



Thursday, September 15, 2020, at 5:30 PM

MINUTES

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in Study Session in the Executive Conference Room of the Norman Municipal Building on the 15th day of September, 2020, at 5:30 p.m., and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray Street 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Clark called the Meeting to Order at 5:30 p.m.

PRESENT

Mayor Breea Clark
Councilmember Ward 1 Kate Bierman
Councilmember Ward 3 Alison Petrone
Councilmember Ward 5 Michael Nash
Councilmember Ward 6 Elizabeth Foreman
Councilmember Ward 7 Stephen Holman
Councilmember Ward 8 Matthew Peacock

ABSENT

Councilmember Ward 2 Joe Carter
Councilmember Ward 4 Lee Hall

AGENDA ITEMS

1. DISCUSSION REGARDING THE SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER (SRO) PROGRAM.

Captain Sean Hawkins, Norman Police Department, delivered a detailed presentation regarding the history, structure, mission, and outcomes of the SRO Program in partnership with Norman Public Schools (NPS). He said the Norman SRO Program was established following voter approval in April 2014 of the Permanent Public Safety Sales Tax (PSST2). One of the funded initiatives included the addition of 13 police officers for creation of the SRO Program. The program was launched in July 2015 and began operations in schools during the 2016–2017 school year. Authorized positions included:

- 1 Supervisor
- 4 Officers – two at each high school (Norman High and Norman North)
- 1 Officer – each of the four middle schools
- 4 Officers – to be assigned to elementary schools (positions pending).

Captain Hawkins stated all SROs are certified through National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO), a nonprofit organization founded in 1991. NASRO emphasizes the Triad Model of the SRO role, e.g., Teacher – Officer – Counselor, with mentorship as the overarching principle. Their mission statement is SROs are dedicated to ensuring a safe learning environment, providing resources to students, faculty, and parents, while developing long-term problem-solving approaches and mentoring students to become community leaders.

Core Program Components

Triad and Mentorship

- The SRO model integrates law enforcement presence with educational and counseling functions.
- Officers build relationships and serve as mentors, bridging gaps between students and police.

Community and Student Engagement

- Operation School Bell: SROs assist students in need with school supplies, clothing, and hygiene items.
- Police Athletics League (PAL): A summer youth engagement initiative promoting positive police-student relationships.
- TEAM Program (Teaching, Educating, and Mentoring):
 - A classroom curriculum covering topics such as firearm safety, bullying prevention, and conflict resolution.
 - Structured for elementary through high school levels.

Captain Hawkins shared the primary objectives:

- Serve as visible, active law enforcement figures and immediate responders to any law-related incidents on campus.
- Provide classroom education on law, safety, and prevention topics.
- Support school administration in problem-solving and maintaining a safe environment.
- Promote positive law enforcement relationships with students and staff.

Disciplinary Limitations

He said SROs do not enforce school rules or administer disciplinary actions. Per the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between NPD and NPS; Principals and administrators remain the primary authority on student discipline. SROs intervene only in criminal matters or immediate safety threats.

Captain Hawkins said the Handled with Care Program originated in Oklahoma City and has been adopted by NPD. The Program allows first responders to confidentially notify schools if a student experiences trauma (e.g., loss of a family member, domestic crisis). It enables teachers and counselors to provide sensitivity and support without breaching confidentiality. The Crime Stoppers App Integration has been implemented across NPS systems. Students can anonymously report safety threats, bullying, or self-harm concerns. Reports are directed to both NPS administration and NPD in real time.

SROs provide safety and security coverage for over 300 school-sponsored events annually, including athletics, graduations, dances, and parades. Officers often serve beyond normal hours to ensure student and staff safety.

Item 1, continued

Program Data Review

Reporting Period: 2019–2020 School Year

Category	Description	Notes
Arrests	0	No physical student arrests occurred.
State Charges	Filed for severe incidents (e.g., threats, assault with weapon)	Reviewed with DA before filing.
Police Dockets	Citations issued by officers	Minor offenses such as tobacco possession.
Citizen Dockets	Parent-initiated complaints	Often related to assault or truancy.
Protective Custody	70 incidents	Related to mental health crises or threats of self-harm.
Monthly Data Reviews	Conducted with NPS Chief Operating Officer	Used to identify trends and make improvements.

All SROs are Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) certified, enabling de-escalation and mental health response within schools.

Councilmember Bierman requested detailed data and demographics on SRO incidents since program inception. She expressed interest in transparency for the public and a data-driven evaluation of program outcomes.

Captain Hawkins confirmed the NPD maintains all required data per the MOU and additional internal metrics. He offered to share aggregate data with the Council. He emphasized that demographic tracking and continuous evaluation are standard practice.

Assistant District Attorney Kristi Johnson explained how juvenile referrals and state charges are processed. She noted that most reports from NPD are directed to the Office of Juvenile Affairs and handled through diversion programs aimed at treatment rather than punishment. Serious offenses are rare and, when adjudicated, can typically be expunged after dismissal. Johnson also highlighted that since the inception of the SRO program, juvenile referrals have steadily decreased, reflecting the program's positive impact on prevention and early intervention.

Councilmember Bierman addressed data analysis and program accountability. She asked whether the department compares local trends with national data. ADA Johnson responded that Oklahoma, and specifically Norman, appears to be trending positively below national averages in school-related juvenile offenses.

Mr. Milner expressed appreciation for shared responsibility between the school district and the police department in maintaining safe school environments. He emphasized that the critical eye of an officer plays a vital role in identifying behavioral warning signs among students and ensuring proactive intervention.

Councilmember Petrone requested use-of-force data specific to the SRO program, referencing public concern from a prior social media forum where data suggested students of color were three times more likely to be involved in incidents with SROs. She asked how the department is addressing this disparity.

Captain Hawkins acknowledged the statistic and agreed that it warranted continued review. He clarified that the data referenced “incidents”—which include reports, lost property, and vandalism—not solely enforcement actions. He stated that efforts are underway to separate enforcement actions from general incident reports to allow clearer analysis of equity trends and expressed the department’s commitment to transparency and improvement, noting that data is used to identify and address potential disparities, not conceal them.

Councilmember Petrone asked whether the department tracks individual officer data to determine if certain SROs disproportionately interact with students of color.

Captain Hawkins stated that such tracking is not currently conducted but agreed it would be valuable for future analysis. He suggested that patterns of concern would likely be flagged by either school administration or police supervision and confirmed that future data collection systems could be adapted to include officer-specific tracking to enhance accountability.

City Manager Darrel Pyle suggested that the pending Diversity and Equity Officer position could provide professional expertise in analyzing demographic data and trends.

Councilmember Bierman agreed with the City Manager and suggested collaboration between Norman Public Schools (NPS) and the Norman Police Department (NPD) to refine data collection methods.

Councilmember Holman requested clarification about whether data is being collected from NPS or NPD to assess public perception of the program.

Mr. Justin Milner, Norman Public Schools, said NPS has not conducted a formal survey but maintains ongoing communication with site administrators and teachers to monitor feedback. He said administrators play a key role in observing daily interactions and providing informal updates.

Councilmember Holman provided a detailed review of the Public Safety Sales Tax (PSST) funding history. He recalled prior concerns about funding permanent positions through a temporary tax and noted the narrow margin by which the renewal passed in 2014. He requested updated financial information on the PSST Fund Balance and sustainability.

Finance Director Anthony Francisco Reported that PSST revenues totaled approximately \$9.4 million in FY 2019–2020, with an additional \$1.1 million in use tax revenue. He stated that expenditures exceeded revenues by approximately \$1.5 million, requiring a General Fund subsidy. He projected that this subsidy would increase to over \$3 million by FY 2025–2026.

Item 1, continued

Mr. Francisco clarified that the Council retains discretion over the timing and funding levels of related expenditures.

Councilmember Bierman recommended maintaining a 50/50 cost-sharing arrangement with NPS for any future program expansions.

Mr. Pyle and Mr. Milner confirmed that NPS currently contributes approximately \$687,000 annually toward the SRO program.

Noted that while NPS remains committed to the partnership, further contributions are unlikely due to statewide budget constraints and economic impacts.

Councilmember Holman emphasized the need for fiscal responsibility and partnership equity between NPS and the City.

Councilmembers expressed concerns about long-term program sustainability if the City continues subsidizing SRO positions. They asked about financial impacts if the program became unsustainable and required reduction of officers and suggested that funding decisions might eventually require voter input through a Public Safety Sales Tax adjustment.

Captain Hawkins indicated that removing SROs from schools should be considered a last resort. He stated that pulling officers from the program could negatively affect long-term success and community trust.

Councilmember Foreman asserted that subsidizing the SRO program from the General Fund is unsustainable. She called for early discussions and potential public vote to address funding challenges before 2025–2026. She also expressed the need to rebuild public trust in financial management. She requested analysis to determine how much of a sales tax increase would be necessary to achieve fiscal balance.

Mr. Pyle confirmed that a 1/8-cent sales tax increase generates approximately \$2.5 million annually and advised that a 1/8 to 1/4 percent increase could stabilize PSST funding. He recommended Council consider multiple options for sustainable funding and discuss further at the annual Council Retreat.

City Attorney Kathryn Walker outlined procedural requirements for placing a sales tax proposal on the ballot. She said Council must give 60 days' notice to the Election Board. It requires two readings of an ordinance before placement. Confirmed that a January–April timeline is feasible for election scheduling.

Councilmember Bierman supported holding discussions at the upcoming Council Retreat (scheduled for October 16). She emphasized the need for public education and outreach prior to any sales tax vote and warned against over-reliance on sales taxes, given possible regional transit tax increases in the future.

Item 1, continued

Mayor Clark thanked Captain Hawkins, Finance staff, and Norman Public Schools representatives and noted the importance of data-driven decision-making and community input. She supported revisiting and updating the MOU for the SRO program to ensure regular review.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

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ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor