



CITY OF NORMAN, OK CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING

Municipal Building, Council Chambers, 201 West Gray, Norman, OK 73069
Tuesday, October 1, 2024, at 5:30 PM

MINUTES

The City Council Special Meeting of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in Special Session in the Executive Conference of the Municipal Building, on Tuesday, October 1, 2024, at 5:30 PM, and notice of the agenda of the meeting was posted at the Norman Municipal Building at 201 West Gray and on the City website at least 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

It is the policy of the City of Norman that no person or groups of persons shall on the grounds of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, place of birth, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, marital status, including marriage to a person of the same sex, disability, relation, or genetic information, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination in employment activities or in all programs, services, or activities administered by the City, its recipients, sub-recipients, and contractors. In the event of any comments, complaints, modifications, accommodations, alternative formats, and auxiliary aids and services regarding accessibility or inclusion, please contact the ADA Technician at 405-366-5424, Relay Service: 711. To better serve you, five (5) business days' advance notice is preferred.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Heikkila called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Present:

Mayor Larry Heikkila
Councilmember Ward 1 – Austin Ball
Councilmember Ward 2 – Matthew Peacock
Councilmember Ward 3 – Bree Montoya
Councilmember Ward 4 – Helen Grant
Councilmember Ward 5 – Michael Nash
Councilmember Ward 6 – Joshua Hinkle
Councilmember Ward 8 – Scott Dixon

Absent:

Mayor Larry Heikkila
Councilmember Ward 7 – Stephen Holman

AGENDA ITEMS

1. DISCUSSION REGARDING THE CONTRACT WITH FOOD AND SHELTER FOR THE EMERGENCY SHELTER.

Mr. Anthony Purinton, Assistant City Attorney, updated Council on the ongoing contract negotiations with Food and Shelter, Inc. He said Food and Shelter confirmed they will continue operating the emergency shelter only through March 31, 2025 (end of winter season), after which they will no longer operate the facility.

Food and Shelter submitted proposed edits to the contract, objecting to:

1. Third-party security requirement – preferring to use in-house CLEET-certified staff.
2. Audit provisions – objecting to the City’s Internal Auditor conducting audits, requesting third-party audits at the City’s expense with advance notice and right to respond.
3. City’s right to recoup funds – objecting to reimbursement recovery provisions.
4. Dedicated bank account – objecting to a separate account for shelter operations. Staff indicated the bank account requirement could be waived for the short-term contract.

Mr. Purinton said other potential operators have been consulted, and none expressed objections to audit provisions.

Councilmembers acknowledged Food and Shelter’s request for advance notice of audits. Several members felt this was reasonable and consistent with current practice, but emphasized that audit provisions must remain clear, enforceable, and unambiguous. Council stressed that future operators must demonstrate both quality service delivery to the unhoused population and the administrative capacity to meet contract standards. Council felt the City should not lower requirements to fit an operator unable to comply. Council also discussed whether to extend the contract for four more months or end the agreement sooner. Mr. Purinton clarified that it will require an appropriation of funds—at least for October, and potentially through March 31st if an extension is approved.

Some Councilmembers emphasized that the current discussion is less about Food and Shelter and more about setting up a framework for future operators. Members agreed the City must maintain core standards, especially on third-party security and audit/recoupment provisions. Mr. Purinton reported exploratory discussions with potential operators, but emphasized that staffing and capacity remain concerns.

Councilmember Ball reiterated support for phasing out the shelter model and redirecting resources toward long-term housing, treatment, and vouchers. Other members expressed concern about feasibility of hotel vouchers due to limited availability, high costs, and property owner resistance.

Additional discussion was had as to whether the City should commit to a year-round shelter or revert to a winter-only model (November–March). Several Councilmembers highlighted the need for case management and workforce reintegration programs as critical to long-term solutions.

Councilmembers agreed the Food and Shelter contract must include third-party security and audit and recoupment provisions intact. There was support for flexibility on the dedicated bank account requirement for the short-term.

Council reaffirmed its commitment to providing shelter services through March 31, 2025, but stressed the need to transition toward a new operator or alternative model. Staff was directed to refine contract terms, prepare appropriations for October 8, and return with options for both short-term continuation and long-term shelter planning.

2. CONSIDERATION OF ADJOURNING INTO AN EXECUTIVE SESSION AS AUTHORIZED BY OKLAHOMA STATUTES, UNDER TITLE 25 § 307(B)(4) TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE LITIGATION REGARDING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NORMAN CENTRAL LIBRARY.

Motion made by Councilmember Ward 2 Peacock, seconded by Councilmember Ward 4 Grant to adjourn into Executive Session.

Voting Yea: Mayor Heikkila, Councilmember Ward 1 Ball, Councilmember Ward 2 Peacock, Councilmember Ward 3 Montoya, Councilmember Ward 4 Grant, Councilmember Ward 5 Nash, Councilmember Ward 6 Hinkle, Councilmember Ward 8 Dixon.

The City Council adjourned into Executive Session at 6:21 p.m. Mr. Darrel Pyle, City Manager; Ms. Shannon Stevenson, Assistant City Manager; Mr. Rick Knighton, Interim City Attorney; Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation; Mr. Lance Harper, Facility and Construction Program Manager; and Ms. Shaakira Calnick, Internal Auditor, were in attendance at the Executive Session.

Motion made by Councilmember Ward 2 Peacock, seconded by Councilmember Ward 6 Hinkle to adjourn out of Executive Session and reconvene the Special Session.

Voting Yea: Mayor Heikkila, Councilmember Ward 1 Ball, Councilmember Ward 2 Peacock, Councilmember Ward 3 Montoya, Councilmember Ward 4 Grant, Councilmember Ward 5 Nash, Councilmember Ward 6 Hinkle, Councilmember Ward 8 Dixon.

The Executive Session was adjourned out of and the Special Session was reconvened at 6:53 p.m.

Possible litigation regarding the construction of the Norman Central Library was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken and no votes were cast.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

City Clerk

Mayor