



CITY OF NORMAN, OK STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 9/22/2026

REQUESTER: Jason Olsen, Parks and Recreation Director

PRESENTER: Jason Olsen, Parks and Recreation Director

ITEM TITLE: CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDMENT AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF CONTRACT K-2627-34: BY AND BETWEEN THE CITY OF NORMAN AND THE SOONER THEATRE OF NORMAN, INC., LOCATED AT 101 EAST MAIN STREET, FOR THE USE OF THE SOONER THEATRE FOR AN INITIAL ONE (1) YEAR TERM WITH AN OPTION OF FIVE (5) FIVE (5) YEAR RENEWAL TERMS FOR A MAXIMUM TERM OF TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS FROM THE INITIAL TERM.

BACKGROUND:

The Sooner Theatre of Norman, Inc. has served the Norman community for decades by providing cultural programming, theatrical performances, arts education, and public events within the historic Sooner Theatre building located at 101 East Main Street. The facility has long been recognized by the community as a cultural landmark and a hub for performing arts.

The current lease agreement governing the use of the building (Contract K-8384-50) was executed on July 3, 1984, and is now outdated in both structure and operational expectations. A new lease agreement has been prepared to modernize terms, clarify responsibilities, and support long-term cultural programming in Downtown Norman.

DISCUSSION:

The proposed lease agreement establishes updated terms for the City's continued partnership with the Sooner Theatre of Norman, Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to cultural enrichment and arts programming. The structure and provisions parallel those of prior community cultural center leases, including Contract K-2627-25 for the Firehouse Art Center, ensuring consistency across Parks & Recreation-managed facilities.

Key Provisions Include:

Term

The lease commences upon Council approval and continues until June 30, 2027, with automatic five-year renewals for up to twenty-five (25) years unless terminated under the conditions outlined.

Rent

The Lessee will pay One Dollar (\$1.00) per year and provide additional community benefit through programming and cultural services, reflecting the City's ongoing commitment to supporting performing arts.

Uses

The property is leased for (1) preservation and maintenance of the building as a historic landmark, and (2) operation of cultural, entertainment, educational, or public service events benefiting the Norman community.

Operations

The Sooner Theatre is responsible for management, custodial care, staffing, programming, and procurement of all necessary equipment. The Lessee may request City funding assistance through annual budget requests and separate funding agreements.

Supportive

Funding

Funding assistance may be allocated through the Parks & Recreation Board's annual process, consistent with other Community and Cultural Centers. Funding amount(s) will be determined annually based on submitted proposals and available budget pools.

Utilities

The Lessee is responsible for all utility costs associated with the operation of the Sooner Theatre.

Maintenance

and

Repairs

- The City will maintain structural elements, mechanical systems, electrical systems, plumbing, fire/security alarms, and provide pest control and landscaping.
- The Lessee is responsible for routine upkeep and emergency repairs costing under \$500, including damage caused through operations.
- Requests for City maintenance must be submitted in writing; a response will occur within ten days.

Alterations

and

Improvements

Any alterations require prior written approval from the City. The City must supervise all improvements to ensure historical preservation standards.

Reporting

and

Transparency

The Lessee must provide annual reports, including a narrative of activities, mission/goals,

financials, expenditure details, bylaws, board membership, fee schedules, and applicable tax or audit documents. The organization must comply with the Oklahoma Open Records Act.

Termination:

The agreement includes termination for cause (with a cure period), termination for convenience with notice, and nonrenewal provisions, along with requirements to return the property in substantially the same condition as received.

Other

Provisions:

Insurance obligations, indemnification, nondiscrimination, compliance with laws, ex-officio City representation on the board, and other general administrative provisions are included to ensure accountability and public stewardship.

This lease ensures the Sooner Theatre remains a vibrant community asset, provides clarity on operational responsibilities, and maintains transparency and accountability for public funding and facility use. Approval of this agreement will support the ongoing delivery of performing arts and cultural programming in Norman.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council approve Contract K-2627-34 with Sooner Theatre, Inc., for the use of the Sooner Theatre for the Parks and Recreation Department.