42 Transferring \$15,000 from the CIP for the Library Battery Replacement to the AWE ADA Door Project.
 - Resolution R-2425-54 Appropriating General Funds for payments relating to Contract K-2223-56
 - Resolution R-2425-53 Directing Staff to terminate Contract K-2223-56, a Service and Lease Agreement with Food and Shelter Inc. for the operation of an Emergency Overnight Shelter
 - RFP-2425-18 and Contract K-2425-48 with Unlimited Treasures in the amount of \$3,564.00 per month to provide custodial services for the AWE
 - RFP-2425-17 and Contract K-2425-49 with Anago OKC in the amount of \$3,142.30 per month to provide custodial services for the 12th Avenue, Irving & Whittier Recreation Centers, and the Little Axe Community Center.
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Chair Sheriff requested to go to Item 4, since a Norman Youth Soccer Association representative was not present.

ITEM 4, being:

ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE NORMAN ARTS COUNCIL

Ms. Leslie Nottingham, Executive Director of the Norman Arts Council (NAC), gave an annual presentation to the Board, and financial information was provided prior to the meeting. She highlighted the completed and future Norman Forward Art Projects, stating that the public art for NF Projects is made possible through the Norman Forward 1% for Art Program. Ms. Nottingham highlighted and showed pictures depicting Norman Forward art projects installed since NAC's last annual report (October 2023) to the Park Board.

- *Home Run Mechan* was installed at Reaves Park and dedicated on December 5, 2023
- *Elevate the Game* was installed at the Young Family Athletic Facility (YFAC) and dedicated on February 19, 2024
- *Windrose* was installed at Griffin Park and dedicated on July 12, 2024
- *Revolutions* were installed at James Garner Avenue, just north of Robinson Street, and dedicated on August 22, 2024, during a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the completion of the James Garner Avenue Phase II Project

She said NAC and the Norman Public Art Committee (PAC) announced the 2024 Mural Incentive Program, which is intended to enhance the cultural landscape of Norman by providing matching funds, up to \$10,000, to property owners who wish to invest in a mural. She said NAC will be receiving applications soon, and an artist will be selected in the Spring of 2025 for the Griffin Park Silos Mural Project. She said the art piece *Emergence* is currently being installed at the Adult Wellness and Education Center (AWE), and an art dedication is scheduled for December 13, 2024. Ms. Nottingham said several Artist Designed Bike Racks throughout Norman are nearly finished being power-coated and will be reinstalled soon.

Ms. Nottingham said the City Council approved a new contract in July with NAC, which includes the administration of the Hotel Motel Tax Funds for Arts, Public Arts, and Norman Forward 1% for Art Projects. Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, said the Hotel/Motel Tax for Arts is 25%. Ms. Nottingham highlighted the FY24/25 Budget and anticipated expenses. She said she can provide more financial information to the Board if necessary.

The Board acknowledged the report.

The Board returned to Item 3.

ITEM 3, being:

ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE NORMAN YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION

Mr. Mark Hyde, Board President of the Norman Youth Soccer Association (NYSA), gave an annual presentation to the Board. A written report, including financial information, was provided to the Board before the meeting.

Mr. Hyde said NYSA had 3,112 participants in the Spring 2024 league and 2,849 in the Fall 2024 league. He said NYSA offers three youth soccer leagues for ages 3 to 18, including Recreational, Academy, and Competitive. The leagues expect to consist of 300 teams playing approximately 2,600 games in the Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 leagues. Mr. Hyde highlighted the fees, camps, and tournament fees. Chair Sheriff asked how many kids are in the TOPS program, and Mr. Hyde said he did not have that information but would provide it to them.

Commissioner Isacksen asked whether the revenue increase was due to the NF Griffin Park Project and field expansions. Mr. Hyde said no, from sponsorships and the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) COVID money. He said NYSA had been restructured, an audit had been recently completed, and that there was a reserve fund for the first time. Chair Sheriff asked if a maximum balance can be kept in reserve, and Mr. Steve Gillis said it is nice to have a large reserve but to have the money earmarked for specific projects. Commissioner Isacksen asked about the Other Assets (1999 Suspense), stating it increased from \$32,209.06 in 2023 to \$216,849.02 in 2024, and Mr. Hyde said he did not have the information but would provide it to the Board. Mr. Hyde said the Celtic Store is a big fundraiser for the program; all the money goes into one general fund. Chair Sheriff felt the monies for Recreation and Competition leagues should be kept separate, and Mr. Hyde said he could look into separating the funds.

Mr. Hyde said the new field expansion has been wonderful for the soccer program, and he has received great feedback from the community. He said if a future Norman Forward 2 is proposed and voter-approved, he felt some funding could be earmarked for field maintenance and lighting.

The Board acknowledged the presentation.

ITEM 5 being:

ANNUAL PRESENTATION FROM NORMAN SPORTS COMMISSION

Mr. Trent Brown, Director of Norman Sports Commission (NSC), said the NSC was formed in May 2023, following Norman voter's approval of increasing the hotel and motel tax from 5% to 8%. With proof of residency, Norman residents do not pay the guest tax, which means the NSC is funded only through visitors' dollars. Mr. Brown said 75% of the increase goes toward the stand-alone commission and 25% towards improvements to Norman sports facilities.

Mr. Brown said the NSC's mission is to build on Norman's athletic tradition by producing and attracting events in our city to strengthen community bonds, promote health, and drive economic growth through sports and recreation. He said Norman's updated and new facilities (Griffin Park Soccer Complex, Reaves Park Ballfields, and the Young Family Athletic Facility (YFAC), will have made Norman a more attractive place for sports tournaments, making it easier for the NSC to book events which holds excellent potential for economic impact. Mr. Brown said during FY24, NSC's inaugural year, NSC booked over 20,000 hotel room nights. He said 63.6% of the FY25 goal (25,000) has already been met, so NSC is on track to exceed our goal. Mr. Brown highlighted the FY24 events and provided the economic impact (business sales, local taxes, jobs supported & estimated room demand) for the following events: March 2024 OSC Celtic Cup, May 2024 Adidas 3SSB Girls Circuit, May 2024 Perfect Game Softball-OKC Challenge and August 2024

MAYB Nationals. He said several events have been scheduled for 2025, including The Fury Run on March 1st and Maverick Criterium Bike Race from May 31st to June 1st.

Mr. Brown said the FY25 Budget is \$975,056 and highlighted earmarks for venue enhancement (\$150,000), sponsorship bid fees (125,000), and locally created events (\$50,000). Commissioner Isacksen asked about the economic impact, specifically sales for hotels, etc., and Mr. Brown said he could break down the information and get it to the Board. Commissioner Isacksen requested NSC submit financials but understood they likely did not know to do so since this is their first annual presentation to the Board.

The Board acknowledged the report.

ITEM 6 being:

ANNUAL PRESENTATION FROM WESTWOOD FAMILY AQUATIC CENTER

Mr. Josh Holman, Aquatic Manager, presented the Westwood Family Aquatic Center (WWFAC) annual report. He said the attendance for the 2024 season (May 24, 2024, through September 27, 2024) was as follows: 100,220 Open Swim; 2,150 Swim Lessons; 7,068 Season Passes; 2,566 Scholarships; 3,150 Special Events and 4,466 Rentals for a total season attendance of 124,102, just a little down from last year's 130,624.

Mr. Holman said the 2024 WWFAC revenue was \$1,204,945.24, up slightly from 1,022,583.08 in 2023. He said the revenue includes pool passes, swim lessons, gate admission, concession sales, special events, lockers, rentals, classes, and merchandise. Mr. Holman said the total expenditures were \$891,349.44 for a net revenue of \$313,550.80 for the 2024 season.

Mr. Holman said the City hired over 164 employees for the 2024 WWFAC season. He said WWFAC has a fantastic team and an amazing retention rate, with 95 employees returning for the 2024 season. Mr. Holman said that Westwood recruits new staff every year and that the Jr. Lifeguard Program and Teen Aquatic Safety Program (TASP) contribute to the recruiting efforts. He said there were 88 Jr. Lifeguards, and the TASP program was created to teach teens 13 to 15 years old proper water safety, which allows teens to be at the waterpark safely without a parent/adult. Mr. Holman said WWFAC offers several events for families and adults, including Water Fitness (2,880), Lifeguard Training (100+, with 68 being from other organizations), and the World's Largest Swim Lesson.

Mr. Holman said future WWFAC projects that could be funded through a capital project and/or bond project include installing Private Cabanas, a Drop Slide, an Epic Surf Simulator, and/or a Flow Rider. He said the cabanas could accommodate half-day or whole-day rentals, and the Return on Investment (ROI) would be about two seasons. For the Epic Surf Simulator and Flow Rider, the ROI would be 6 to 10 years; however, these attractions would boost the city's income and the attendance rates of the parks, i.e., birthday parties, private lessons, special events, Surf season passes and Surf merchandise.

The Board acknowledged the report.

ITEM 7 being:

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDED AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF THE REQUEST FROM KRISTEN BYERS TO INSTALL A "LITTLE LIBRARY" IN RUBY GRANT PARK

Ms. Bethany Grissom, Park Planner, said in December 2023, the Board recommended the Parks and Recreation Department begin requiring citizens and local groups to submit applications for requests and/or proposed projects to be installed in City parks. In October 2024, Ms. Kristen Byers approached the Parks and Recreation Department with a project application to install a *"Little Library"* in Ruby Grant Park.

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Ms. Byers said the purpose of the *"Little Library"* is to provide a location for people to exchange books freely. She said *"Little Library" locations exist in other parks, including Rotary Park, Oakhurst Park, and Lions Park.* She said she has purchased and will maintain the library box, maintain and stock inventory as needed, and post on the Little Free Library's website – littlefreelibrary.org. She showed a picture depicting the dimensions of the *"Little Library."* She said the installation would consist of a wooden box with an operable door on a wooden post installed in the ground with a metal bracket. Ms. Byers said Park staff will assist with determining the park's location for placement and installation to ensure it meets departmental standards.

The Board loved the proposed project and thanked Ms. Byers for bringing the project forward. Staff recommend that the Park Board recommend the Director of Parks and Recreation approve the *"Little Library"* Project in Ruby Grant Park.

Commissioner Sallee motioned, and Commissioner Usry recommended the Director of Parks and Recreation approve the *"Little Library"* Project in Ruby Grant Park. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chair Sheriff and Commissioners Isacksen, Ross, Sallee, and Usry

NAY: None

ITEM 8 being:

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDED AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF THE APPOINTMENT OF NORMAN RESIDENTS TO THE URBAN FORESTRY MASTER PLAN (UFMP) STEERING COMMITTEE

Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, said an Urban Forest Master Plan (UFMP) is a document to guide a municipality in making wise choices regarding its urban forest's ongoing care and growth. He said the FYE 2024-25 budget included funding for a project proposed by the Parks & Recreation Department, Forestry Division, to hire a professional consultant to help develop a UFMP for the City of Norman. Mr. Olsen said staff advertised those services in the summer of 2024 and selected Davey Resource Group (Davey) to create our UFMP.

Mr. Olsen said as part of the UFMP process, Davey assembled a steering committee of Norman residents to help inform them about the concerns and priorities regarding our urban forest. He said the steering committee will meet four times over the next six months and address predetermined topics in a conversation moderated by Davey. Mr. Olsen said that Davey will do most of the work needed to produce a successful UFMP; however, the steering committee will be essential. He said staff reached out to various residents and described their duties and responsibilities to them. Mr. Olsen said the final list includes one Tree Board, Park Board, and Environmental Control Advisory Board (ECAB) member and two at-large members who have previously served on other boards and/or commissions.

Staff recommends the Park Board approve the following Norman residents to be on the UFMP Steering Committee: Kristi Isacksen, Park Board; Will Spain, Tree Board; Deb Cretsinger, ECAB; Richard McKown, recommended by the Director of the Parks & Recreation Department and Michelle Corr, recommended by the Park Development Division.

Commissioner Usry motioned, and Commissioner Ross approved the recommendation that Norman residents be on the UFMP Steering Committee. The vote was taken with the following results:

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YEAH: Chair Sheriff and Commissioners Isacksen, Ross, Sallee, and Usry

NAY: None

ITEM 9 being:

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDED AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF THE APPOINTMENT OF THE NEW PLAYGROUND DESIGN FOR WILLIAM MORGAN PARK

Ms. Bethany Grissom, Park Planner, said on September 21st and 28th, 2024, staff advertised a Request for Proposal (RFP) 2425-22 in the *Norman Transcript* for the William Morgan Park Playground Project. She said RFPs were distributed directly to ten playground equipment vendors, five of whom responded with complete proposals. Ms. Grissom said all bidders were asked to maximize the \$230,000 playground budget and design a playground with boulders of various heights so climbers of all ages and skill levels could be accommodated. She said staff evaluated the playground proposals and determined that Happy Playgrounds LLC best met the design requirements and had the most incredible variety of equipment.

Ms. Grissom distributed pictures of the playground design submitted by Happy Playgrounds LLC, reflecting the new shade structure and various boulder(s) placed in the playground area. She said the proposed design kept the current playground footprint and swing set, as it was still in excellent shape. Ms. Grissom highlighted the bid tabulations and said staff recommends the Board recommend the Director of Parks and Recreation submit a contract to the City Council for consideration to award the William Morgan Park Playground Project to Happy Playgrounds LLC for \$227,004.00.

Commissioner Isacksen motioned, and Commissioner Ross seconded, to recommend the Director of Parks and Recreation submit a contract to the City Council for consideration to award the William Morgan Park Playground Project to Happy Playgrounds LLC for \$227,004.00. The vote was taken with the following results:

YEAH: Chair Sheriff and Commissioners Isacksen, Ross, Sallee, and Usry

NAY: None

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, said a grand re-opening was held at Sunrise Park on October 4th to celebrate the park's renovation, including a new playground, improved and expanded walkways, and fence work. He said an art dedication is scheduled on December 13th at the Adult Wellness and Education (AWE) Center. The \$100,000 public art sculpture is a dichroic glass flower and butterfly created by Skunk Control of Australia and was made possible by the Norman Forward quality of life initiative. Mr. Olsen said the AIM Parks Sub-Committee is meeting on December 10 to review the proposed Park and Recreation Master Plan. RDG will continue to refine the master plan, and the next steps include presenting the proposed master plan at public meetings to gather public input, presenting the proposal at January 7, 2025, Study Session, and presenting at the April 3, 2025 Park Board meeting for approval and recommendation to Council. The proposed plan will be an agenda item on the May 20, 2025, Council meeting for Council consideration of final adoption.

Mr. James Briggs, Park Development Manager, said Multisports LLC is finishing their works to construct a new 6-court outdoor pickleball facility on the east side of the Young Family Athletic Center (YFAC). He said crews from Musco Sports Lighting were also on-site to set pole bases and run wiring for the new lights

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for the pickleball courts and the new sand volleyball and existing turf practice field at YFAC. The next Norman Forward Neighborhood Park renovations will be for NE Lions, Kiwanis, and Springbrook Parks, and once the process and proposed designs are complete, staff will present them to the Board for approval. Mr. Briggs said the staff selected Choleta as the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) contractor, and meetings with various stakeholders will begin soon. A CWPP not only exists as a document the city can use to plan for how to respond to wildfires, but it also is a key component used when applying for larger grants and funding that can be used to implement the recommended mitigation strategies that the plan includes that will reduce the likelihood and severity of wildfires.

Mr. Mitchell Richardson, Recreation Manager, said the Winterfest on Main is scheduled on December 7th, at approximately 7 pm, and after the Norman Holiday Parade, which will start at 6 pm and end at James Garner Avenue. He said this year, we are starting a new tradition to include the annual tree lighting in front of the railroad tracks, and there will be several food trucks, a chance to meet Santa, read stories with the Grinch, make crafts, enjoy performances, and watch a drone show at the end of the night. Mr. Richardson said the Trae Young Family Foundation and Prime Time Transportation will host a bike giveaway on December 8th at the YFAC. The event will give away 500 bikes to children in the area at no cost and will be structured as a drive-thru pickup. Mr. Richardson said the Ugly Sweater 5K and Fun Run is scheduled at Legacy Park on Saturday, December 14th. He said an Ugly Sweater contest will be held after the run, and participants can enjoy music and hot chocolate. Mr. Richardson said Westwood Family Athletic Facility (WWFAC) season passes and Daddy Daughter Dance (DDD) tickets can be purchased online. He said many people take advantage of the reduced prices and also give them as Christmas presents. Mr. Richardson said the DDD will be held at the YFAC instead of Embassy Suites this year.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Sheriff adjourned the meeting at 7:34 p.m.

Passed and approved this _____ of _____ 2025

Sherrel Sheriff, Chair