CITY OF NORMAN, OK
CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE

Municipal Building, Executive Conference Room, 201 West Gray, Norman, OK 73069
Tuesday, August 11, 2026, at 5:00 PM

MINUTES

The City Council Conference of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in Regular Session in the Executive Conference Room in the Municipal Building, on Tuesday, August 11, 2026, at 5:00 PM, and notice of the agenda of the meeting was posted at the Norman 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

Mayor Holman called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

PRESENT
Mayor Stephen Holman
Councilmember Ward 1 David Gandesbery
Councilmember Ward 2 Jacy Deck
Councilmember Ward 3 Robert Bruce
Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant
Councilmember Ward 5 Trey Kirby
Councilmember Ward 6 Kyle Steele
Councilmember Ward 8 Scott Dixon

ABSENT
Councilmember Ward 7 Kimberly Blodgett

AGENDA ITEMS

1. DISCUSSION REGARDING POTENTIAL INTERCHANGE LOCATIONS WITHIN NORMAN FOR THE SOUTH EXTENSION TURNPIKE PLANNED FOR CONSTRUCTION BY THE OKLAHOMA TURNPIKE AUTHORITY.

   Mr. Trent January, Oklahoma Turnpike Authority, provided an update on the Toby Keith Expressway and Southern Extension projects, including the proposed additional interchanges. He explained that the Authority had engaged a third-party landscaping group to develop potential designs based on feedback received during public meetings.

   Mr. Joe Echelle, Oklahoma Turnpike Authority, discussed the Southern Extension's proposed alignment, interchanges, and emergency access. He explained that the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority receives its authority from the State Legislature and does not require City approval to construct the turnpike itself. Hel also discussed the Authority's existing agreement with the Oklahoma Highway Patrol and the potential for contracting with local fire departments, noting that additional emergency-response costs could ultimately affect toll rates. Mr. Echelle stated that, from a safety perspective, interchanges spaced approximately every five miles would provide additional access

Item 1, continued:

and turnaround opportunities, particularly as the area continues to grow. He also explained that future interchanges could potentially be considered after the turnpike is constructed, although doing so later could require additional right-of-way, utility, relocation, roadway improvements, and local funding.

Council questioned whether the City has authority over construction of the turnpike, the Authority's responsibility for emergency response, and whether local fire departments could be contracted to provide services. Councilmember Dixon expressed support for continuing to discuss the issue from a public safety perspective. Councilmember Bruce asked about other Oklahoma communities without turnpike interchanges and whether any state agency independently evaluates interchange spacing from a statewide safety perspective. Mr. Echelle explained that the Authority generally considers approximately five miles an appropriate spacing for safe access and emergency turnaround locations, although specific locations depend on engineering and other factors. Councilmember Gandesbery expressed support for an interchange near Alameda and Tecumseh based on public safety and hazardous-material response concerns, while emphasizing that his position depended on the Authority's information regarding affected properties. Councilmember Kirby expressed strong opposition, citing the City's existing shortage of firefighters and stating that the proposed interchange would provide limited additional emergency-response benefit compared with existing routes. Council discussed whether emergency access could instead be provided through a gate or other roadway connection without constructing a full interchange. Councilmember Grant requested that, if staff proceeds with a resolution, it includes information regarding a future fire station, noise studies and sound walls, natural landscaping, potential wetland mitigation, and assistance with fire equipment for hazardous-material response. Council also discussed the potential long-term liability and increased call volume that the Southern Extension could create for the Norman Fire Department, as well as the lack of a direct mechanism for compensating the City for those additional public-safety costs. Council questioned the timing for providing direction to staff. Staff explained that a resolution could be prepared for a future Council meeting and would be subject to Council consideration and a public hearing. Councilmember Hinkle indicated that he opposed the interchanges but wanted an opportunity to hear from Ward Six constituents before providing final input

Council also discussed whether declining the proposed interchanges now would prevent the City from requesting them in the future. Mr. Echelle explained that the City could potentially request an interchange later, but doing so could require additional property acquisition, utility relocation, and improvements to City streets, and the project would have to be reconsidered against the Authority's priorities at that time.

Council directed staff to continue developing resolution language regarding the proposed interchanges and incorporate the additional information requested by Council, including considerations related to a future fire station, noise mitigation, sound walls, natural landscaping, wetland mitigation, and fire equipment/public-safety needs.

*****

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:29 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor Stephen T. Holman