

**THE CITY OF NORMAN/NORMAN MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY
NORMAN FORWARD CITIZEN FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT BOARD
ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 1, 2023 – DECEMBER 31, 2024**

The NORMAN FORWARD Citizen Financial Oversight Board (CFOB) was established by the City Council (Resolution R-1516-75) on December 22, 2015 to “review actual and projected Norman Forward Sales Tax (NFST) revenues; recommend a mix of project financing versus pay as you go ("paygo"); review the pace and sequencing of construction projects; review all Council actions related to expenditures of NFST moneys; recommend strategies for long-term operations and maintenance of facilities; report to Council from time to time as warranted and to provide an annual report to Council; perform such other duties related to Norman Forward as the Council directs by motion or resolution; create policies and procedures as guidelines for the functioning of the NFST CFOB in areas including but not limited to attendance, receiving public testimony, structure or format of meetings, frequency of public hearings; and be willing to assign an NFST CFOB member to serve with and act as a liaison to certain Advisory Committees that Council may form from time to time regarding specific Norman Forward Projects related to Libraries, Senior Center, Westwood Pool replacement, Indoor Aquatics, Football/Softball Sport Complex, Griffin Park Soccer improvements, Ruby Grant Park improvements, Reaves Park baseball improvements, Andrews Park improvements, Westwood Tennis facilities, Trail development, and Neighborhood Park improvements.”

There are nine Board members, with terms expiring as follows:

Erik Paulson; December 22, 2024
Linda Price; December 22, 2024
Andy Rieger; December 22, 2024
Alva Brockus; December 22, 2025
Cinthya Rogers; December 22, 2025
Zachary Simpson; December, 22, 2025
Misty Grantham; December 22, 2026
Saidy Herrera-Orellana*; December 22, 2026
Andy Sherrer; December 22, 2026

*Resigned

The Board will continue in existence until the NFST term has expired, all NFST revenues have been expended or allocated, or a final report is made to Council, whichever occurs latest.

The voters of Norman, on October 13, 2015, approved the City of Norman’s Ordinance O-1516-5, which authorized a 15-year, ½ percent sales tax, primarily to pay for quality of life improvements including the following:

- New Central Branch Library - \$39,000,000 (Completed 11/2019; \$35,010,261)
- New East Branch Library - \$5,100,000 (Completed 7/2018; \$4,794,304)
- James Garner Avenue Extension - \$6,000,000 (Completed 9/2024; \$5,503,664)
- New Indoor Aquatic Facility - \$14,000,000 (“YFAC” Completed 2/2024)
- Westwood Pool Reconstruction - \$12,000,000 (Completed 5/2017; \$11,763,800)
- Westwood Tennis Center - \$1,000,000 (Completed 9/2018; \$1,801,277)
- Reaves Park Baseball Complex - \$10,000,000 (Completed 3/2023)
- Griffin Park Land Purchase - \$10,000,000 *(Now \$2,400,000 for lease payments)
- Griffin Park Soccer Complex - \$11,000,000 (Completed 9/2023; \$12,871,928)
- New Football/Softball Complex - \$2,500,000 (Completed 10/2022; \$2,450,346)
- New Indoor Multi-Sport Facility - \$8,500,000 (“YFAC” Completed 2/2024; \$48,014,740 – All Sources)
- New Neighborhood Park Development - \$2,000,000
- Existing Neighborhood Park Improvements - \$6,500,000
- New Trail Development (Legacy Trail) - \$6,000,000 (Now \$4,500,000)
- Ruby Grant Park (Phase I) - \$6,000,000 (Completed 11/2020; \$6,146,426)
- Saxon Park Development (Phase II) - \$2,000,000
- Andrews Park Redevelopment - \$1,500,000 (Completed 11/2019; \$1,446,574)
- Canadian River Trails Park Development - \$2,000,000
- Road and Infrastructure Improvements - \$2,700,000
- Senior Citizen’s Center – TBD *(“AWE Center” Completed 11/2023; \$14,154,421 – All Sources)
- Public Art Installations – TBD (Near Completion \$1,022,192)

*Through mutual agreement with the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, a long-term lease of the Griffin Park land was negotiated for \$80,000 per year (\$2,400,000 over the life of NORMAN FORWARD). The City Council re-programmed the remaining \$7,600,000 originally allocated for the purchase of the Griffin Park land for construction of the Senior Citizen’s Center.

Other authorized NORMAN FORWARD expenditures could include operating subsidies to the Indoor Aquatic Facility and Westwood Aquatic Center; capital replacement; and/or maintenance and support personnel.

The Citizen Financial Oversight Board (CFOB) began meeting in January, 2016 and has been reviewing documents, reports and Council actions since then. During this reporting period, meetings of the full CFOB were held on April 4, 2023; May 23, 2023; July 18, 2023; September 15, 2023; November 3, 2023; December 29, 2023; February 23, 2024; April 12, 2024; June 5, 2024; July 31, 2024; September 20, 2024; and November 15, 2024. Significant items discussed and reviewed over the current reporting period include the following:

- Completion of the major “brick and mortar” facility construction projects included in the NORMAN FORWARD program, and site visits to the major facilities.
- Review of Operating Agreements for the Adult Wellness and Education (AWE) Center, Griffin Soccer Complex and YFAC
- Concerns with the Norman Public Library Central building
- Parking at the AWE Center and YFAC

NORMAN FORWARD Implementation Plan

The Norman Forward Project Implementation Plan (IP) was originally prepared by City staff and the Program Management Consultant, ADG. The Board was provided with updates to the project timing schedules included in the IP throughout the current reporting period. The Implementation Plan continues to be a “living” document which will change over time. The Board will review the IP on at least a semi-annual basis, with further updates as necessary based on major project milestones being achieved.

NORMAN FORWARD Pro Forma Financial Projections

The Board requested City staff, in conjunction with the City’s Financial Advisory team, to prepare Pro Forma Financial Projections for the entire 15-year NORMAN FORWARD program. Based on the project budgets and other expense assumptions, sales and use tax revenue projections, and debt issuance and interest rate projections, the Pro Forma projections were prepared to answer basic questions of, given these logical assumptions, will NORMAN FORWARD be financially able to deliver the projects that were promised to the voters? Will there be “excess” money during the NFST collection period or left over at the end for other projects or needs? Will there be cash flow concerns during interim time periods of NORMAN FORWARD’s tenure, which will require changes to the timing of pay-as-you-go projects? The most recently-updated Pro Forma projections are attached to this report.

The Pro Forma financials have been updated and presented to the Board periodically. The Board adopted changes to the revenue growth rate assumptions for sales tax (from 4.25% to 2%) and use tax (from 4% to 5%) that are built into the pro forma analyses.

As illustrated below, the NORMAN FORWARD Sales Tax and Use Tax collection rates have varied over their life, with sales tax growth beginning slower than projected but increasing in recent years. Use tax collections have been consistently above projections. Total sales and use tax revenue collections are currently about two percent (2%) below the original projections.

NORMAN FORWARD Revenue Collections
vs. Original (2015) and Fiscal Year Projections
as of January, 2025

	Original (2015) Projection	Fiscal Year Projection	ACTUAL COLLECTION	VARIANCE (%) From Original	VARIANCE (%) From Fiscal Year
Sales Tax	\$102,871,583	\$93,589,126	\$93,052,040	- 9.55%	-0.57%
Use Tax	\$ 4,214,633	\$ 9,783,651	\$11,628,580	175.91%	18.86%
TOTAL	\$107,086,216	\$103,372,777	\$104,680,620	- 2.25%	1.27%

The Board and ultimately the City Council/Norman Municipal Authority have adapted well to changes necessitated by the financial realities presented in the Pro Forma, and will be directed to continue to do so.

NORMAN FORWARD Revenue and Expenditure Reports

At each of its meetings, the Board is presented with financial reports on projected and actual sales tax collections and expenditures by project. The most recent of these reports are attached. The Board understands that the financial information will become more and more meaningful as NFST collections are received and actual collection patterns progress, and as projects progress and their related expenditures can be measured versus preliminary project budgets. Supplemental funding from external sources has been allocated to projects in some cases and some re-allocation of funding between projects has been directed by the Council and approved by the Board. Overall, the Board is encouraged by the program’s financial resiliency on a net basis.

NORMAN FORWARD Sales Tax Collection Concerns

Beginning in March, 2017, the Board began discussing concerns with sales tax collections being below projections. Although use tax collection has been quite a bit above projections recently, actual sales and use tax collections combined have been approximately 2.25% below the original projections (see attached Sales Tax Revenue reports). This condition has actually improved substantially from previous reporting periods. The Board restates its recommendation to Council, however, that all savings on the NORMAN FORWARD projects should be retained to make up for shortfalls in projects and revenue and not used for project add-ons.

NORMAN FORWARD Ad Hoc Project Committee Liaisons

A part of the original direction from the City Council to the Citizen Financial Oversight Board was for the CFOB to appoint a Member to act as a Liaison to each of the Ad Hoc

Project Committees appointed to consider design and construction specifications for each of the major NORMAN FORWARD projects. The Board has appointed the following members to these Liaison roles, to date:

Senior Citizen's Center – Completed
Griffin Park Soccer Complex – Completed
Reaves Park Baseball/Softball Complex – Completed
Indoor Aquatic Center/Indoor Multi-Sport Center – Completed
Ruby Grant Park – Completed
Youth Football/Adult Softball Facility – Completed
Saxon Community Park – Cynthia Rogers

Completion of Major NORMAN FORWARD Projects

As previously discussed, the major “brick and mortar” projects paid for by the NFST have been completed. The Board is pleased to report that these projects have for the most part been completed on time and within their budgets, supplemented in some cases by outside funding sources (CARES Act, Norman Regional Hospital, Federal Transit Administration, etc.). These project completion finances are summarized in the attached Completed Project Cost Report (as of January, 2025).

CFOB Review of City Council Actions

At each of its meetings, the CFOB receives and reviews any City Council or Norman Municipal Authority actions that have been taken since the CFOB last met that impact the NORMAN FORWARD Sales Tax program. The Board has an understanding of its review authority and its ability to timely report back to the Council and/or the public on any Council/NMA actions which the Board believes would not be in the best interest of the NORMAN FORWARD program, or which the Board may believe to be in conflict with the tenets of the NORMAN FORWARD Ordinance. The reports and recommendations that the Board has made to the Council during this reporting period are attached.

NORMAN FORWARD Program Management Consultant

Early in the implementation of the NORMAN FORWARD program, it was determined by the City Council that there would be a need to retain an outside architectural/engineering consultant to act as a “Program Manager”, with the stated goal of helping to deliver the promised projects on time and within their financial budgets. ADG Professional Corporation was selected to fill this role. As the major “brick and mortar” construction projects in the Norman Forward program have been completed or are nearing completion, the services of the Program Manager to the CFOB have terminated. The Board has had ongoing discussion of the potential contributions to the problems at the Norman Public Library Central project due to insufficient oversight by the Project Manager.

Norman Public Library Central Water Infiltration Issues

Throughout the reporting period, the Board has received reports on the status of the completed Norman Public Library, Central (NPL Central) project and water infiltration issues that have led to the temporary closure of the facility less than five years into its useful life. The Board understands that its role is limited to oversight of the NORMAN FORWARD Sales and Use Tax contributions to the construction of the facility, and that role has been served well, with the project coming in on time and well below its budgeted cost. The Board believes that it has a responsibility to continue to monitor the situation at the Central NPL, due to the negative public reflection of the closure on the NORMAN FORWARD program as a whole. The Board appreciates receiving ongoing status reports from Program Managers on the project, and will continue to include information in reports to the public.

NORMAN FORWARD Project Updates

At each of its meetings, the Board receives updates on the progress of authorized NORMAN FORWARD projects from the Project Management staff and/or from the related Ad Hoc Group Liaison. The Board has also been given presentations from project architects on the preliminary design and master site plans for major NFST projects. The Board's discussion of this information forms the basis for Board recommendations on its review of Council actions taken related to the NORMAN FORWARD program.

NORMAN FORWARD is delivering on its promises to the residents of and visitors to Norman. The major Norman Forward projects have been completed and residents of and visitors to Norman will be enjoying them. Considering that the temporary taxing period for Norman Forward is only halfway through its term, the progress of the projects is a tremendous success story.

NFST Revenue Bonds

The major NORMAN FORWARD projects were financed through three debt issuances, secured by the Norman Forward Sales Tax, through the Norman Municipal Authority. The revenue generated from these revenue bonds has been spent on the approved project costs. Payment of the debt service on these bonds will become the major expenditure of Norman Forward funds in the coming years. The Board discussed the attached debt repayment (amortization) schedules for these bonds at its April, 2024 meeting.

Summary

Summarized information on collections and expenditures from the Norman Forward Sales Tax, along with the most recently-updated Pro Forma Financial Projections prepared for the CFOB is attached.

The NORMAN FORWARD Citizen Financial Oversight Board is extremely excited about the progress of the NFST program to date. The CFOB remains committed to ensuring that

all of the projects approved by the voters in the Norman Forward Sales Tax will be completed at the level that can be supported by available revenues.

The Council/Norman Municipal Authority actions taken to implement the NFST Ordinance have been in compliance with the direction approved by the voters of Norman. While there are concerns about the shortfall in sales tax revenue, a great deal of credit is due to the engaged Norman public, the City Council, the financial involvement of the Norman Municipal Authority, the various Ad Hoc project committees, City staff, and the program management firm for this progress. The mix of debt financing to complete the projects in advance of the tax revenues being received has been appropriated to complete the major projects years ahead of the tax collections. The City/NMA has been extremely successful in generating funding from other sources to supplement the Norman Forward projects, and the Council has made prudent decisions in re-allocating funds between Norman Forward projects where necessary.

The Board looks forward to its continuing role in the success of the NORMAN FORWARD program.