



CITY OF NORMAN, OK CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

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

Tuesday, November 18, 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, November 18, 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 5:06 p.m.

PRESENT

Mayor Holman
Councilmember Ward 4 Grant
Councilmember Ward 5 Nofire
Councilmember Ward 6 Hinkle
Councilmember Ward 7 Blodgett
Councilmember Ward 8 Dixon

ABSENT

Councilmember Ward 1 Gandesbery
Councilmember Ward 2 Peacock

AGENDA ITEMS

1. DISCUSSION REGARDING STATUS OF THE FYE 2026 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM (CIP) BUDGET AND PREPARATION OF THE FYE 2027 CIP BUDGET

The Mayor noted a technical issue preventing the presentation from displaying in the meeting video; however, all documents are available with the agenda on the City website.

Item 1, continued

Mr. Jacob Huckabba, Budget Analyst, stated that the presentation marks the official start of the FYE 2027 Capital Budget process. Staff provided a brief review of the adopted FYE 2026 CIP and outlined preparation steps for the FYE 2027 single-year capital budget, together with the 2028–2031 Five-Year Capital Improvements Plan.

Ms. Kim Coffman, Budget Manager, highlighted the new budget book and FYE 2025 Annual Financial Report cover, designed by Anthony Francisco, Finance Director, featuring a “Tour of Jenkins Avenue” theme.

Mr. Huckabba highlighted the definition and characteristics of Capital Projects. He said Capital projects typically are greater than \$100,000 (flexible threshold); address acquisition, maintenance, or expansion of long-term assets with a useful life over five years; include infrastructure such as streets, bridges, buildings, utilities, and public art; and span multiple fiscal years, carrying forward appropriations until completion. He said phasing design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction allows projects to be spread over several years depending on resources.

Mr. Huckabba said Staff identifies project needs comes from various sources, i.e., long-range master plans (AIM Plan, Transportation, Parks, Wastewater, Stormwater, etc.), citizen and Council priorities, and emergency or emerging needs.

Funding Sources Include:

- General obligation bonds
- Dedicated sales taxes: Capital (0.7%), Norman Forward (0.5%), Public Safety
- Tax Increment Finance Districts (University North Park, Center City)
- Enterprise utility funds
- Grants
- Room Tax Fund
- Excise taxes for specific utilities (e.g., sewer system expansion)

Staff noted that funding sources often restrict how money may be used, limiting Council flexibility.

Councilmember Bruce asked how priorities are assessed. Staff responded with ranking methodologies vary by plan (e.g., stormwater vs. transportation), but internal scoring systems remain consistent within each category. Staff emphasized that some funds can only be spent on specific asset types (e.g., water funds on water projects). Council maintains discretion within flexible funds such as Capital Sales Tax. Long-range plans serve as inputs, while the one-year capital budget is the implementation tool.

Councilmembers asked about consistent prioritization frameworks across project categories and how Council should approach cross-category choices. Staff noted that most capital improvement dollars are pre-committed or restricted, which limits discretionary re-prioritization.

Explanation of Bond Proceeds and Fund Balance

Staff reviewed the "Status of the Capital Fund" and said large fund balances reflect unspent bond proceeds, not available discretionary funds. Bond tranches are issued in phases based on project readiness, to avoid excess debt costs. Unspent bond proceeds are held in reserve and cannot be used for unrelated projects.

Examples were provided regarding the 2019 transportation bonds and the Bridge Bond Program, including how contingency funds approved by voters can be used for emergency bridge failures.

Mr. Huckabba highlighted historical allocation guidelines for Capital Sales Tax revenues include as:

- Capital Outlay – approx. 27%
- Street Maintenance – approx. 20%
- Sidewalks & Mobility – approx. 10%
- Stormwater – approx. 10%
- IT Infrastructure – approx. 5%
- Remaining categories divided among Public Safety construction, Parks, and other capital needs

He said these percentages are guidelines, not mandates, and may change based on Council priorities. Recent increases to the IT allocation were highlighted due to cybersecurity threats and essential infrastructure upgrades.

Actual FYE 2026 Capital Fund Allocations

- Capital Sales Tax revenue: \$17.5 million
- Appropriated: \$14.7 million
- Approximately \$2.8 million left unappropriated to support long-term fund health and avoid overextending project load.

Street Maintenance percentages do not include street bond projects, which are funded separately through General Obligation bonds. Debt service constitutes a large portion of the "Other Projects/Debt Service" category estimated at approximately \$12 million for the year.

Recurring Projects and Projects Excluded in FYE 2026

Recurring Projects Funded in FY 2026 (examples):

- Street striping
- Stormwater maintenance
- Tree program
- Sidewalk program
- IT capital
- Capital outlay equipment replacements
- Various mobility and transportation safety programs

Subtotal: approx. \$12.6 million

Item 1, continued

Items not included in FYE 2026 but placed back into FYE 2027 projections:

- Alley repairs
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance program
- ODOT audit adjustment
- Pay-as-you-go bridge maintenance (separate from bridge bond program)
- Traffic calming initiatives
- Neighborhood development and improvement projects

Staff emphasized maintaining a robust inventory of “unfunded but ready” projects in case new resources become available.

Council inquired about a recently submitted 80/20 grant to construct a roundabout at Acres and James Garner. Staff confirmed the grant has been submitted; results are pending. The roundabout project is separate from the 2019 transportation bond program. If awarded, the local match is proposed to come from Norman Forward funds.

Councilmember Blodgett asked why ADA Compliance was not funded in FYE 2026. Staff explained ADA compliance has not been abandoned; accessibility improvements are included within all street projects. A separate recurring ADA program exists, and current year balances remained unspent due to ongoing grant-matched work. Funds often need to accumulate over multiple years to reach thresholds needed for specific ADA upgrades or to qualify for matching grants. Example: A previous \$300,000 ADA allocation successfully leveraged to secure an 80/20 grant, converting it into a \$1 million project on Lindsey Street.

For several other unfunded FYE 2026 items (e.g., alley repairs, audit adjustments, bridge maintenance) projects still had existing prior-year balances to draw from and some were delayed intentionally due to substantial new funding from the Bridge Bond Program, reducing the need for additional FYE 2026 appropriations.

Mr. Anthony Francisco, Finance Director, clarified the distinction between approved projects with existing balances, and out-year plan projections, which may change as priorities shift or new funding sources become available.

The City Manager and Staff described the internal coordination process among budget managers. Each division advocates for its needs based on long-range plans and operational priorities. Revenue projections set limits for new capital spending. Significant internal discussion takes place before arriving at a unanimous Staff recommendation for Council. Staff emphasized that professional judgment and collaborative consensus drive the final proposed budget.

2019 Transportation Bond Program Status

Staff noted that while the program has progressed well, several factors have slowed implementation. Post 2019 Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) scoring changes reduced eligibility for some previously selected projects. This required reprioritization, resulting in projects like James Garner Avenue moving down the schedule and Jenkins Avenue moving up. Staff continually pursue additional funding through ACOG, federal programs, Safe Streets for All, and other grants. Construction costs have increased approximately 60% since 2019–2021, creating additional pressures on project budgets and schedules. To manage costs, staff have pursued alternative design strategies, including downsizing some roadway expansions (e.g., shifting 24th Avenue NE from four lanes to three).

Bridge Maintenance Bond Program Update

Staff provided an update on the \$50 million Bridge Bond Program, noting:

- \$16 million has been issued to date.
- Completed Projects:
 - 60th Avenue NE Replacement
 - Lindsey Street Rehabilitation
 - Main Street Rehabilitation
- Projects underway:
 - East Post Oak Road Replacement under construction
 - Three additional bridge projects in design
- The City has secured a \$13 million grant for the Porter Avenue bridge.
- Additional grant opportunities may allow the City to extend bond funds to additional bridges beyond the original priority list.

Council expressed appreciation for the Absentee Shawnee Tribe, a partner in several grant initiatives.

Public Safety Sales Tax (PSST) Fund Update

Staff reviewed progress on capital commitments from the PSST renewal:

- Major commitments have been met except for Fire Station 5 relocation.
- Earlier commitments, ECOM, radio system updates, apparatus replacement, were funded through PSST revenue bonds, maturing March 2027.
- After payoff, capacity will exist to begin:
 - Design and land acquisition for Fire Station 5, estimated at \$6.5 million.
 - Potential use of remaining Emergency Operations Center project balances (approximately \$1.4 million) to begin preliminary work.

Item 1, continued

Long-Range Public Safety Infrastructure Planning

Staff discussed broader public safety facility needs:

- Fire Station 1 is the oldest and busiest station in the city, responding to approximately 650 calls last month alone.
- Relocation or expansion of Station 1 triggers a need to reevaluate citywide fire coverage maps due to changes in response radius.
- Staff suggested scoping options for:
 - Rebuilding Station 1 on its existing site
 - Relocating Station 1 to Reed & Main
 - Constructing supplemental Fire Station "1A"
- Similar uncertainties exist regarding a future Police Department facility, including potential sites and operational configurations.

Staff suggested utilizing available PSST savings to fund professional scoping studies for both fire and police facilities.

Council and staff discussed the possibility of a future KidSpace Community Park project, including replacement of the existing KidSpace at Reaves Park and the potential development of a second KidSpace-style playground at University North Park. Staff noted approximately \$400,000 remains in the University North Park TIF fund designated for the Lifestyle Center, which may be used only within that district. Because the prospective playground site lies within that boundary, those funds could be utilized for the project.

Initial cost estimates indicate a KidSpace-style playground at Reaves Park is approximately \$300,000 if constructed in-house, and approximately \$600,000 if constructed by the original KidSpace designers and installers. The Council discussed utilizing TIF funding at University North Park for a second playground could reduce the financial burden on the Capital Fund for the Reaves Park replacement.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor