



# The City of NORMAN

201 West Gray, Bldg. C • P.O. Box 370  
Norman, Oklahoma 73069 • 73070

OFFICE OF THE FINANCE DIRECTOR  
Phone 405-366-5413  
FAX: 405-366-5417

December 8, 2022

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 6, 2022, with the following members present:

Andy Rieger, Chair	Linda Price
Alva Brockus	Cynthia Rogers
Bree Montoya	Andy Sherrer

During the meeting, the Board discussed the appropriation action taken by the City Council (November 22, 2022 Council agenda) for the NORMAN FORWARD James Garner Avenue extension project. The CFOB is pleased that Council acted to move this project forward at its full funding level. We are concerned, however, that a portion of our recommendation related to this appropriation was not followed (see attached October 26, 2022 Recommendation letter). As noted on the attachment, our recommendation was to re-allocate \$1,500,000 of NORMAN FORWARD Fund balance (indirectly, savings from the Norman Public Library, Central project) to the James Garner project and to appropriate the balance of needed funding for the project from the City's General Fund balance or other City resources. The Council's action (by Resolution R-2223-67) was to appropriate \$2,281,034 of NORMAN FORWARD Fund balance to the James Garner project.

The CFOB recommendation was based on the \$1,500,000 that had previously been re-allocated from the James Garner Avenue project to the NORMAN FORWARD Young Family Athletic Center project. Our recommendation was that the amount of NORMAN FORWARD funds re-allocated to the James Garner project be limited to this amount; effectively the \$1,500,000 appropriation would have returned the James Garner Avenue project to its originally-planned funding level. We are concerned that due to ongoing shortfalls in the NORMAN FORWARD sales tax from the original projections made in 2015, this action may have the long-term effect of reducing the amount of NORMAN FORWARD funds that will be available for future projects. We have consistently recommended that any cost "savings" in NORMAN FORWARD projects be returned to the Norman Forward Fund balance to be available to fund future projects at their planned levels.

While we understand that the NORMAN FORWARD Fund is in a position to absorb this additional cost for the James Garner Avenue extension project right now, we want to make sure that the Council is aware that this action may exacerbate the need for the City's General Fund (or other City resources) to be used to "back stop" future NORMAN FORWARD projects. **By unanimous vote, CFOB recommends that the Council understand the negative financial position that may result in future NORMAN FORWARD projects due to this action, and that this Council and future Councils be prepared to utilize City General Fund revenues or other City resources to complete NORMAN FORWARD projects at their planned levels.**

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy Rieger". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Andy" is written with a large, stylized 'A' that loops around the 'n'. The last name "Rieger" is written with a large, stylized 'R' that loops around the 'i'.

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



# The City of NORMAN

201 West Gray, Bldg. C • P.O. Box 370  
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October 26, 2022

OFFICE OF THE FINANCE DIRECTOR  
Phone 405-366-5413  
FAX: 405-366-5417

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 October 25, 2022, with the following members present:

Andy Rieger, Chair

Alva Brockus

Saidy Orellana

Erik Paulson

Linda Price

Cynthia Rogers

Andy Sherrer

During the meeting, the Board was given an update on the status of the NORMAN FORWARD James Garner Avenue extension project by City Engineer Scott Sturtz. The Board was informed of recent bids that had been accepted by the Oklahoma Department Transportation (ODOT) for the construction of Phase 2 of the project (extending from the north end of the Central Library site northward along Legacy Trail to a roundabout terminating north of Robinson at Flood Street). The bids were found to be proper and the low-bidder, Redlands Construction Company has successfully completed similar projects in Norman to the James Garner Avenue Extension. The CFOB is encouraged by the progress of the project, but was discouraged to learn that the bids exceeded the engineer's estimate and will require approximately \$2.3 million in additional funding to what remains available in the NORMAN FORWARD allocation to the project.

The original NORMAN FORWARD allocation for the James Garner Avenue project, approved by the voters of Norman, was \$6,000,000. The Council/NMA previously re-allocated approximately \$1,500,000 in funds that were originally programmed for the James Garner project to the Young Family Athletic Center project (based on the preliminary engineer's construction cost estimate for the James Garner project, it was believed these funds would be available to be re-allocated) and the CFOB reviewed and approved this Council action. Based on the results of the recent ODOT bidding process, it is apparent to the Board that the full original allocation of funding will be needed to complete the James Garner Avenue project.

The CFOB is also updated on the funding status of other NORMAN FORWARD projects at each Board meeting. The Central Library project has been substantially completed for over two years, with a final cost being below its original NORMAN FORWARD allocation by approximately \$3.9 million. The Board reiterates its recommendation that any project cost savings from completed NORMAN FORWARD projects be returned to the NORMAN FORWARD Fund balance for the

completion of remaining voter-approved projects (the concern with the shortfall in sales tax collections from the original projections will need to be recovered through project cost savings in order to complete all of the projects). Due to the high priority of the James Garner Avenue project in the original NORMAN FORWARD program, however, the Board voted unanimously as follows:

1. That the Council/NMA re-program, re-allocate or appropriate funding originally programmed for the completed NORMAN FORWARD Central Library project of \$1,500,000 to the NORMAN FORWARD James Garner Avenue Extension Project.
2. That any funding that remains allocated to the Central Library project in the NORMAN FORWARD Fund after this re-allocation be returned to the NORMAN FORWARD Fund balance.
3. That the Council make available from the City's General Fund balance, Capital Improvement Projects Fund, or other City funds adequate revenue (estimated to be approximately \$800,000) to fully fund the difference in the construction cost of the James Garner Avenue Extension project at the level of the bids received by ODOT in October, 2022 on the timeline established by the ODOT project guidelines.

We appreciate the progress that is being made to bring this high priority project for the voters, residents and multi-modal travelers of Norman to reality. As we approach the mid-point of the Norman Forward Sales Tax lifetime (July 1, 2023 is the halfway point of the taxing period), it is gratifying to know that all of the major "brick and mortar" projects, including James Garner Avenue, will be under construction, nearing completion, or completed by that time. We look forward to reviewing further Council actions and working with City staff to complete the project, in cooperation with the ODOT. 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  
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