



CITY OF NORMAN, OK CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL SESSION

**Municipal Building, Executive Conference Room, 201 West Gray, Norman,
OK 73069**

Tuesday, October 22, 2024 at 5:00 PM

MINUTES

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in Special Session in the Executive Conference Room of the Norman Municipal Building on the 22nd day of October, 2024, at 5:00 p.m., and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray Street 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

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 7 Stephen Holman
Councilmember Ward 8 Scott Dixon

AGENDA ITEMS

1. CONTINUED DISCUSSION REGARDING OPERATION OF THE EMERGENCY SHELTER

Mr. Anthony Purinton, Assistant City Attorney, provided an update on the status of the emergency shelter contract. City Council, in its meeting of October 8, 2024, considered a resolution to terminate the Food and Shelter contract to operate the emergency shelter. An amendment was approved to change the notice period from 30 days to 60 days. A proposed amendment to ensure no lapse in shelter operations was tabled. Discussion was continued to the October 22, 2024, meeting to allow time for additional information on a potential new contractor.

Mr. Purinton said the board of the prospective new operator met and authorized negotiations with City staff. A draft contract has been provided, and initial feedback has been favorable. Staff are awaiting a more detailed line-by-line review. Negotiations remain in the early stages, with a goal of finalizing an agreement by November, though December remains a possibility.

Staff recently met with Thunderbird Clubhouse and the Norman Housing Authority (NHA).

- NHA is currently in shortfall status and unable to issue new vouchers.
- The last new voucher was issued in June 2024 for an application submitted in September 2023.
- The waitlist stands at over 1,000 individuals, with an estimated wait time of 15–18 months.
- No new vouchers are being issued across all categories (elderly, disabled, veterans, etc.). The Housing of Urban Development (HUD) requires NHA to demonstrate sufficient funding for the long term before exiting shortfall status.

Other funding sources, including Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG), are already allocated and insufficient to cover immediate needs. Staff concluded that there are not enough units or funds available to provide permanent solutions for current shelter residents if the shelter were to close.

Council Discussion:

- Some Councilmembers suggested redirecting shelter operating funds to NHA to expand housing vouchers; however, Staff explained HUD restrictions would prevent immediate impact.
- Examples were shared of limited housing availability in Norman, including long waitlists at certain complexes.
- Council emphasized the importance of ensuring no lapses in shelter operations during the transition to a new operator.

Food and Shelter has indicated a willingness to continue operations until March 2025 (end of winter season) or until a new operator assumes responsibility.

Staff recommended postponing the cancellation of the Food and Shelter contract until a new operator's contract is finalized. A 30-day termination notice could be issued once the new start date is set, or termination could occur sooner if mutually agreed upon.

The possibility of current Food and Shelter employees transitioning to employment with the new contractor was raised. Staff noted this will be addressed in future negotiations, with no opposition expressed by the potential new operator.

Council discussed potential enhancements, including the use of metal detectors and handheld wands. A walk-through metal detector from Municipal Court is currently in storage and could be repurposed for shelter use. Handheld wands could be acquired, if needed. Staff agreed to communicate with Food and Shelter regarding interim security practices.

2. CONSIDERATION OF ADJOURNING INTO AN EXECUTIVE SESSION AS AUTHORIZED BY OKLAHOMA STATUTES, UNDER TITLE 25 § 307(B)(4) TO DISCUSS PENDING LITIGATION IN THE CASE OF UTC V. CITY OF NORMAN, ET AL., CASE CJ-2024-1405 JV (CCDC 2024).

Motion made by Councilmember Ward 2 Peacock, Seconded by Councilmember Ward 8 Dixon.

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 7 Holman, Councilmember Ward 8 Dixon

The City Council adjourned into Executive Session at 5:39 p.m. Mr. Rick Knighton, City Attorney; Mr. Darrel Pyle, City Manager; Ms. Shannon Stevenson, Assistant City 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 8 Dixon.

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 7 Holman, Councilmember Ward 8 Dixon

The Executive Session was adjourned out of and the Special Session was reconvened at 6:03 p.m.

Pending litigation in the case of UTC v. City of Norman, et al., Case CJ-2024-1405 JV (CCDC 2024), was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken, and no votes were cast.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:04 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor