

CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL SESSION MINUTES

November 17, 2020

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in a virtual Special Session at 5:30 p.m. hosted in the Municipal Building Council Chambers on the 17th day of November, 2020, And notice and agenda of the meeting were posted in the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT: Councilmembers Bierman, Carter, Foreman, Hall, Holman, Petrone, Mayor Clark

ABSENT: Councilmembers Nash and Peacock

Item 2, being:

RESOLUTION R-2021-68: A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORMAN, OKLAHOMA, GIVING THE SECRETARY OF THE CLEVELAND COUNTY ELECTION BOARD NOTICE OF MUNICIPAL AND MUNICIPAL RUNOFF ELECTIONS FOR 2021.

Councilmember Petrone moved that Resolution R-2021-68 be adopted, which motion was duly seconded by Councilmember Foreman;

Items submitted for the record

1. Resolution R-2021-68

Thereupon Councilmember Bierman moved to amend Section Five to state "elections aforementioned in Sections 2 and 4 shall be held to elect Councilmembers filling Ward positions for one (1), three (3), five (5), and seven (7) for terms of two years and for Ward Two the remainder of the term to expire on July 7, 2022," which motion was duly seconded by Councilmember Holman; and the question being upon amending Section Five as stated above, a vote was taken with the following result:

YEAS: Councilmembers Bierman, Carter, Foreman, Hall, Holman, Petrone, Mayor Clark

NAYES: None

The Mayor declared the motion carried and Resolution R-2021-68 was as amended as stated above.

and the question being upon adoption of Resolution R-2021-68, as amended, a vote was taken with the following result:

YEAS: Councilmembers Bierman, Carter, Foreman, Hall, Holman, Petrone, Mayor Clark

NAYES: None

The Mayor declared the motion carried and Resolution R-2021-68 was adopted as amended.

Item 3, being:

DISCUSSION REGARDING STATUS OF THE FYE 2021 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM (CIP) BUDGET AND PREPARATION OF FYE 2022 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM BUDGET AND THE FYE 2023-2026 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN.

Mr. Anthony Francisco, Director of Finance, said tonight Council will be updated on funded projects and Council priorities. He said discussion on proposed new projects will take place February 16, 2021, with final review of the proposed FYE 2022 plan on May 4, 2021.

Mr. Francisco said the purpose of the CIP is to support services of municipal governments and projects are identified in Long Range Master Plans reviewed by citizens and adopted by Council (land use, transportation, parks, water, wastewater, greenways, stormwater, etc.). Priorities are set for short range and long range and short range needs go into a one-year adopted Capital Budget and long range needs go into a Five-Year CIP along with proposed schedules of implementation and available funding sources. The CIP and other budgets are adopted annually, but only the one-year budget allows appropriation of funds so emergencies and high priority unanticipated project needs can be added.

Mr. Francisco said sources of funding include enterprise revenues, voter approved General Obligation (G.O.) Bond proceeds; Capital Sales Tax; NORMAN FORWARD Sales Tax (NFST); Public Safety Sales Tax (PSST); University North Park Tax Increment Finance (UNPTIF) Sales Tax; intergovernmental grants; Room Tax; private funds, and others.

A capital project generally costs more than \$100,000; is relatively fixed or permanent in nature; is an asset with an expected life span of more than five years; usually consists of the construction of new, expanded, or improved tangible assets; often takes more than one fiscal year to complete; and contracted services for design, land acquisition, and utility relocations that may be required in advance of construction.

Mr. Francisco explained that Capital outlay is expenses for maintaining, purchasing new, or replacing tangible assets which have an expected life of one to five years, and is a one-time occurrence and expense that usually occurs within a single fiscal year to include vehicles, furniture, computers, and equipment. He said Capital Outlay paid by the Capital Fund is expended from the General Fund and Westwood Fund with capital sales tax funds transferred to cover costs.

Mr. Francisco highlighted all funds included in the CIP Budget as follows:

Special Purpose Capital Funds

- Public Safety Sales Tax Fund (PSST)
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Fund
- Special Grants Fund
- Room Tax Fund
- Public Transportation and Parking Fund
- Capital Fund (Pay-As-You-Go or PAYGO)
- Capital Fund (General Obligation Bonds)
- NORMAN FORWARD Sales Tax Fund
- Park Land Development Fund
- University North Park Tax Increment Finance (UNPTIF) District Fund
- Arterial Road Recoupment Fund

Enterprise Funds

- Water Fund
- Water Reclamation Fund
- Sanitation Fund
- Sewer Maintenance Fund
- New Development Excise Tax Fund

Sources of revenue for all funds in FYE 2020 through FYE 2021 include grants – 1.92%; private funding – 0.0%; Community Park Fee - .04%; User Fees – 20.23% Capital Improvement Charge – .91%; Sewer Maintenance Rate – 5.21%; Sewer Excise Tax - .70%; Capital Sales Tax – 20.12%;

Item 3, continued:

Tax Increment Financing – 1.83%; Public Safety Sales Tax – 4.44%; NORMAN FORWARD Sales Tax – 4.92%; Room Tax - .14%; and Bonds – 39.55% for total revenues of \$245,701,122.

Expenditures for all funds in FYE 2020-2021 include Capital Outlay – 2.19%; Maintenance of Existing Facilities – 0.13%; Personnel and Services – 0.74%; Street Maintenance – 3.19%; Transportation – 23.44%; Buildings and Grounds – 29.47%; Parks and Recreation – 12.49%; Water Reclamation – 9.38%; Sanitation – 0.79%; Stormwater – 1.71%; and Water – 16.28%.

Mr. Francisco said the Capital Improvements Fund (CIF) was established in 1976 to account for capital projects funded by capital sales tax receipts, general obligation bond issues, or specific matching funds, i.e., private and reimbursement. He said these projects support services that do not have dedicated special revenues like Enterprise Funds. Those projects relating to Enterprise Funds, funded with fees and charges, or special revenue sources are accounted for in their respective Enterprise Funds. He said seven tenths of one percent (0.7%) of sales tax is set aside for capital improvements for the Capital Fund and those approved projects for construction with this funding are accounted for in the CIF.

The capital sales tax guidelines to allocate revenue includes existing facility maintenance – 5%; general contingency – 7%; Capital Outlay – 27%; street maintenance – 25%; and other projects and debt service – 36%.

Mr. Francisco highlighted the status of the Capital Fund as follows:

- Capital Fund PayGo
 - FYE 21 estimated available for new projects is a negative \$2,362,280
 - FYE 22 projected available for new projects is a negative \$2,183,805
 - FYE 23 projected available for new projects is a negative \$241,645
- Capital Fund Bonds
 - Bond reserves are unbalanced – some positive and some negative, evaluating how to balance those currently unbalanced

Councilmember Foreman asked if CARES Act funding could be used for the negative balance and Mr. Francisco said yes, but cautioned that CARES Act funding is a one-time funding source and could not be used for ongoing operational expenses.

Significant projects closed in FYE 21 (work complete and all bills paid) include James Garner Avenue, Phase 1, Acres Street and James Garner Avenue Intersection - \$1,870,500; Sidewalks and Trails, 24th Avenue N.E. - \$85,000; Legacy Park Parking Lot - \$175,000; Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Infrastructure Projects - \$17,058,000.

Mr. Francisco highlighted significant completed projects (work is finished but not all bills have been paid) in FYE 21 that includes Rock Creek Road from 24th Avenue N.E. to 60th Avenue N.E. Rural Road Projects - \$750,000; Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Compliance and Monitoring Plan Implementation, Year Four - \$300,000; Vicksburg Channel Liner Replacement - \$496,315; Asp Avenue Parking Lot - \$934,000; 24th Avenue N.W. and Tee Drive Intersection - \$1,475,000; State Highway 9 Multi-Modal Path, 36th Avenue East to 48th Avenue East - \$950,700; and 12th Avenue N.E. Traffic Signal Interconnect, Alameda Street to Robinson Street - \$293,000.

Significant projects underway in FYE 21 include Transit/Parks/Emergency Vehicle Maintenance Facility - \$8.6 million; TMDL Compliance and Monitoring Plan Implementation, Year Five - \$300,000; Lake Thunderbird TMDL Data Analysis and Plan Update, Years One through Five - \$207,160; Engineering Design Criteria and Green Stormwater Infrastructure Review, Phase I - \$125,000; Fire Station 9 (finishing miscellaneous small items) and Fire Administration Building Renovation – 85% complete; East Interstate Drive, Main Street to Robinson Street - \$915,412; 24th Avenue East Bond Project - \$14,938,870; Porter Avenue and Acres Street Intersection - \$3,675,000; Engineering Design Criteria Update and Green Stormwater Infrastructure Review, Phase II - \$150,000; and Comprehensive Plan Update.

Item 3, continued:

Projects under construction in FYE 20/21 include Municipal Complex Renovations - \$9,971,465; Legacy Trail Extension along 24th Avenue N.E. and 36th Avenue N.W. - \$980,500; 36th Avenue N.W. Utility Relocation - \$17,950,000; I-35 and Robinson Street West Side - \$5,300,000; Classen Boulevard Sidewalks - \$229,296; Flood Avenue Sidewalks, Gray Street to Acres Street - \$250,000; Porter Avenue Streetscape Utility Relocation - \$2,471,000; and Jenkins Avenue Bond Project Utility Relocation - \$9,600,000.

Mr. Francisco said CIP Sidewalks under construction include Cruce Street, Pickard Avenue to Flood Avenue; Berry Road, Boyd Street to Brooks Street; Main Street, North Side of Berry Road to Park Avenue; and Brooks Street, Jenkins Avenue to Classen Boulevard.

Mr. Francisco highlighted the FYE 2016-2021 Street Maintenance G.O. Bond Program totaling \$25 million.

Mr. Francisco said the 2012 Transportation/Stormwater Bond Program with actual costs include Cedar Lane Road: 12th Avenue S.E. to one-half mile east of 24th Avenue S.E. - \$10,048,310; Lindsey Street: 24th Avenue S.W. to Berry Road - \$42,135,770; Franklin Road Bridge: one-half mile west of 12th Avenue N.W. - \$4,219,680; 12th Avenue S.E.: State Highway 9 to Cedar Lane Road - \$3,393,780; Main Street Bridge: one-half mile west of 36th Avenue S.W. - \$7,038,000; 24th Avenue East: Lindsey Street to Robinson Street - \$14,938,870; 36th Avenue N.W.: Tecumseh Road to Indian Hills Road – amount to be determined; Alameda Street: one-half mile east of 24th Avenue S.E. – amount to be determined. He said the total bond budget is \$89,502,700 with estimated actual costs to date of \$66,835,540.

The 2019 Transportation Bond Projects for FYE 2021-2022 consist of Porter Avenue and Acres Street Intersection Improvements - \$3,675,000; Porter Avenue Streetscape - \$5,280,074; James Garner Avenue, Phase Three: Acres Street to Duffy Street - \$4,853,440; Jenkins Avenue: Imhoff Road to Lindsey Street - \$9,601,000; and Constitution Street: Jenkins Avenue to Classen Boulevard - \$2,643,260.

Mr. Francisco said in the City Vehicle Replacement Program, the City replaced 35 units in FYE 2017 - \$3,046,969; 27 units in FYE 2018 - \$2,383,036; 29 units in FYE 2019 - \$2,045,471; 36 units in FYE 20 - \$1,991,083; and 27 units in FYE 21 - \$2,150,365.

Upcoming Capital Project Fund recurring sidewalk projects in FYE 2022 includes Sidewalk Program for Schools and Arterials - \$80,000; Sidewalk Accessibility Projects - \$30,000; Citywide Sidewalk Projects (50/50 repairs) - \$50,000; Downtown Area Sidewalk Project - \$50,000; Sidewalks and Trails - \$120,000; and Horizontal Saw Cut Program - \$50,000 for total expenditures of \$370,000.

Recurring proposed CIP in FYE 2022 includes Capital Outlay - \$3,769,409; Street Maintenance - \$2,305,377; Maintenance of Existing Facilities - \$215,000; Stormwater Draining Maintenance - \$1,725,000; Personnel - \$1,384,316; Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) Audit Adjustments - \$100,000; Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Sidewalk Compliance and Repair - \$100,000; Bridge Maintenance - \$500,000; Driveway Repairs - \$10,000; Street Striping - \$100,000; Traffic Calming - \$50,000; Community/Neighborhood Improvements - \$100,000; and Building Maintenance Mechanical/Electrical - \$50,000 for total expenditures of \$10,409,102.

Councilmember Petrone said bridge replacement is important to her and asked if there is money budgeted to replace any of the bridges in Norman. Mr. Francisco said no, but bridge replacement can be included in future bond projects. Mr. Darrel Pyle, City Manager, said some of the proposed federal infrastructure funding emphasizes a bridge component and if that happens, the City will be very competitive in trying to obtain that funding. Councilmember Petrone suggested stormwater and bridge projects be combined to alleviate some stormwater issues and asked Staff to prepare information on any bridges that need immediate attention.

Upcoming significant projects in FYE 2021 include 36th Avenue N.W., Tecumseh Road to Indian Hills Road Widening Utility Relocation - \$2,000,000; Porter Avenue Streetscape - \$1,911,164; and James Garner Avenue, Phase II - \$4,853,440.

Item 3, continued:

Mr. Francisco said an ice storm hit Norman between October 26 through October 29, 2020, and an estimated 500,000 cubic yards of storm debris is anticipated to be removed beginning November 9, 2020, with completion expected within 60 to 90 days. He highlighted costs of debris removal - \$5,127,300, debris monitoring - \$1,281,825, and disposal cost - \$1,250,000 for total estimated cost of \$7,659,125 with the City's share estimated to be between \$957,000 to \$1,915,000 if federal matching funds are obtained. He said if federal funding is not obtained, the City is looking at a \$7.7 million unexpected expense, which means projects may need to be delayed or reduced in scope.

Public Safety Sales Tax Fund Projects underway in FYE 2020-2021 include Emergency Radio Communication – final acceptance and cleanup - \$15,000,000, Emergency Operations Center (EOC) – design complete - \$6,451,500, and Fire Apparatus Replacement, Year Four - \$800,000. Mr. Francisco said there is a funding shortfall on the EOC Project that will need to be addressed (approximately \$8 million).

Mr. Francisco highlighted the fire apparatus replacement schedule as FYE 2016 Elevated Platform - \$1,105,943; FYE 2017 Fire Engine - \$523,853; FYE 2018 Fire Engine - \$622,079; FYE 2019 Pumper/Tanker - \$622,079; and FYE 2020 Pumper/Tanker - \$725,000. In FYE 2021 budgeted projects include Air and Light Unit - \$475,000; Rescue Boat - \$75,000; Drone - \$25,000; Public Education Trailer - \$125,000; and two Staff vehicles - \$100,000.

FYE 2021 NORMAN FORWARD Projects completed include Central Public Library, Rotary Park Renovation, Blake Baldwin Skate Park (at Andrews Park), and Ruby Grant Community Park.

FYE 2021 NORMAN FORWARD Projects underway include Andrews Park improvements; Griffin Park remodel; Indoor Aquatic Facility and Multi-Sports Complex; new neighborhood park development (Southlake Park); James Garner Avenue – Flood Avenue to Acres Street; and Senior Wellness Center (Porter Campus location to be determined).

Upcoming NORMAN FORWARD Projects include Griffin Park, Phase Four - \$11,000,000; new neighborhood park - \$2,000,000; lease payments for Griffin Park - \$80,000 annually for a total of \$2,400,000; Canadian River Park - \$2,000,000; new trail development throughout Norman - \$6,000,000; Senior Wellness Center - \$7,600,000 plus CARES Act Funds of \$4,800,000 for a total of \$12,400,000; and Saxon Park development - \$2,000,000.

Room Tax Fund significant projects in FYE 2021 include Historic Museum parking - \$55,000, remaining debt on 2002 Norman Municipal Authority (NMA) Golf Course Bonds retiring on June 1, 2022, and projects delayed due to revenue shortfalls.

Mr. Francisco highlighted upcoming challenges that include the I-35 Corridor Study (Norman/Moore/ODOT); Public Transportation (Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), Bus Transfer Station, replacement buses, and recommendations from Transit Study); new traffic signals on State highways and City arterials; Norman Regional Hospital Campus land sale (to be determined); fleet replacement; Fire Station #10; bridge replacements; stormwater infrastructure maintenance; Fleet Fueling Facility; City Vehicle Washing Facility; releasing reserves for Senior Center and Robinson Street and Crossroads Boulevard (undetermined); and revenue/expenditure imbalance.

Mr. Francisco asked if Council wanted to take the PSST Ad Hoc Committee's recommendation to release reserve funds for the Senior Center and Robinson Street/Crossroad Boulevard Projects (approximately \$1 million) to help close the gap in the EOC funding or propose a sales tax rate increase to pay for ongoing personnel costs. Councilmembers agreed the reserve funds should be released to help close the gap in the EOC shortfall.

Councilmember Carter said stormwater and bridges are huge issues that need to be bond projects because these types of projects are costly and need a large infusion of money. Mr. Pyle said if Council chose to bundle bridge projects, what is the minimum dollar amount needed to make the projects viable and Mr. O'Leary said there are approximately ten to twelve bridges that should be replaced within the next five to ten years ideally and the average cost of replacement is going to be \$2 to \$3 million per bridge.

Item 3, continued:

Councilmember Petrone said Council could consider using some CARES Act money to fill the funding gap for the EOC and build a facility that Norman can be proud of and that will be utilized for many years.

Councilmember Hall said she likes the idea of looking at bonds for long term funding for bridges.

Next steps include discussion of proposed new projects on February 16, 2021, and review of final proposed Capital Budget for FYE 2022 and CIP for FYE 2023 through 2026, on May 4, 2021.

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Item 4, being:

DISCUSSION REGARDING USE OF CORONAVIRUS AID, RELIEF, AND ECONOMIC SECURITY (CARES) ACT FUNDS.

Mayor Clark said there are many financial needs in Norman and it is Council's duty to decide how to use the \$3.75 million plus in CARES Act funds. She asked when Council has to make a decision and Mr. Pyle said there is no timetable on spending the \$3.75 million. He said the December deadline being talked about by news outlets is the deadline cities have to submit their cost reimbursements to the State. He said Council has set criteria for the small business recovery component of CARES Act funding and suggested small grants without repayment would benefit small businesses in the community. He said some communities are giving grants of up to \$25,000, while others have capped grants at \$5,000 per business application.

Mayor Clark said she would like to focus on micro-grants without a repayment plan. She has heard that many landlords have given massive discounts to small businesses in their facilities, but now landlords are having to pay County property taxes. She asked if the City has discussed opportunities of collaborating with Cleveland County. How much CARES Act money did the County receive and what are they doing with that money? Mr. Pyle said Cleveland County did not fare as well as Oklahoma County and he did not know how much money they received. He is also not sure what the County was able to assemble and submit for reimbursements, but that is definitely a conversation that can take place. Mayor Clark said the County receives the bulk of property taxes so the City and County should be working together to help small businesses.

Councilmember Holman supports small business relief because corporate chain businesses are in a position to recover from pandemic impacts. He said the City has invested a lot in revitalization to attract new businesses and are at risk of losing businesses. He said rent and utilities seem to be the biggest burden for small businesses right now. If Council approves a program and then runs into unexpected hurdles, the program criteria can be adjusted.

Mr. Pyle said grants in the amount of \$10,000 for 300 businesses would have a substantial impact on the local economy.

Mayor Clark said even if the City obtains federal and state funding for the ice storm there will still be a funding delta that is not budgeted so where would the City get that money? Mr. Francisco said some of the \$7 million expenditure for the ice storm is City crews doing the work, such as picking up limbs instead of filling potholes, which is a reimbursable cost; however, there is a substantial out-of-pocket cost for paying a contractor. He said the City can allocate money from the departmental budget, use the one percent (1%) emergency reserve account, or use unexpended allocations from other departments and other areas within the budget. He said the Rainy Day Fund can be used, but the City can only tap into the Rainy Day Fund if a disaster emergency is declared and there is the assumption that could happen. He said until the City knows whether or not a federal declaration will be issued, he would hold off on spending CARES Act money for this purpose.

Councilmember Foreman said her priority would be storm debris as well as a reserve for capital projects to get smaller projects accomplished and close the funding gap. She said aiding small businesses with grants using CARES Act funds would be appropriate.

Item 3, continued:

Councilmember Bierman said Norman residents need assistance whether they are business owners or not because there is not a great optimism for additional stimulus money. She likes Mayor Clark's idea of micro-grants rather than larger grants with the stipulation that those businesses who did not receive federal funding should receive priority consideration, including businesses owned by members of the marginalized community and sole proprietors. She said workers paid under a "tip wage" structure received no help with unemployment because of how their pay is structured and most restaurants and bars are currently under strict pandemic restrictions.

Councilmember Bierman said the Citizen Pottawatomie Program is a great model on how the City can structure an assistance program because they really provided for their citizens. She said the City's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program for low-income citizens is a great way for the City to ensure those with the greatest need are the ones to access the grants first. She asked for a status update on the CDBG Rent/Utilities Assistance Fund and Mr. Pyle said that program has not been fully subscribed. Councilmember Bierman said that tells her not a lot of people know about the program and suggested re-advertising. She said the Center of Disease Control's (CDC) eviction halt ends on December 31st and they are not planning to extend that so tenants in Oklahoma who are aware of that have signed the pandemic disclosure, but landlords are not required to tell tenants this option is available to them. She said CARES Act money could also be used for mask mandate compliance, reimbursing businesses wanting to offer a discount for wearing a mask, etc. She said she is okay with holding a little money aside for storm debris removal, but small business assistance is her top priority.

Councilmember Petrone said the PSST Committee recommended Council allocate the remainder of the CARES Act money towards the EOC and asked what \$3.2 million could buy for the EOC. Mr. Kevin Foster, Police Chief, said in current budget design, the dispatch area will not be hardened to withstand an F5 tornado so an additional \$2 to \$3 million would help make the entire facility hardened, which is important. He said it would be difficult to retro fit some items on the building, such as storm resilient windows.

Councilmember Petrone said a constituent suggested using CARES Act money for mask enforcement and that idea snowballed into alleviating Norman Police Department calls for mask violations by temporarily hiring someone to do nothing but mask enforcement. Another idea was to help provide an additional eight to ten thousand COVID tests because the State is pulling back on funding and each test costs \$65. Mr. Pyle said the State has found a new allocation of funds and expects to be back to full testing mode within two weeks, which gives the City a little breathing room.

Councilmember Petrone asked what it would cost the City to absorb late fees on water bills during the mandated pandemic shut down period and Mr. Pyle said delinquencies increased by \$900,000 for just one month so the City would be looking at a lot of money. Councilmember Petrone said she would like to know the amount of the delinquencies as well as options for Council to allocate CARES Act money for those delinquencies. Mr. Francisco said there are many customers who had delinquencies prior to the pandemic and asked if Council wanted newly identified delinquencies since March 2020, and Councilmember Petrone said she would like to see pre-March and post-March information.

Councilmember Petrone wondered if storm debris costs could be paid with department savings or savings on closed projects.

Councilmember Hall said small businesses are her priority and she is in favor of providing some type of small local business relief through micro-grants because a loan would only create more stress. She is comfortable putting money aside for storm debris until the City is sure federal funding will be forthcoming. She would like to make sure the City is really making an effort in informing citizens that rent and utility assistance is available. She said it is a relief to hear the state has additional money for COVID testing, but the City should continue to monitor this issue.

Mr. Pyle said there seems to be consensus of putting money aside for storm debris costs while waiting to hear if an emergency will be declared; creating a small business micro grant program with a \$10,000 maximum based on criteria previously approved by Council; and having money available for other local community needs that could include rental assistance, utility assistance,

Item 4, continued:

COVID testing, etc. He asked if \$1 million for each of these three buckets would meet Council's approval.

Councilmember Carter said he likes the idea of a micro grant program and setting aside money for storm debris removal. He said success lies in simplicity and time is of the essence for small businesses so he would like to see that program begin immediately. He said the idea of 100 small businesses obtaining \$10,000 grants gives a direct infusion to small businesses who may otherwise have to close their doors and he would like to see something on the agenda next week if possible.

Mayor Clark said Councilmember Peacock could not attend tonight's meeting, but asked her to read comments from him. Councilmember Peacock said all remaining CARES Act funding should be directed to small business relief grants prioritizing those businesses most directly impacted by the pandemic. There needs to be a scoring rubric to best identify where to direct the funds instead of a first come first serve approach and points should be awarded for such things as being unable to access federal dollars, being locally owned, being minority owned, suffering additional losses from the ice storm, or needing rent assistance. There should be a maximum cap amount per grant and the Oklahoma Business Relief Fund has that amount set at \$25,000. He also challenges City Staff to find other creative options for assistance, such as utility forgiveness or fee waivers in an effort to stretch these funds as far as possible.

Mayor Clark said she supports making \$1 million available now for micro grants. She said two Councilmembers are absent tonight because they are quarantining due to exposure and while she represents the City of Norman as a whole, they represent individual wards. She said two of eight wards is 25% of Norman citizens that are unable to engage in this conversation because Council was forced to return to in person meetings. She urged everyone to contact their State representatives to call a special session to enable municipalities to continue virtual meetings.

Councilmember Foreman asked how many small businesses are in Norman and Mr. Pyle said he will email that information to Council tomorrow morning.

Councilmember Bierman said she would like to consider grants aimed at specific types of costs, such as rent/utilities and include other things like children's school needs (tablets for online learning). She would also like a \$10,000 cap on the micro grants with an open window to accept all applications before ranking them.

Councilmember Petrone said she supports placing \$1 million aside for storm debris costs in hopes the money will not have to be used for storm debris removal and can be reallocated. She suggested putting aside \$100,000 for mask enforcement for temporary workers and \$150,000 for rewarding businesses owners that enforce the mask mandate. She supports waiving utility late fees especially for citizens who are victims of the backlog due to unemployment. She supports a \$10,000 cap on a micro grant program as well.

Councilmember Carter suggested a sunset on the micro grant program to allow Council to revisit the program in 60 days to decide if the program needs to be extended.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "FYE 2021 Capital Improvements Program Budget Status, Preparation of FYE 2022 Capital Improvements Projects, and Preparation of FYE 2023-2026 Capital Improvements Plan"

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ADJOURNMENT

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

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ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor