



CITY OF NORMAN, OK CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE

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

Tuesday, April 11, 2023 at 5:30 PM

MINUTES

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CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Heikkila called the Meeting to Order at 5:34 p.m.

PRESENT

Mayor Larry Heikkila
Councilmember Ward 1 Austin Ball
Councilmember Ward 2 Lauren Schueler
Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant
Councilmember Ward 5 Rarchar Tortorello
Councilmember Ward 6 Elizabeth Foreman
Councilmember Ward 7 Stephen Holman
Councilmember Ward 8 Matthew Peacock

ABSENT

None

AGENDA ITEMS

1. PRESENTATION FROM ENGAGE LEARNING

Mr. Bart Keeton, Executive Director of Engage Learning, said Engage Learning is seven years old and a Norman non-profit based organization with a robust Facebook site and website. He said Engage Learning has 20 full-time Staff with degrees in engineering, computer science, architecture and 45 part-time Staff that are mostly college students from the University of Oklahoma (OU) or Oklahoma State University (OSU) who help with projects in Norman.

Mr. Keeton said their largest partnership is with Oklahoma City Public Schools (OKCPS) where Engage Learning trains teachers on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM - an educational program developed to prepare primary and secondary students for college, graduate study, and careers in the fields of science), every month.

The opportunities in Norman are significant for Engage Learning and they would like to do more in Norman for elementary and middle school students. Engage Learning has connected with every Norman elementary school multiple times as well as middle schools, and both high schools. Mr. Keeton said Engage Learning has a rich relationship with Norman, but does not have as much programming in Norman as they would like. He said there might be an opportunity for a space in Norman that Engage Learning can begin to use with a huge opportunity for summer programming. He said The Well has been a great partner and Engage Learning has done some spring break summer camps there that includes robotics, drones, sports live programs, etc. He said with the exception of the Summer Program, Engage Learning tries not to charge families as many of the children have fewer opportunities for this type of programming.

Mayor Heikkila asked if Engage Learning has a space in Norman that they are looking at and Mr. Keeton said yes, the former Facility Maintenance building on Gray Street because there is enough space to allow future growth.

Councilmember Tortorello asked what Engage Learning's main funding source is and Mr. Keeton said corporate sponsorships, with Devon being their largest sponsor.

Mr. Darrel Pyle, City Manager, said current facilities at Council's disposal include Reaves Center, current Senior Center, and Couch Center (former Facilities Maintenance location).

Mayor Heikkila asked how much Engage Learning has talked with NPS for their input and Mr. Keeton said in terms of space, not much at all.

Councilmember Peacock said he would love to see Engage Learning in the Couch Center location because it is such a strategic centrally located spot in Norman. He said having a facility that draws families and students would bring in more people to local businesses in Downtown Norman as well as having a bigger economic development.

Councilmember Foreman said the space on Gray Street is currently be used as a temporary warming shelter with a month-to-month agreement and she has no intention of vacating that location until another solution for a warming shelter is found.

Councilmember Schueler said Engage Learning cannot use the Gray Street location this summer, but thinks the Gray Street location would be the best option in regards to long-term capacity.

Councilmember Holman agreed with Councilmembers and said the Gray Street location is where he would like to see this type of program in Norman. He is all for utilizing whatever facility resources the City can provide right now with the potential for a long-term solution.

Mr Pyle said Staff could prepare a short-term lease agreement, decide which space works best for everyone, and place that short-term lease agreement on the Council agenda before the end of May and Councilmembers concurred.

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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor