



CITY OF NORMAN, OK CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING

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

Tuesday, August 01, 2023 at 5:30 PM

MINUTES

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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 Lauren Schueler
Councilmember Ward 3 Bree Montoya
Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant
Councilmember Ward 5 Michael Nash
Councilmember Ward 7 Stephen Holman
Councilmember Ward 8 Matthew Peacock

ABSENT

Councilmember Ward 6 Elizabeth Foreman

AGENDA ITEMS

1. CONSIDERATION OF ADJOURNING INTO AN EXECUTIVE SESSION AS AUTHORIZED BY OKLAHOMA STATUTES, TITLE 25 § 307(B)(3) IN ORDER TO DISCUSS THE APPRAISAL AND ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY LOCATED GENERALLY WEST OF 12TH AVE NE, SOUTH OF ROCK CREEK ROAD AND NORTH OF ALAMEDA, AS WELL AS REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT THE SE CORNER OF 24TH AVE NE AND ROBINSON, ALL IN NORMAN.

Motion made by Councilmember Ward 8 Peacock, Seconded by Councilmember Ward 2 Schueler.

Item 1, continued:

Voting Yea: Mayor Heikkila, Councilmember Ward 1 Ball, Councilmember Ward 2 Schueler, Councilmember Ward 3 Montoya, Councilmember Ward 4 Grant, Councilmember Ward 5 Nash, Councilmember Ward 7 Holman

The City Council adjourned into Executive Session at 5:32 p.m. Mr. Darrel Pyle, City Manager, Ms. Kathryn Walker, City Attorney; Mr. Anthony Francisco, Director of Finance; Mr. Jason Olson, Director of Parks and Recreation; and Ms. Emily Pomeroy and Ms. Lisa Harden with the Center for Economic Development Law, were in attendance at the Executive Session.

Motion made by Councilmember Ward 8 Peacock, Seconded by Councilmember Ward 4 Grant.

Voting Yea: Mayor Heikkila, Councilmember Ward 1 Ball, Councilmember Ward 2 Schueler, Councilmember Ward 3 Montoya, Councilmember Ward 4 Grant, Councilmember Ward 5 Nash, Councilmember Ward 7 Holman

The Executive Session was adjourned out of and the Special Session was reconvened at 6:25 p.m.

The appraisal and acquisition of real property located generally west of 12th Avenue N.E. south of Rock Creek Road and north of Alameda Street as well as real property located at the southeast corner of 24th Avenue N.E. and Robinson Street, all in Norman was discussed. No action was taken and no votes were cast.

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2. DISCUSSION REGARDING HOUSE BILLS 2903 AND 2904 PROVIDING POSSIBLE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADDITIONAL SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS.

Mr. Darrel Pyle, City Manager, said prior to discovery of House Bills 2903 and 2904, Staff was approached by some Parent Teacher Association (PTA) members asking what they needed to do to get more School Resource Officers (SRO's). There are 17 elementary schools that do not have SROs and although funding is a big part of this program, staffing is a much bigger part of the program. He said the Norman Police Department (NPD) is expected to be fully staffed by January and adding 17 more officers could be a three year process, which is not an immediate solution. He said Mayor Heikkila discovered a House Bill had been signed into law that creates a pilot project for the State of Oklahoma for a \$50 million three year pilot program for safety in schools. He said approximately \$98,000 will be distributed per school district per year for three years and the State Department of Education (SDE) said they are taking administrative costs right off the top leaving \$90,000 per year per school district for three years. He said \$90,000 is a little less than the cost of one SRO and NPS is recognizing they want to use that funding for additional SRO efforts and the School Districts are the recipients of the dollars in those House Bills. He said Texas Legislature approved a bill for an SRO and armed security personnel in every school in the State of Texas.

Item 2, continued:

Mr. Pyle said the pilot project tells which way legislatures are leaning towards and there is also a Federal conversation taking place about making SRO's mandatory nationwide. He said momentum is shifting towards school safety although it would be better if that came with more funding, but Staff is bringing this to Council's attention for input. He said it would cost \$100,000 per SRO and with 17 elementary schools needing an SRO, it becomes unsustainable over time. He said this is not an overnight fix and it will be years in the making, but it starts with that first step and what that direction looks like. He said the SDE will have application procedures in place by Friday, August 4, 2023.

Mr. Pyle said NPS wants seasoned officers in the schools because of things the officers are situationally aware of and there is a path for NPS to help meet earlier staffing needs in expansion of services through the Sheriff's Office. He said in the long term, NPS wants to expand its relationship with the City, but the thought that NPS could help pay half for 17 officers is not realistic.

Councilmember Schueler asked how the City would handle a possible mandate and Mr. Kevin Foster, Police Chief, said the program would be phased in, i.e., four officers per year going forward until the City has the 17 SRO's. He said the City still has four SRO's required in the Public Safety Sales Tax (PSST) so that could be the first four SRO's and the City would move forward from there. He said he will be talking to the County Sheriff's Office to see if they are going to place officers in schools and if the officers are going to be security guards or actual SRO's.

Councilmember Schueler said this is an extra layer of work for NPD, but she prefers Norman Officers be elevated into these positions. Mayor Heikkila agreed and said it is good management of the Sheriff to be helping the City in this step so the City can move forward without having to take 17 officers from NPD. Chief Foster said there is a huge push for SRO's, but they are going to have to be phased in.

Councilmember Holman said he is concerned about the financial ability to add one SRO for each school even looking years down the road and if NPS is not able to contribute at all to the program is there other precedent of other cities paying for the security of a public school entity?. Mr. Pyle said depending on how the pilot program morphs and whether or not federal legislation actually comes into play there is a lot of potential paths to follow. He said the three year pilot window happens to end about the time the debt service is paid off in PSST, which frees up approximately \$2 million per year.

Ms. Kathryn Walker, City Attorney, said State Legislation set up a revolving fund in anticipation of other funding from the Federal Government so all grants and other monies received from the State and Federal Governments for school security projects and SRO's will be going into this revolving fund. She believes there is an intent for a longer term program and all the money within the revolving fund would have to be spent on maintaining the SRO Program or security enhancements for the schools.

Item 2, continued:

Mr. Pyle said the Public Safety Study is currently in the Request for Proposal (RFP) stage, but he believes there will be a recommendation for more officers especially with the University of Oklahoma (OU) changing over to the Southeast Conference (SEC). He said PTA parents believe the best approach is to have uniform support at all schools.

Councilmember Peacock asked if the City has the ability to run an academy geared just for SRO's because there will be a Statewide hiring bonanza on SRO's and it would be great to get ahead of the curve to get the best of the best. Chief Foster said he is thinking that someone would go through the academy, work in the streets for a period of time, then going to SRO training to be placed in a school.

Councilmember Schueler said she would like officers currently on Staff to be elevated into a SRO position due to training and experience. She would rather have experienced, seasoned officers protecting the schools.

Mr. Pyle said NPS would like to have a police car parked at every school and that would be a great use of surplus vehicles as well as a visual deterrent. He said NPS would be responsible for maintenance of the vehicles.

Councilmember Grant asked what happens after three years if the State does not continue the program and Mr. Pyle said no one knows the answer to that, but it would be very difficult to go backwards and take SRO's out of schools. He said if the City moves forward with the program, it would just be a new way of business going forward.

Mr. Pyle said NPD is working with the Sheriff's Office to see how quickly things could happen and City Staff will have more information for Council next week and seek direction.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor