



MINUTES

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in Conference in the Executive Conference Room of the Norman Municipal Building on the 24th day of June, 2025, 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 Heikkila called the Meeting to Order at 5:30 p.m.

PRESENT

Mayor Larry Heikkila
Councilmember Ward 1 Austin Ball
Councilmember Ward 2 Matthew Peacock
Councilmember Ward 3 Bree Montoya
Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant
Councilmember Ward 5 Michael Nash
Councilmember Ward 6 Joshua Hinkle
Councilmember Ward 7 Stephen Holman
Councilmember Ward 8 Scott Dixon

AGENDA ITEMS

1. DISCUSSION REGARDING A PROPOSED CONTRACT WITH CLEVELAND COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COALITION.

Mr. Rick Knighton, City Attorney, provided the original contract history. He said in July 1996, the City of Norman entered into Contract K-9697-33 establishing the Norman Economic Development Coalition (NEDC). The initial purpose was to promote and recruit new and existing businesses and industry in Norman. He said the Contract automatically renewed annually unless terminated. It was amended in 1998 to update termination and duration provisions.

Mr. Knighton said the NEDC is transitioning into the Cleveland County Economic Development Coalition (CCEDC). CCEDC's expanded mission includes broader county-wide economic development, involving Lexington, Slaughterville, Noble, Moore, South Oklahoma City, and Norman.

Mr. Knighton provided a contract comparison between the NEDC contract vs. the CCEDC contract.

The CCEDC will serve in an advisory role for economic development planning, which is a new provision. CCEDC will continue industrial/business recruitment, marketing, and promotion of city assets via a new website (www.selectcount.com). CCEDC encourages collaboration across Cleveland County cities and private entities.

The governance and reporting portion includes CCEDC providing reports and recommendations to the City. Monthly financials presented at board meetings.

Mr. Knighton said the new contract has no requirement for quarterly reports or audit submission to the City (previously required in NEDC contract). There was a lack of clearly defined term "local question" under political activity restrictions.

The City contribution will be \$1 per capita based on July 2023 census figures (\$130,046). The FYE 26 City budget includes \$125,000, leaving a \$5,000 gap. Previous funding model was flat-rate (\$75,000–\$125,000 per entity). OU and Chamber may no longer be formal partners.

The City Manager is designated as City representative on the CCEDC board. Some members of Council suggested substituting a designated small business representative due to public perception concerns, e.g., Sara Kaplan, Business and Community Relations.

The new contract prohibits use of funds for candidate or political party support/opposition. However, unlike the NEDC contract, the CCEDC contract does not include restrictions related to supporting/opposing ballot questions.

Council Comments and Concerns

Councilmember Peacock:

- Expressed concern over lack of financial documentation (audits, quarterly reports).
- Emphasized the need for accountability for City contributions over past 30 years.
- Raised concerns about funding equity as new cities join without having contributed historically.
- Asked whether there is a transition plan to recognize Norman's legacy investment.
- Queried about incubator funding equity, noting Norman and Cleveland County contributed \$1M each.
- Emphasized transparency and accountability as non-negotiable conditions for City funding.

Councilmember Grant:

- Opposed omission of financial reporting and audit provisions.
- Questioned whether "local questions" include Council actions or only ballot issues.
- Suggested re-evaluating the City Manager's role on the board due to optics.

Councilmember Montoya:

- Stated expectation for at least compiled financial statements by a public accounting firm.

Item 1, continued

Councilmember Holman:

- Sought confirmation on per-capita contributions from other entities, especially Cleveland County.
- Inquired about project equity, such as Norman-funded incubator space potentially going to businesses outside Norman.

City Manager and Staff Responses:

- Confirmed financials are reviewed monthly at CCEDC board meetings.
- Confirmed independent audits are conducted by a certified accounting firm.
- Stated City of Moore is a current participant; Noble and Lexington are not yet confirmed.
- Clarified the City's internal auditor may audit City-provided funds for compliance.

Next Steps / Follow-Up

- Staff will revisit:
 - Inclusion of quarterly reports and audits in the contract.
 - Clarification of political activity definitions.
 - Membership structure and financial equity with newly participating cities and the county.
 - Possible designation flexibility for City representation on the CCEDC board.
 - Contract start date will be amended based on council approval timing, likely later than July 1.

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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

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ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor