



CITY OF NORMAN, OK CITY COUNCIL BUSINESS & COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING

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

Thursday, June 05, 2025 at 4:00 PM

MINUTES

The City Council Business & Community Affairs Committee of the City Of Norman, Cleveland County, State Of Oklahoma, met in Regular Session in the Executive Conference Room on the 5th day of June, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. and notice of the agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray and on the City website at least 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Peacock called Meeting to order at 4:00pm

PRESENT:

Councilmember Ward 2 Matthew Peacock – Chair
Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant
Councilmember Ward 5 Michael Nash
Councilmember Ward 8 Scott Dixon

ABSENT:

Councilmember Ward 6 Joshua Hinkle

Others Present:

Councilmember Ward 7 Stephen Holman
Mr. Anthony Purinton, Assistant City Attorney II
Mr. Chris Mattingly, Director of Utilities
Ms. Shannon Stevenson, Assistant City Manager
Mr. Jason Murphy, Stormwater Program Manager
Ms. Shaakira Calnick, Internal Auditor
Lieutenant Lee McWorter, Police Community Outreach PACE Officer
Ms. Sandra Simeroth, Administrative Technician IV

AGENDA ITEMS

1. DISCUSSION REGARDING SHOPPING CARTS THROUGHOUT THE CITY.

Ms. Shannon Stevenson, Assistant City Manager, presented a report outlining the ongoing issues related to abandoned shopping carts throughout Norman. The report highlighted concerns related to public safety, neighborhood aesthetics, pedestrian access, and impacts on drainage systems. The presence of shopping carts in parks, medians, and other public areas has led to numerous complaints from residents. Staff noted a steady increase in the number of abandoned shopping carts, particularly in high-traffic retail corridors and residential areas adjacent to commercial centers. The City currently lacks a specific ordinance addressing the retrieval or regulation of shopping carts. As a result, enforcement options are limited, and removal often falls to Stormwater or Parks Department on a case-by-case basis.

Wal-Mart in discussions has agreed to put tags on all their shopping carts, stating this is property of Wal-Mart and the location of the store it belongs to and possession of shopping cart removed from premises is a violation of state and local law. Staff can then see which location is being affected the most. The City now has a Proactive Community Engagement Team (PACE) under the direction of Lieutenant McWhorter with a more Holistic approach.

Councilmembers emphasized the importance of engaging with local retailers, including grocery stores and big box retailers, to collaborate on solutions. Concerns about potential burdens on businesses were discussed.

Lieutenant Lee McWhorter, PACE officer, said purpose of our team is to build relationships with individuals, connect them to resources and to educate them on city Codes and State statutes. The PACE team coordinates community resource partners with business and property owners and can reach out to Kara Fritts at Central Oklahoma Community Mental Health Center, (COCMHC) for assistants and plug in any other resources that the City has. Trying to take in account all the different scenarios in every situation. If we book in property from carts, we now have a form which has a case # and contact information and the location address and the hours of operations of where items can be picked up. Individuals have 90 days to claim their property, or they can contact the Police department, and individuals can extend the hold.

Mr. Anthony Purinton, Assistant City Attorney II, outlined potential legal frameworks for implementing a shopping cart containment or retrieval ordinance. This could include requirements for businesses to label carts with owner identification, implement cart retention systems, or retrieve abandoned carts within a set timeframe. Whether or not a Cart has a sign on it staff has authorization from Wal-Mart cooperate offices to write citations on their behalf.

Lieutenant McWhorter said the PACE team is starting social media campaign lasting six weeks, so everyone is aware that cart enforcement will begin August 1, 2025. This is a way to solve a recurring problem that the City has not been able to solve in other ways.

Ms. Stevenson provided case studies from other municipalities that have enacted shopping cart containment ordinances. These include impound fees, retrieval timelines, and mandatory prevention measures for businesses.

Item 1, continued

Councilmembers requested staff draft a proposed ordinance for further discussion, including Mandatory labeling of carts, Business responsibility for retrieval, Impoundment procedures, and possible fees. Council would also like to discuss possible grants or incentive programs to support compliance for small businesses. Staff were directed to return with a contract draft, ordinance, and stakeholder feedback at a future committee meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:58 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor