

CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE MINUTES

August 10, 2021

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in a conference at 5:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building Council Chambers on the 10th day of August, 2021, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT:

Councilmembers Foreman, Hall,
Holman, Lynn, Peacock, Schueler,
Studley, Tortorello, Mayor Clark

ABSENT:

None

Item 1, being:

DISCUSSING REGARDING THE 2019 GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND PROJECTS AND FUNDING.

Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works, said the United States Senate just passed a \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill and Oklahoma should be receiving some of that money. He believes cities and towns will have to apply for the money through the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG).

Mr. Scott Sturtz, City Engineer, introduced Mr. Ron Weltzheimer, Program Manager for Olsson; Mr. Liesel Polwort, Assistant Program Director of Olsson; Mr. Kevin Bloss, Client Relationship Manager for Olsson; Mr. David Riesland, City of Norman Transportation Engineer; Mr. Tim Miles, City of Norman Capital Projects Manager; and Mr. Paul D'Andrea, City of Norman Capital Projects Engineer.

Mr. Sturtz said the City of Norman now has a public engagement website, www.normanstreets.com. He said there is an area for comments and the City is always happy to hear public feedback. He said this website will list upcoming City of Norman Transportation Projects that will increase safety and efficiency for all modes of transportation.

Mr. Sturtz said the 2019 Transportation General Obligation (G.O.) Bond Program was approved by voters on April 2, 2019, which is a ten-year program expiring in 2030. This is the largest bond package the City has ever put forth to a vote that includes 19 projects for a total program amount of \$139 million with \$72 million from bond money and \$67 million from anticipated federal funds (80/20 split). He said the bond program included a Traffic Management Center, widening and reconstruction of roads, installation of new traffic signals, improvements to stormwater drainage systems, and addition of sidewalks, bike lanes, and multi-modal paths. He said this program did not increase property taxes because the City was able to leverage an existing property tax bond that was ending.

Item 1, continued:

Mr. Sturtz highlighted the bond program improvement projects as 36th Avenue West from Indian Hills Road to the City of Moore city limits; 48th Avenue West, Phase I - Robinson Street to Rock Creek Road; 48th Avenue West Phase II - Rock Creek Road to Tecumseh Road; Indian Hills Road and Interstate 35 Interchange; Indian Hills Road from 48th Avenue West to Interstate I-35; East Tecumseh Road from 12th Avenue N.E. to 24th Avenue N.E.; Rock Creek Road from Queenston Avenue/Bruckner Drive to 24th Avenue N.E.; Gray Street Two-Way Project: University Boulevard to Porter Avenue; James Garner Avenue from Acres Street to Duffy Street; Lindsey Street Special Corridor, Phase I, from Pickard Avenue to Elm Avenue; Lindsey Street Special Corridor, Phase II, from Elm Avenue to Jenkins Avenue; Jenkins Avenue from Imhoff Road to Lindsey Street; Constitution Street from Jenkins Avenue to Classen Boulevard/12th Avenue S.E.; Cedar Lane Road East from 24th Avenue S.E. to 36th Avenue S.E.; 36th Avenue S.E. from Cedar Lane Road to Highway 9; Porter Avenue Streetscape; Porter Avenue and Acres Street Intersection Improvements; Traffic Management Center; and 24th Avenue N.E. from Rock Creek Road to Tecumseh Road.

Mr. Sturtz said funding is part of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST) and over the last 28 years, the City has averaged \$6 million in funding for over 140 transportation projects totaling \$160 million. He said FFY 2020 through FFY 2023 funding is guaranteed while FFY 2024 through FFY 2025 are projected funding request amounts, but are not guaranteed.

To obtain this federal funding, the City has to be part of the Regional Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). He said approximately \$20 million is available each year from ACOG, but there is a lot of competition for this funding. Federal funding from ACOG is guaranteed for the first two years, then Staff must reapply for project funding and although Norman has been highly successful in obtaining funding, competition for the funds has become fierce over the past few years. He said ACOG member agencies within the Encompass Planning area are eligible to apply and no single government can receive more than 56% of the total funding.

Mr. Sturtz said transportation project selection criteria includes widening, including railroad/highway grade separations; new construction; intersection improvements; resurfacing, reconstruction, rehabilitation, restoration; bridges; independent bicycle and pedestrian facilities; transit, park/ride, High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes; carpool/vanpool; and safety projects (safety projects are 100% federally funded).

Significant changes were made to project selection criteria in FFY 2019 and the City was not scoring as well so the City began aligning projects with the Regional Multi-Modal Transportation Plan goals and objectives; added transportation system performance management; developed a process/methodology to ensure that the region's transportation funding is being used effectively; adjusted the scoring between types of projects to reflect the region's needs; improved the competitiveness of projects that utilize cost-effective strategies from the Congestion Management Plan toolbox; and simplified the project application process and criteria; and removed project readiness criteria, which is no longer considered in project criteria by ACOG. Mr. Sturtz said the new criteria was finalized and accepted by both the Intermodal Transportation Technical Committee and Intermodal Transportation Policy Committee and was used for the first time in the formulation of the FFY 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Item 1, continued:

Mr. Sturtz said projects scheduled within the next five years that do not have federal funding shares include Porter Avenue and Acres Street; Jenkins Avenue from Imhoff Road to Lindsey Street; Porter Avenue Streetscape; James Garner from Acres Street to Duffy Street; and Gray Street Two-Way Conversion. He said these projects are being done with bond proceeds only.

Projects where federal funding has not been guaranteed, but will be pursued include Cedar Lane Road from east of 24th Avenue S.E. to 36th Avenue S.E.; Constitution Street from Jenkins Avenue to Classen Boulevard; 36th Avenue N.W. from North of Indian Hills Road to Moore city limits; Traffic Management Center; 36th Avenue S.E. from Cedar Lane Road to State Highway 9; 24th Avenue N.E. from Rock Creek Road to Tecumseh Road; 48th Avenue N.W., Phase I: Robinson Street to Rock Creek Road; Lindsey Street Special Corridor: Elm Avenue to Jenkins Avenue; Indian Hills Road: 48th Avenue N.W. to Interstate 35 (I-35); Indian Hills Road and I-35 Interchange; 48th Avenue N.W., Phase II from Rock Creek Road to Tecumseh Road; Lindsey Street Special Corridor: Pickard Avenue to Elm Avenue; Tecumseh Road from 12th Avenue N.E. to 24th Avenue N.E.; and Rock Creek Road from Queenston Avenue to 24th Avenue N.E.. He said Porter Avenue and Acres Street Project is currently under construction and under budget by \$360,000 at this time.

In the fall of 2020, Council authorized federal funds for Jenkins Avenue: Imhoff Road to Lindsey Street; Porter Avenue Streetscape; Constitution Street from Jenkins Avenue to Classen Boulevard; and the Traffic Management Center. Mr. Sturtz said ACOG is agreeable, with Council's consent, to transferring FFY 2023 funds from the Jenkins Avenue and Constitution Street Projects to the Gray Street Two-Way Conversion Project, which means the City will keep \$1.7 million in federal funding guaranteed for those projects. Pros for this transfer of funds means Gray Street Two-Way Conversion can begin in 2023; the City will have more time to coordinate with the University of Oklahoma (OU) on the Jenkins Avenue Project; the ability to obtain funding for Constitution Street; and Jenkins Avenue and Constitution Street rank well and can compete for future federal funding. The only cons are delaying Jenkins Avenue until 2024 and having to reapply for federal funding for Jenkins Avenue and Constitution Street.

Mr. Sturtz asked Council if Staff should request the \$1.7 million in federal funds be transferred to the Gray Street Two-Way Conversion Project and Councilmembers concurred, but expressed interest in saving as many trees as possible on the Jenkins Avenue Project by possibly burying electric lines.

Next steps include switching Jenkins Avenue funding to Gray Street Two-Way Conversion; submitting applications for federal funding for Jenkins Avenue - \$5.1 million, James Garner Avenue, Phase III: Acres Street to Duffy Street - \$2.5 million, and Constitution Street - \$3.9 million for FFY 2024; constructing Cedar Lane Road or other 2019 Bond Projects in FFY 2023 with leveraged federal funding of \$9.3 million (if the above referenced projects gain funding); continuing to pursue other grant applications on "good fit" projects; and promoting public engagement.

Item 1, continued:

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "2019 Transportation Bond Projects - Funding Strategies," dated August 10, 2021

* * * * *

Item 2, being:

DISCUSSION REGARDING INCENTIVES FOR COVID VACCINATIONS.

Mayor Clark said at the Oklahoma Municipal League meeting last week, members discussed the Delta variant, the rising cases of COVID, and what cities will be doing. The general consensus is that vaccine opportunities would be better than mask mandates and there was an appetite to focus on vaccine incentive programs. She has created a proposal for a vaccine incentive program that would be funded with ARPA funds. She is proposing launching the program on August 24, 2021, with the first shot being available August 30 through November 3, 2021. With the first shot, the person will be entered to win a set of tickets (five sets of two tickets) to OU's first season opener on September 11th, will be entered to win a \$25,000 cash prize, and will be given a \$10 gift coupon to a participating local business. The gift card would expire December 31, 2021, and participating businesses would turn the gift coupons into the City for reimbursement. For the second shot, she is proposing the person be entered a second time to win the cash prize and she is working on another incentive item for the second shot. She said OU students will be allowed to enter the drawing for the cash prize because they are Norman residents. For residents already vaccinated, they would bring proof of vaccination to City Hall to be entered for the cash prize.

Mayor Clark said she would like to have drive-thru options as well as fixed location options, but those details have not been determined yet. The City will partner with Norman Regional Health System and Cleveland County Health Department for the vaccine pods.

Councilmembers supported the proposal and felt the City needed to have total control over the money used for the program by possibly having a cap on the amount of gift coupons distributed. They also felt the gift coupon amount should be higher than \$10, e.g., \$25 or \$50, to really garner more interest in obtaining the vaccinations.

Mayor Clark proposed passing a resolution at the next Council meeting setting an expectation for mask wearing as well as getting vaccinated.

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

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor