



CITY OF NORMAN, OK STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 09/22/2026

REQUESTER: Karla Sitton, Administrative Tech IV

PRESENTER: Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation

ITEM TITLE: CONSIDERATION OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF THE RECEIPT OF THE ANNUAL REPORT FROM SOONER THEATRE TO THE BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS.

BACKGROUND:

The Sooner Theatre opened its doors for the first time in 1929 as the region's first movie theatre built to show talking pictures. Local architect Harold Gimeno spared no expense while building the Spanish Gothic-style building, spending over \$200,000. For nearly 50 years, The Sooner Theatre was the most popular movie theatre in the area until the mid-1970s, when multiplexes gained popularity and the single-screen Sooner could no longer meet the demand. In 1975, the Sooner Theatre closed and remained dark – nearly lost to the wrecking ball – until 1979, when a dedicated group of citizens refused to let the theater be lost and appealed to the City of Norman under the auspices of the non-profit organization The Sooner Theatre of Norman, Inc. The City agreed to purchase the Theatre and lease it to the organization. After the first phase of restoration, the Sooner Theatre reopened in 1982 as a community performing arts center.

The Sooner Theatre has become a beacon of light in the community's historic downtown Walker Arts District, impacting the lives of audiences and children each year.

DISCUSSION:

The City has Contract K-0203-146 with Sooner Theatre, Inc., to operate the vibrant performing arts venue, which offers a diverse range of productions and events, as well as adult and youth programs throughout the year. Sooner Theatre gave its annual presentation to the Board of Park Commissioners on September 3, 2026. Their presentation included information about their events, programming, rentals, and 2024-2025 financials.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council accept the Sooner Theatre FYE 2025 annual report.