



Tuesday, October 28, 2025, at 5:30 PM

MINUTES

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in Conference in the Executive Conference Room of the Norman Municipal Building on the 28th day of October, 2025, at 5:30 p.m., and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray Street 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Holman called the Meeting to Order at 5:30 p.m.

PRESENT

Mayor Stephen T. Holman
Councilmember Ward 1 David Gandesbery
Councilmember Ward 2 Matthew Peacock
Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant
Councilmember Ward 5 Brandon Nofire
Councilmember Ward 6 Joshua Hinkle
Councilmember Ward 7 Kimberly Blodgett
Councilmember Ward 8 Scott Dixon

ABSENT

Ward 3 seat currently vacant

AGENDA ITEMS

1. DISCUSSION REGARDING POTENTIAL CHARTER AMENDMENTS.

Ms. Kathryn Walker, Assistant City Attorney, provided an overview of potential Charter amendments, noting three areas of focus identified during the recent Council retreat:

- Stipends for Elected Officials
- Adjustment to Term Start Dates
- City Auditor Qualifications

Elected Official Compensation

The previous proposal presented to voters in 2022 established an annual stipend of \$8,100 for the Mayor and \$5,400 for Councilmembers, with a five-member Compensation Committee to review adjustments every three years. The committee would base recommendations on factors such as the Consumer Price Index, City budget, and other relevant indicators.

Ms. Walker emphasized that while the measure failed previously, it is unclear which specific provision voters opposed. Council discussed whether monthly pay rates should be shown on the ballot to avoid confusion between annual and monthly figures.

Comparisons of nearby cities indicated:

- *Edmond* doubled mayor and council pay in 2021.
- *Lawton* increased compensation in July 2025 to \$1,666/month for Councilmembers and \$20,000/year for Mayor.
- *Moore* voters recently approved pay increases to \$300/month for Councilmembers and \$500/month for Mayor.

It was noted that Norman has not raised compensation since 1981, and public awareness of the low current stipend remains limited.

Term Start Dates

The proposed amendment would move the swearing-in date for newly elected officials to the first Tuesday following the runoff election, ensuring consistent start times for all offices. The adjustment would take effect beginning with even-numbered wards in 2028, odd-numbered wards in 2029, and the Mayor in 2031, to preserve the full terms of current officials.

Council expressed interest in maintaining fairness and consistency while acknowledging the extended timeline required for implementation.

City Auditor Qualifications

Proposed language expands eligibility to include candidates holding Certified Internal Auditor (CIA), Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE), or equivalent certifications in addition to Certified Public Accountant (CPA) credentials. This change provides greater flexibility in hiring and acknowledges a range of professional qualifications relevant to auditing functions.

Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Policy

Council discussed adding charter or policy language regarding TIF approval thresholds and public participation. Suggestions included requiring either a supermajority Council vote, or a public vote for TIF approval.

Ms. Walker advised that state law limits elections to those specifically authorized under statute; however, Council could establish local policy or ordinance procedures to enhance transparency and community input.

Alternative approaches were discussed, i.e., forming a citizen advisory committee during project initiation, conducting public surveys or informal advisory votes post-Statutory Review Committee approval.

Councilmembers emphasized the importance of citizen engagement, equity in economic benefits, and transparency in development decisions.

Implementation and Timing

Council discussed aligning any new compensation changes with future terms to avoid perceptions of self-approval of raises. Consideration was given to implementing approved amendments in the FY 2027 budget cycle (effective July 1, 2027) to allow for planning and public communication.

Ms. Walker reminded Council that Attorney General and Governor approval of Charter amendments can take several months to nearly a year following voter approval.

Council agreed not to reconvene the Charter Review Commission, as most proposed amendments were recently reviewed during the 2022 process. Future full-charter reviews may be considered but are not required for the current set of proposed changes.

Council discussed potential election dates for the proposed charter amendments. February 2026 would require immediate action, allowing limited time for public education. April 2026 would allow for more thorough outreach and alignment with the Street Maintenance Bond election, creating a citywide ballot opportunity.

Council favored scheduling the Charter amendment election for April 2026 to allow sufficient preparation and coordination.

Next steps for Staff include:

- Draft amendment language (compensation, start dates, auditor qualifications, and any TIF-process policy proposals suited for ordinance).
- Prepare comparative pay data (including Tulsa/Broken Arrow) and suggested monthly figures for ballot text.
- Plan public education materials.

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2. DISCUSSION REGARDING STREET MAINTENANCE BOND ELECTION IN SPRING 2026.

Mr. Scott Sturtz, Director of Public Works, introduced the discussion, noting that the City's Street Maintenance Bond Program, originally launched in 2005, has successfully completed four five-year cycles and is now preparing for its fifth renewal, covering 2026 through 2031. He emphasized that this bond program focuses on maintaining existing roadways, rather than building new ones. Its primary purpose is to improve local, neighborhood, and rural roads that often fall outside of larger capital projects.

Mr. Sturtz said the program is based on the Pavement Condition Index (PCI), a data-driven measure used to prioritize roadway maintenance. Each year, approximately 20% of Norman's 800 miles of roadways are evaluated, resulting in a complete assessment of all city streets every five years. Since inception, Norman's overall PCI has improved from the mid-60s to approximately 77, which is well above the national average of 60–65.

Mr. Sturtz said the initial 2005–2009 bond was approved by 53% of voters; subsequent renewals in 2010, 2016, and 2021 passed with increasingly strong support, reaching 67% approval in 2021. He said the City has completed all street segments promised in each prior bond cycle. He noted that the success of this program has been recognized regionally, with other Oklahoma cities, such as Edmond and Oklahoma City, modeling similar maintenance bond initiatives after Norman's.

Mr. Sturtz outlined that each program cycle ensures equitable investment across all city wards, using a category-based distribution approach:

Category	Approximate Funding Allocation
Urban Asphalt Rehabilitation and Maintenance	25%
Urban Concrete Rehabilitation and Maintenance	25%
Rural Road Rehabilitation and Maintenance	15%
Urban Reconstruction	20%
Preventative Maintenance	15%

Preventative maintenance efforts, such as crack sealing and surface sealing, have been particularly effective in extending pavement lifespan and preventing costly reconstruction. Each bond program includes a specific list of streets, which Council may amend as needed. Staff conducts on-site verification to confirm project suitability and coordinate with water, sewer, stormwater, and ADA improvement projects to maximize efficiency.

Mr. Sturtz estimated funding for the 2026–2031 Program at \$35 million. He said no tax increase is proposed, continuation of the existing ad valorem rate. The increase in total funding reflects growth in property valuations rather than any millage change.

Mr. Joe Hill, Street Program Manager, noted that the proposed program covers approximately 180 lane miles of roadway improvements, including both reconstruction and maintenance. The backlog of streets requiring full reconstruction is only 2.2% of total road miles—well below the typical 10–12% seen in cities of comparable size. He said the City typically issues five to six construction contracts per year, encompassing 15–25 projects across various pavement types and wards.

Mr. Hill presented a citywide map illustrating proposed projects, with color-coded categories for easy reference. The map, developed in collaboration with the GIS and Planning Division, will be made available through an interactive online portal, allowing residents to view project locations, Ward number, the type of work, and anticipated construction year. Preventative maintenance projects have been clustered by neighborhood to increase efficiency and minimize disruption.

Councilmember Peacock confirmed that no proposed projects involve roadway widening, emphasizing that the bond is maintenance-only. Councilmember Nofire inquired about the number of reconstruction projects, noting the increased cost and concentration in older neighborhoods. Staff explained that reconstruction projects are strategically distributed citywide to address the most deteriorated roads while maintaining overall equity.

Item 2, continued

Councilmembers and Staff discussed coordination with neighborhood development and the City's long-term maintenance obligations as new infrastructure is accepted into the system.

Several Councilmembers commended staff for maintaining high pavement condition standards relative to peer cities and noted Norman's leadership example for other Oklahoma municipalities.

Staff reviewed the timeline required for placing the bond renewal on a ballot. A February 2026 election would require Council action by November 2025, allowing limited time for public education. An April 2026 election would allow additional time for community outreach, ward meetings, and informational presentations to civic groups.

Council supported April 2026 as the preferred election date to coincide with the proposed Charter Amendments election, allowing both measures to appear on the same ballot. Staff confirmed that the bond must be renewed by May 2026 to prevent any lapse in authorization and preserve the existing property tax rate.

Mr. Sturtz indicated staff would conduct extensive public engagement before the election, including presentations to Rotary Clubs, PTAs, ward meetings, and community groups.

Council discussed the importance of clear communication emphasizing the program's 20-year track record of success; its focus on maintenance, not expansion; the absence of a tax increase; and the data-driven selection process ensuring citywide equity.

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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

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ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor