

January 10, 2024

Honorable City Council Members
Honorable Trustees of the Norman Municipal Authority (NMA)
201 West Gray Street
Norman, Oklahoma 73069

Dear Mayor/Chair Heikkila and City Council Members/NMA Trustees:

The NORMAN FORWARD Citizen's Financial Oversight Board (CFOB) met on December 29, 2023, with the following members present:

Andy Rieger, Chair	Linda Price
Alva Brockus	Cynthia Rogers
Zachary Simpson	Saidy Orellana
Misty Grantham	

During the meeting, the Board discussed the funding for the Griffin Land Lease payments from the NORMAN FORWARD Fund and the ongoing negotiations between the City and the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse (ODMHSAS) of the sale of the Griffin Property. Originally, \$10,000,000 in funding was included in the 2015 NORMAN FORWARD vote to authorize the purchase of the Griffin property, including the current Sutton Wilderness Park, Griffin Park and Francis Cate Park. It was determined to be mutually beneficial for the City to enter into a long-term lease for this property in 2018 for up to a 30 year period, at which time the City has a purchase option for the land. Lease payments of \$80,000 per year, paid from the NORMAN FORWARD funds, will apply to the ultimate purchase of the land. \$7,600,000 of this original budget was then re-allocated to the Adult Wellness and Education Center project.

The CFOB discussed the potential long-term positive effect to the NORMAN FORWARD Sales Tax Fund if the funding for these payments was re-appropriated from the General Fund rather than the NORMAN FORWARD Fund. Re-appropriating these payments in the City's General Fund would increase the amount of NORMAN FORWARD funds that would be budgeted for future projects. We continue to be concerned with the NORMAN FORWARD Fund's sales and use tax shortfalls when compared to the original projections made in 2015.

While the negotiations are still ongoing, the CFOB has determined that the potential purchase of the Griffin property has gone beyond the scope of the NORMAN FORWARD project to become a city-wide project and that this lease agreement should no longer be paid by NORMAN FORWARD funds. **By unanimous vote, CFOB recommends that the Council understand the potential benefit to the NORMAN FORWARD Fund if the funding for the Griffin Land Lease Payments, in the amount of \$80,000 per year, were re-appropriated from the General Fund.**

We are glad to respond to any questions you may have regarding our discussion and this action.

Sincerely,

Andy Rieger, Chair
Norman Forward Citizens Financial Oversight Board

EC: NORMAN FORWARD Citizen's Financial Oversight Board Members
Darrel Pyle, City Manager/NMA General Manager
Anthony Francisco, Finance Director/NMA Treasurer
Kathryn Walker, City Attorney/NMA General Counsel