



CITY OF NORMAN, OK
PUBLIC SAFETY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
Development Center, Room B, 225 N. Webster, Norman, OK 73069
Thursday, November 09, 2023 at 4:00 PM

MINUTES

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ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Chairman Linda Price
Committee Member Kyle Hurley
Committee Member Lea Greenleaf
Committee Member Russell Rice
Committee Member Ann Gallagher
Committee Member Greg Gilkey

ABSENT

Committee Member Kenny Orr
Committee Member Mark Emerson

OTHERS

Battalion Chief Chad Roney, NFD
Russell Anderson, Comm. Systems Supervisor
Kim Coffman, Budget Manager
Dannielle Risenhoover, Administrative Tech. IV
Major Chad Vincent, NPD
Bill Scanlon, Citizen
Justin Milner, NPS Asst. Superintendent

Chair Price called the meeting to order at approximately 4:10 PM. She welcomed everyone to the meeting.

MINUTES

1. CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDMENT AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 12, 2023

Member Lee moved to approve the October 12, 2023 Public Safety Oversight Committee minutes which was duly seconded by Member Rice. The motion passed unanimously.

Items submitted for the record:

Citizens Public Safety Oversight Committee Minutes from October 12, 2023.

REPORTS

2. CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDMENT AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF FINANCIAL REPORTS

Kim Coffman gave the report. As of the end of October, revenue was 6-7% below the budgeted target. Coffman stated, "Sales tax has been down a little bit. Our target for each month is at least \$1.05 million and we've only met that target one of the four months. We're hoping to bring that back throughout the rest of the fiscal year." Coffman continued, "Overall, the expenditures are looking good." The major expenditures for the month of October were for ammunition, continued construction of the Emergency Communications Operations Center (ECOC), and payments for architectural and engineering services to ADG.

Items submitted for the record:

Financial Reports

DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS

3. MONTHLY UPDATES - FIRE DEPARTMENT

Battalion Chief Chad Roney gave the report. Roney stated that the official kick-off of the Resource Allocation Study was November 7. Norman Fire Department officials are currently in Ohio completing their final review of Engine One and the "spec out" for Engine Three. Engine One is expected to be in service by the end of 2023.

Member Greenleaf asked why the Public Safety Oversight Committee never sees any debts or request for funds for emergency management. Roney replied that a lot of the emergency management funds come through grants. Kim Coffman added, "Emergency management doesn't have a division within the Public Safety Sales Tax Fund, so that's why you don't see that on your financials. The Fire Department and Public Safety Sales Tax (PSST) Fund is only to fund those 30 firefighters that they added through that ordinance and their materials, supplies and so forth, and then the apparatuses. They (Emergency Management) have their own division in the General Fund. They get sales tax revenue and have budget requests every fiscal year."

4. MONTHLY UPDATES - POLICE DEPARTMENT

a) POLICE DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Major Chad Vincent gave the update. The graduation date for the current Norman Police Academy is tentatively set for December 14, 2023. This academy is expected to graduate 9 or 10 cadets. Norman Police Department (NPD) currently has openings for 14 officers. It appears that the January 2024 Norman Police Academy will have 10 cadets. Vincent said that on November 14, NPD will approach Norman City Council with the request that they appropriate funds for the hiring of the four additional School Resource Officer (SRO) positions that were voter approved thru the PSST 2 mandate. If approved, the authorization to hire these four positions will create an estimated eight vacancies within the police department come January 2024.

Member Rice asked if Norman Public Schools (NPS) are going to pay their share of the costs associated with the SRO positions. Vincent replied, "They're still working that out."

Rice cited a document stating, "The City and NPS agree to jointly fund the School Resource Officer Program," he continued, "and contract law says that 'each responsible party should pay equally.'"

Kim Coffman stated, "That's not the language of the ordinance. The ordinance just says 'cost share'. This has been debated many times, but as long as they're (NPS) paying for any portion of it, that's technically a cost share."

Member Rice stated that he didn't believe that the City should be paying for the cost of providing Norman Police Officers for after school events. Coffman said, "The cost share that we propose to Norman Public Schools each year, does include an average of how much was spent on over-time. Last year, I believe it was just over \$20,000 per officer. They would split that. When Norman Public Schools agrees to pay, which they haven't agreed to pay this fiscal year yet, and we haven't received any payments from them this fiscal year, they are paying for a portion of overtime for those events."

Vincent stated that the call volume continues to pick up and officers continue to stay busy. "Things are really going pretty well," Vincent stated. "Nothing major, nothing super crazy, so all is well."

b) DISPATCH UPDATES

Russell Anderson gave the report. Anderson confirmed that the public safety vehicle storage facility letter endorsed by the Oversight Board was received by the City Council; however, no action or study session has been taken regarding building the vehicle storage facility. Chair Price commented, "I did talk to the Mayor and asked him about it, and asked him to speak with the City Manager about it, and he said he would do that."

Dispatch does not have anyone in training right now and is down six employees. Six applicants have already interviewed and are now in the background check process.

The University of Oklahoma's (OU) legal department has approved OU joining the City of Norman's Computer Aided Design (CAD) system. Anderson said, "This will be a pretty big

undertaking but it will be good for the interoperability. We're trying to get County and we're trying to get Moore on the same system and with our combined SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) teams, it only makes sense." There has been no update on Moore coming onto City of Norman's system, but Anderson did speak with Sheriff Todd Gibson and said it sounds as if Moore is leaning towards joining Norman's system instead of Oklahoma City's.

c) EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS CENTER (ECOC) UPDATES

Russell Anderson gave the report. The concrete shell of the ECOC building is up. Early this month, or by the end of December, curbs should be poured with preparations for pavement work. Windows and doors should be installed by the end of December or early January. Security access controls have been ordered.

Kim Coffman said, "Related to the ECOC, there's going to be an opportunity for project managers to present to the Council the status of the capital projects later on this month. That might be a good opportunity for them to include the need for that storage facility and bring it to the forefront of the Council's attention."

d) STATISTICS ON SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER (SRO) PROGRAM

Major Chad Vincent led the review of the statistical data. The data reviewed was for the 2022-2023 school year. There were nine arrests that occurred on school grounds but only six arrests were of Norman Public School students. "I think it's pretty noteworthy that we made six arrests in an entire school year when you have 16,000 students spread amongst 25-ish different sites," Vincent said. "When we talk about data and making arrests, and how we interact with the students and families, we want to mentor, coach, and help; but, at some point, there is an accountability piece. When you're bringing a weapon to school, conspire to commit terrorism, possession of a weapon - some of those are offenses that just need to be taken action on. We have a responsibility for school safety and if you bring a gun to school, there's most likely going to be an arrest made."

A section of the data looked at was classified as "Non-custodial Criminal Charges". This section referred to events where arrests were not made, but charges were filed. There were 42 events listed under this category, some of which included assault and battery on a school employee, child sexual abuse, and possession of controlled dangerous substances. "I go back to the coaching, the mentoring, the loving on students, but we do have an obligation to protect our teachers and our students and these are the instances where we've held people accountable and filed charges on them," Vincent said.

Member Hurley asked, "If I'm pro SRO and I'm having a conversation with someone who is not SRO friendly who says, "You know what? It's a pipeline to prison, they're targeting certain groups," you all (Police Officers) still would have done these exact same things if those SRO's were actually out on the streets, so in-other-words, does this actually keep the kids safe in the schools or are we just talking about the impact reaching out into their home and everything?"

Norman Public School Assistant Superintendent Justin Milner replied, "I think you're right, the crime has happened. It's going to get caught somewhere else, but the fact is that the school is vulnerable. As far as the impact on the schools, I will tell you from conversations with school faculty yesterday, if there wasn't an SRO in their building they wouldn't be there. And they're

very honest. They would not feel safe otherwise - to be either an administrator, a teacher or any support staff. That's the world we're living in. It's a challenge to find teaching staff as it is, but again, when we can't help them feel safe in that environment because of what we're listing here...these offenses are scary and they're darn sure scary for teachers who feel very vulnerable right now for so many reasons, but one - their own safety. The children in the following pages, the bulk of this, when you talk about kids in protective custody situations, these are kids that have exceeded the capacity of our school counselors. They are at such an escalated stage that they're about to harm themselves or others - or they've been harmed. That's the other thing, they didn't get sexually abused at school, but they came to our school sexually abused. They notified an adult and we took action on it and we engaged law enforcement and DHS as we should, according to the law, to protect that child further from any reoccurring abuse we pray. Not to be overly dramatic, and if anyone knows me, I'm not one to be dramatic, but I'm going to be a straight shooter with you - I look at that list and those "protective custodies" and the super majority I look at as potential fatalities. I don't know how you measure that, but I will tell you that - if unresolved, I see that kid taking someone's life or their own. We have to do everything possible, within our control, and we still won't save them all, but it won't be for lack of trying, but we've got to continue to make that commitment. We understand our responsibility and we've been hardening the structures, but even that can be penetrated. The other issue is - the threat is not always on the outside. We've seen unfortunate situations in our country where the threat was within the walls. We've put a number of things in place to try and minimize that impact. Having an SRO in that building, building relationships and connecting with kids, and making kids feel like they can reach out, in addition to other tip lines that we put in place, in coordination with NPD and the City of Norman, I believe all that together helps us add a layer of safety that without them (SRO's) you could never achieve."

Member Greenleaf said, "The one thing that I think all of us understand is that we all represent different wards. I, for one, do not want anyone to call me and ask, 'Why didn't you have protection in the schools?' I want to have kids protected. I don't want to be like so many other places in the country where people didn't go in and do their job or nobody was there to do the job. So, yah, I'm going to continue to fight for it."

Major Vincent covered the next section of the data that covered Municipal Court tickets. "The Municipal Court has a program directed at kids that really helps to come along side of them, loves on them, gives them resources. They don't want anything to be on anybody's permanent record and typically, they tell me, about half of these types of charges get dismissed, but what happens on 100% of the cases is parents get to figure out how to be better parents, the students get a chance to get connected," Vincent said. "This is another opportunity for our kids to get some assistance, some extra love from the City of Norman through our Municipal Court system."

Citizen, Bill Scanlon who has been involved with the Municipal Court system for the last six years added, "I see these dockets. Most of the stuff that comes before the court is not from SROs. They're not."

Vincent drew attention to the last data block that referred to crisis intervention/mental health. This included the bulk of the incidents with 144 line items. "Sixty-nine of these line items come from crisis intervention. Crisis intervention is also what we call protective custody. This is when the person is at the point where they are an immediate threat to themselves or others. This application, candidly, is when kids are at the end of their rope or ready to kill themselves or somebody else - usually this is themselves." Vincent said. "This is the most challenging block

(of data) for me to really articulate. These are the cases of 'I want to die.' That's when our SROs get a chance to come along side these kiddos, really when they're at their lowest point of their lives and they get a chance to walk through a process with them. They get them plugged into resources, they do whatever it takes to help get that kid in a better spot. Most times this is taken to an outside facility, typically to our juvenile intervention type, mental health partners in the City. Most times they are not put in handcuffs. When they are put in handcuffs, it's when a safety issue is present. Most of the time what you'll see is kids getting in a car and then the officer or parents go and get that kid in front of a counselor who can provide immediate, in-depth care for the kid. The other challenging part is you look at the age. This is what's really tough. You've got six, seven, and nine year olds."

Justin Milner added, "When I started (working for NPS) we would talk about suicides and suicidal ideation and we were often times talking about high school students only, when I got here 20 years ago. That has come down to talking about pre-K, Kindergarten aged students. Four, five and six (year olds) having suicidal ideation. That's not a teacher making that determination. That's a mental health provider making that determination. It's an epidemic."

Vincent concluded with, "About half of what our school resource officers do is directly related to mental health."

Items for the record:

SRO Program Statistical Data

4. ESTABLISH TOPICS FOR THE DECEMBER 14, 2023 MEETING

Chair Price asked that an update regarding Council's decision on allocating funds for four additional SRO officers be put on the December 14th agenda.

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Member Rice made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was duly seconded by Member Gilkey. The motion passed unanimously.

Linda Price, Chair
Citizens Public Safety Oversight Committee