



CITY OF NORMAN, OK CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

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

Tuesday, December 2, 2025 at 5:30 PM

MINUTES

The City Council Study Session of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in Regular Session in the Executive Conference Room in the Municipal Building, on Tuesday, December 2, 2025, at 5:30 PM, and notice of the agenda of the meeting was posted at the Norman Municipal Building at 201 West Gray and on the City website at least 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

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CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Holman called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

PRESENT

Mayor Holman

Councilmember Ward 1 Gandesbery

Councilmember Ward 2 Peacock

Councilmember Ward 4 Grant

Councilmember Ward 5 Nofire

Councilmember Ward 6 Hinkle

Councilmember Ward 8 Dixon

ABSENT

Councilmember Ward 7 Blodgett

AGENDA ITEMS

1. DISCUSSION OF AN ORDINANCE ADDING LICENSE REQUIREMENTS FOR MASSAGE THERAPY AND RELATED ESTABLISHMENTS.

Ms. Kathryn Walker, Assistant City Attorney, presented a proposed ordinance establishing local licensing requirements for massage therapy and bodywork service establishments, aimed at combating illegal operations, human trafficking concerns, and public safety issues.

Ms. Walker said the Norman Police Department (NPD) have noted an uptick in establishments opening in Norman purporting to be massage therapy and/or bodywork services establishments that are really a cover for prostitution, human trafficking, drug trafficking, and money laundering. She said on average, over 100 massage parlor ads for locations in Norman appear on known prostitution websites each month. Unsuspecting clients have gone in for massages and been propositioned and even sexually assaulted.

Ms. Walker said State law licenses massage therapists, but not massage therapy establishments, making it more challenging to identify legitimate establishments vs. criminal establishments. Cities only had authority to regulate zoning, until the passage of Senate Bill 644, effective November 1, 2025, which allows cities to also now implement licensing requirements. Ms. Walker said after discussions with NPD and local massage therapists, a concern was raised that other establishments performing bodywork services, an area which is completely unregulated by state law, may also serve as a front for similar illegal behavior.

The proposed ordinance focuses on regulating establishments, not individual therapists, and aligns definitions with state law. If adopted, it would go into effect on April 1, 2026.

Key Ordinance Components

- Licensing required for all massage therapy and bodywork service establishments.
- Low fees to avoid burdening legitimate businesses (\$50 initial, \$25 renewal).
- Licenses denied for applicants with certain felony convictions, fraudulent applications, or prior license revocations in other cities.

Operational requirements include:

- Cleanliness and sanitation standards.
- Posted pricing.
- Client records maintained for three years.
- Consent forms required.
- Employee register.
- Appropriate professional attire.
- Operating hours: 8:00 AM to 10:00 PM, with exceptions noted on license.
- No locked rooms during services.
- No overnight sleeping at establishments.
- Professional conduct standards focusing on client safety and prohibition of sexual contact except when medically legitimate.

Ms. Walker said the goal is to target clearly illegal establishments, not legitimate businesses. Enforcement will primarily be complaint-based or based on visible advertising of illegal services. NPD Staff explained challenges in prosecuting sexual assault cases without evidence or victim cooperation. Violations may result in administrative license action, criminal charges, or injunctions.

Ms. Walker indicated the proposed ordinance also includes some zoning and code cleanup. She said it removes outdated terms "massage parlor" and "sexual encounter center" from adult entertainment zoning definitions. Planning Commission reviewed and supported the cleanup measure.

Councilmembers discussed the licensing process for businesses offering mixed services (massage + other bodywork). Council also discussed grievance procedures and the role of the License Review Board. Interest was expressed by Council in removing stigma from legitimate massage therapy businesses. Reports from NPD noted approximately 15 illicit operations currently active in the city, often open late-night and associated with human trafficking indicators.

It was the consensus of Council to move forward with formal adoption. The Ordinance will be on the January 13, 2026, Council agenda for First Reading.

2. DISCUSSION OF AN ORDINANCE LIMITING THE USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN SCHOOL ZONES AND CONSTRUCTION ZONES.

Ms. Jeanne Snider, Assistant City Attorney, presented a proposed ordinance limiting the use of electronic devices in school zones and construction zones. She provided an overview of the existing texting ordinance, originally mirrored after state law, noting its limitations and outdated terminology. Recent legislative changes through House Bill 2263 now prohibit the use of handheld electronic devices while operating a motor vehicle in designated school zones and active construction or maintenance work zones.

Ms. Snider said House Bill 2263 became effective November 1, 2025, and allows local enforcement through municipal court. The primary goal is to improve safety in school and construction zones. The ordinance makes it unlawful for any driver to manually use, hold, or support a handheld electronic device in those zones. Total fine and court costs cannot exceed \$100. Exceptions include hands-free operation, Bluetooth, voice-activated functions, music control, and emergency communication. She said officers may not seize a driver's phone without consent. Staff highlighted an increase in speeding and reckless driving, including speeds of 88 to 100 mph, often among youth drivers. Emphasis was placed on the safety of road workers, school children, crossing guards, and volunteers in affected areas.

The discussion underscored the need for consistency with state law, enhanced local enforcement, and prioritizing public safety. There was Council consensus to move the ordinance forward.

3. DISCUSSION REGARDING CONSUMPTION OF MARIJUANA AND INHALING SECONDHAND MARIJUANA SMOKE WHILE IN A VEHICLE.

Ms. Jeanne Snider, Assistant City Attorney, presented an overview of a proposed ordinance aligning municipal code with recent state law changes regarding marijuana consumption in motor vehicles. The ordinance mirrors existing open-container alcohol rules and introduces prohibitions on both active consumption and secondhand exposure to marijuana smoke while operating a motor vehicle on streets, highways, or alleys.

She said state law now makes it unlawful for a person in a motor vehicle to consume marijuana, including medical marijuana, while the vehicle is being operated. The proposed ordinance would also prohibit inhaling secondhand marijuana smoke from another person inside the vehicle. Staff noted parallels with existing prohibitions on secondhand tobacco smoke exposure and emphasized that both active and passive marijuana use in a moving vehicle are safety concerns. Ms. Snider said violations would fall under the same category as transporting an open container, carrying a fine of \$200 plus court costs. Staff indicated this is consistent with current alcohol-related open-container violations.

Ms. Snider said the ordinance further prohibits possession of an open container of marijuana, defined as any container with a broken seal, opened packaging, or not fully sealed, within reach of occupants. Containers stored in locked trunks or enclosed compartments inaccessible to passengers would be allowed. Staff stated the ordinance supports public health objectives, provides clear enforcement authority, and maintains consistency with state law.

Councilmember Grant asked how many impairment cases involve marijuana alone. Major Brent Barbour, NPD, responded that cases range widely and can involve marijuana, prescription medications, or other substances. Oklahoma remains a zero-tolerance state, meaning any detectable THC coupled with observed impairment is actionable. Mayor Holman asked how officers would differentiate between marijuana smoke, CBD vapor, and nicotine vapor. Major Barbour said officers rely on driving behavior, odor, and observed conditions, not merely visible vapor, and will discontinue a stop if no indicators are present. He said vape cartridges alone (without a battery) would not constitute an open container.

Major Barbour said officers may request consent for a blood test or obtain a search warrant when probable cause of impairment exists. Impairment-related driving offenses remain state-level charges, not municipal.

Councilmember Grant said younger drivers may be most affected and asked about educational outreach. Major Barbour said the NPD regularly partners with the schools, university, fraternities, and community groups to disseminate safety information.

Youth citations (under 18) would be handled by the municipal juvenile court program, which includes referrals to evaluations and treatment resources.

Item 3, continued

Council asked how charges are determined for municipal vs. district court. Major Barbour explained officers maintain discretion. Impairment cases default to state charges, while non-impairment violations, e.g., open containers, may be handled municipally. Municipal court provides faster processing and reduces the burden on district courts for lower-level offenses.

Council asked if other cities had adopted local ordinances. Ms. Snider noted the law just took effect November 1st but Staff will research how other cities, e.g., Edmond, Moore, Broken Arrow, and Enid, are approaching similar ordinances and provide an update at Second Reading in January.

4. DISCUSSION REGARDING THE USE OF OPIOID FUNDS.

Ms. Shannon Stevenson, Assistant City Manager, presented an overview of the City's opioid settlement funds and recommended uses. She said Norman is a non-litigating political subdivision under the 2022 Oklahoma Opioid Settlement. Funding is distributed annually through 2038, at approximately \$248,000 per year. She said the City has approximately \$830,000 in unallocated settlement funds currently on hand. The initial disbursement included payments for years 1 through 4 and 7, but the state's schedule remains unpredictable with no clarity on years 5 and 6.

Ms. Stevenson said Norman has successfully obtained two grant awards, passed through to the Virtue Center: \$190,000 in 2024 and \$500,000 in 2025.

Ms. Stevenson said the funds must be used for evidence-based opioid remediation in four main categories: treatment and recovery; co-occurring disorders; prevention and education; criminal justice and public safety; and oversight and coordination.

Capital projects are not eligible. Technology may be eligible depending on whether it is directly tied to opioid remediation work.

A cross-departmental team (City Manager's Office, Legal Department, Police Department, and Municipal Court) reviewed possible projects. Many were ruled ineligible due to settlement restrictions. The remaining projects were evaluated based on eligibility, sustainability, whether expenses were one-time or ongoing, and reliability of future disbursement.

The City's "A Better Way - Opportunity Knocks Program" was funded in part from opioid settlement funds: \$334,000 (plus \$50,000 from the Sanitation Fund) for a total annual cost of \$384,000. Ms. Stevenson said the Program sunsets in April 2026 and due to high costs, staff recommends shifting future funding requests to the State's competitive grant program, which is better suited to larger awards.

Ms. Stevenson said the evaluation committee recommended the following:

Proposed One-Time Expenditures – \$70,000

- Narcan Supply – \$20,000
 - Previously provided free by the State; no longer reliably available.
 - Three-year shelf life; allows PD to maintain adequate reserves.
- County Detention Center Opioid Treatment – \$50,000
 - Supports access to a long-acting opioid treatment injection for Norman residents in the Cleveland County jail.
 - Developed in coordination with Cleveland County; County is encouraged to provide matching funds for non-Norman inmates.

Proposed Recurring Annual Expenditures – \$237,500

Designed to remain under the annual expected settlement allocation of \$248,000.

- Municipal Court Community Officers – \$10,000
 - Overtime to support community court docket operations.
- Proactive Community Engagement Officers – \$40,000
 - Additional overtime to enhance downtown and citywide engagement.
- Social Worker Position
 - Provides crisis response, connects individuals to services, and supports police on opioid-related and mental-health-related calls.
 - Intended to resolve gaps in existing, piecemeal systems.
- Community Resiliency Manager
 - Oversees coordination of homeless outreach, crisis response, interdepartmental incidents, and grant development/management.
 - Acts as a central “champion” for complex multi-departmental response efforts.
- Social Work Intern (OU School of Social Work)
 - Paid internship to support community engagement and crisis response.

Councilmembers expressed strong support for Narcan replenishment; jail-based long-acting opioid treatment; social worker and community resiliency manager positions; and paid social work intern while maintaining flexibility given unpredictable state disbursements.

Social workers and resiliency manager positions will be housed in the City Manager’s Office, not NPD, to reflect multi-department responsibilities. Council indicated the need for clear job postings to attract highly qualified candidates.

Council also supported the use of the second van for mental-health crisis response and the use of the \$830,000 as seed money for early years, preserving flexibility until the State’s disbursement pattern stabilizes.

5. DISCUSSION REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PARKING TRUST FOR PARKING AND TRANSIT OPERATIONS.

Assistant City Attorney Kathryn Walker provided an overview of the proposed establishment of a Parking and Transit Trust, noting that conversations on this topic have occurred for more than a decade. She explained the purpose and benefits of creating a public trust, emphasizing that trusts operate as separate legal entities and can enter into long-term financial commitments that the City cannot constitutionally make.

Ms. Walker reviewed the City's existing trusts and their functions, including the Norman Municipal Authority, Norman Utilities Authority, Norman Regional Hospital Authority, Norman Tax Increment Finance Authority, and Norman Economic Development Authority. She described the fiduciary duties of trustees and clarified the separation between the City and its trusts.

The history of parking discussions was outlined, including the creation of the Economic Development Advisory Board, parking studies from 2003 through 2018, and prior work toward a multi-jurisdictional parking authority. The City currently projects roughly \$360,000 in annual parking revenue, with expenses exceeding revenues. Expenses on equipment, maintenance, and shared staff were noted. Parking citations generate revenue, but not enough to offset enforcement costs.

The need for long-term financing tools for structured parking was discussed, including examples from Oklahoma City and Tulsa. Council discussed whether transit should be included in the trust. Advantages included organizational synergy, alignment with Oklahoma City's model, and the need for a unified structure to accommodate future RTA-related work. Transit revenues would continue to be separately accounted for but could legally be pledged when structuring debt.

City Manager Darrel Pyle and Council discussed the potential for structured parking on Campus Corner and downtown, including activating commercial spaces on the ground floor and using long-term parking leases to support financing. Staff noted that letters of intent for reserved parking spaces can strengthen bond financing. The need to incorporate Tax Increment Finance (TIF) elements for Campus Corner redevelopment was also raised.

Further discussion addressed parking demand, meter enforcement, potential rate adjustments, and operational considerations such as management of future commercial leases within parking structures. Staff emphasized the importance of separating legal authority from practical use of revenues, clarifying that transit revenue, while possible to pledge legally for debt issuance, would continue to support transit operations.

Councilmembers expressed strong support for moving forward and highlighted long-standing community needs for structured parking, the relationship to density goals, and the opportunity to serve future housing, mixed-use, and employment centers.

Item 5, continued

Ms. Walker confirmed that the December 9th agenda item will include a resolution approving the trust indenture and accepting beneficial interest. Filing with the Secretary of State will follow. Staff also noted parallel work on development agreements and TIF adjustments necessary to support future parking structure projects.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor