



**CITY OF NORMAN, OK**  
**PUBLIC SAFETY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING**  
Development Center, Room B, 225 N. Webster Ave., Norman, OK 73069  
Thursday, June 13, 2024 at 4:00 PM

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## MINUTES

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### ROLL CALL

#### PRESENT

Chairman Linda Price  
Committee Member Kenny Orr  
Committee Member Kyle Hurley  
Committee Member Mark Emerson  
Committee Member Russell Rice  
Committee Member Ann Gallagher

#### ABSENT

Committee Member Lea Greenleaf  
Committee Member Greg Gilkey

#### OTHERS

Kim Coffman, Budget Manager  
Major Brent Barbour, NPD  
Russell Anderson, Comm. Systems Manager  
Dannielle Risenhoover, Administrative Tech. IV  
Jacob Huckabaa, Budget Technician  
Bill Scanlon, Citizen  
Major Chad Vincent, NPD  
David Grizzle, NFD  
Rick Knighton, Assistant City Attorney  
Shawn Hawkins, NPD  
Joshua Hinkle, Council Member Elect

Chair Price called the meeting to order at approximately 4:00 PM. She welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## **MINUTES**

### **1. CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDMENT AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF MINUTES FROM MAY 9, 2024**

Member Rice moved to approve the May 9, 2024 Public Safety Oversight Committee minutes which were duly seconded by Member Gallagher. The motion passed unanimously.

Items submitted for the record:

Citizens Public Safety Oversight Committee Minutes from May 9, 2024.

## **REPORTS**

### **2. CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDMENT AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF FINANCIAL REPORTS**

Kim Coffman gave the report. She stated that sales tax is about 5% below the budget. "It looks like we're going to close the year at that amount because we already have June's sales tax and it's about \$984,000 which is still below that \$1 million marker that we like to see to meet the budget," Coffman said. Use tax is about 15% above budget; however it is not filling the gap left by the sales tax. Coffman reports that she has not received any payments from Norman Public Schools for the City of Norman's School Resource Officer program.

There were two payrolls in the month of May and no public safety sales tax payments made for the construction of the Emergency Communications Operations Center (ECOC). Coffman believes the ECOC is focused on spending American Rescue Plan (ARPA) Funds as there is a deadline to use them. "They did spend about \$1.3 million from the ARPA Funds for the ECOC project. Year-to-date, they've spent about \$5.6 million of the \$10 million that was appropriated from ARPA Funds for the ECOC project," Coffman said. There were Capital expenditures out of the SRO Cost center totaling \$16,285 that funded hand guns and four computer monitors.

Items submitted for the record:

Financial Reports

## **DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS**

### **3. MONTHLY UPDATES**

#### **a) FIRE DEPARTMENT UPDATES**

David Grizzle gave the report. He stated, "Currently, the Fire Department has no substantial updates or any projects coming up."

Assistant City Attorney Rick Knighton was present at the meeting to give an update regarding the grievance filed between the Firefighter Union and paramedic-firefighters at stations five and six. On February 2, 2023, the City's Medical Director sent an email to firefighters advising that effective March 1, 2023 there would be new protocols in addressing cardiac care with the use of new medications and heart monitors. The heart monitors were purchased through grant funding and not Public Safety Sales Tax funds. A grievance was filed leading to arbitration being sought.

On March 7, 2024, the first directive in Arbitrator Robert Costello's award was "The City is ordered to do the following: Immediately rescind the March 1, 2023 EMS protocols and any requirement that paramedics utilize the new heart monitors or administer the new pharmaceuticals which were introduced along with the new protocols." According to Knighton the arbitrator believed that the City violated the contract by implementing these protocols without getting an agreement from the Labor Union. "The difficulty with that is that the contract specifically says, 'The Fire Chief is the person that has authority to implement new protocols,' and that's what he did," Knighton said. "Unfortunately Arbitrator Costello believed that the City was required to negotiate with the Union about these protocols before he issued his specific directive that we immediately rescind the protocols that were implemented on March 1, 2023. So, under the Police and Fire Arbitration Act, the grievance arbitration is binding. We don't really have any remedy with regard to this. We're bound to follow this arbitrator decision. Removal of those monitors was based on this directive from the arbitrator. It wasn't based on the Fire Chief not wanting to negotiate; it was simply, this is what the arbitrator told us to do so this is what we did."

The second provision in the arbitrator's order was: The City must "refrain from any further changes to the EMS Protocols, or the reintroduction of the new heart monitors or pharmaceuticals until such time as the City secures the Union's agreement to same. This portion of the order will terminate upon termination of the present Agreement." This provision ordered the City to enter into negotiations with the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF). "The difficulty with this has been, IAFF does not have an issue with the protocols. During the arbitration, their president was asked, "What is the issue you have with the protocols?" (He replied) "We don't have an issue with the protocols. What their issue is with, is with staffing. They want to try and use this arbitrator decision to force the department to deploy two paramedics per shift at stations five and six, so that's 12. The City only has 24. You'd be deploying half of your paramedics to stations five and six and five is on the other side of Lake Thunderbird and six is on the west side of Lake Thunderbird. Then you would have 12 paramedics to deploy to your other seven stations. Part of the difficulty from the Chief's perspective is, he does not think that that is an appropriate deployment of his resources because a lot of those paramedics have dual certifications." The dual certifications include firefighters with paramedic and hazmat tech qualifications as well as paramedic and rescue tech qualifications. The Fire Chief finds these dual certified firefighters more pertinent to the urbanized area.

Member Rice agreed that hazmat situations are more probable in the urbanized area but stated, "Those emergencies, like hazmats, can wait the additional 10 minutes it would take the people (dual certified paramedics) to come from station five or six, whereas, people who need the lifesaving medication at five and six - can't wait. That's the difference there." After clarifying that per contract, the Fire Chief gets to implement the protocols, Knighton replied, "This is what the Chief is looking at: the average calls per day at stations five and six are two. The other stations have significantly more calls per day, per shift. A lot of those calls are medical calls." Knighton stated that it was his understanding that EMS response time in urban Norman has become longer. "No they're not. That's a false statement," Member Kyle Hurley stated. "I'm the Director of EMSTAT and you're being given incorrect information."

Knight said, "The issue becomes, is this a Union issue where the Union gets to decide staffing or is it a Chief issue and the Chief is looking at the broader, bigger picture with regard to how to deploy his resources? Staffing is a management right decision that the Chief has the right to make under the existing management rights provision in our contract. The Chief has the discretion to make those staffing decisions. Currently at (station) five, you have two paramedics

on shift A and B, one paramedic on shift C. At station six you have one paramedic on each shift. That station is within three miles of station nine. Station nine has one paramedic on each shift. So again, the Chief is trying to deploy his limited resources the best way he knows how."

The City is currently trying to broker an agreement with IAFF so that the monitors and protocols can be implemented and there is no alternative to the protocols that have been rescinded.

Member Rice asked "Can we get a temporary, one-month agreement that allows the equipment to be on the trucks and it give the City and IAFAF plenty of time to negotiate?"

Knighton stated that he could not speak for IAFF. Rice stated that he spoke with IAFF and they are agreeable to this suggestion and that he would have IAFF reach out to Knighton.

The response time for the Fire Department is approximately 4-5 minutes. The response time for EMSTAT is approximately 8 minutes. Member Rice asked, "Do the fire trucks that aren't five and six have the ELS equipment on them?"

Knighton replied, "No. The issue out east is fire trucks tend to arrive before the ambulance does. In the urbanized area, the ambulance have that same equipment on their ambulances and they tend to arrive at about the same time as the fire trucks do, so it's not necessary."

Rice responded, "If there's enough coverage with paramedics and ambulances in town, and they don't need to carry ELS equipment on a fire truck, why can't you double-up (on paramedics) out there (at stations five and six)? If there's ambulances covering all the stuff here that most of the paramedics can do, and the reason that we have these out here at stations five and six is because there isn't the paramedic response time that is enough to save a life, we don't need the same coverage at all stations. We need less coverage where there is ambulances and more coverage where there is not ambulances."

Knighton replied, "That's assuming that the only thing you consider, in terms of certified resources, is paramedics. If a paramedic has a dual certification, and that person is also a rescue tech, and you want that person extricating someone from a vehicle on the interstate because of a bad auto wreck, you also want his paramedic skills. If you have a fire engine responding to a hazmat incident where people have sustained injuries as result of some hazardous chemical spill, you also want that someone with paramedic skills to start providing care sooner rather than later."

Chair Price thanked Knighton for providing the information and stated, "This isn't really a PSST issue. We asked for information, I think you've (Knighton) provided that information. There's clearly a conflict going on that needs to be resolved. I don't think this committee can resolve it in any way shape or form. I appreciate you coming. If nobody else has any questions, I think we should move on and try and get this resolved outside of the Committee meeting." Member Hurley asked to clarify the EMS response time, misinformation with Knighton privately; otherwise, there were no other questions presented.

#### b) POLICE DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Major Chad Vincent gave the update. Vincent highlighted several community events that the Norman Police Department (NPD) participated in and are preparing to participate in. The School Resource Officers (SROs) have embarked on their summer mentoring programs. Twelve SROs, four of them new but fully trained, and one supervisor will be back in Norman Public Schools the last week of July.

The Public Safety Resource Allocation Study is likely to be released in August.

City of Norman has 166 commissioned officers. Seven cadets are expected to graduate in July. Vincent says that there has been "an uptick in (police officer) applications" being placed. The NPD is offering a lateral police academy and actively recruiting certified police officers. These officers go through a shorter academy and come in at a higher pay rate than a regular recruit. The lateral police academy will start in October 2024 with graduates in the field in February 2025. In the last month, the University of Oklahoma joined the City of Norman's Computer Aided Design (CAD) system, the CAD was upgraded, and a new 911 system was adopted.

#### c) DISPATCH UPDATES

Russell Anderson gave the report. The Dispatch Department is down four employees. Four applicants have proceeded to the background process. Anderson hopes to start the next Dispatch Academy on June 28, 2024.

#### d) EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS CENTER (ECOC) UPDATES

Major Brent Barbour gave the report. He highlighted the progress in the construction of the Emergency Communications Operations Center (ECOC) and the Vehicle Storage Facility. He advised the Committee that due to some delays, the grand opening for the ECOC facility will most likely occur in September 2024. The original grand opening was set for July.

### 3. ESTABLISH TOPICS FOR THE JULY 11, 2024 MEETING

The topics for the next meeting will remain the same.

#### **MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS**

None.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Member Gallagher made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was duly seconded by Member Rice. The motion passed unanimously.

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Linda Price, Chair  
Citizens Public Safety Oversight Committee