



**CITY OF NORMAN, OK
CITY COUNCIL BUSINESS & COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE MEETING**

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

Thursday, February 05, 2026, at 4:00 PM

MINUTES

The City Council Business & Community Affairs Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in Regular Session in the Executive Conference Room on the 5th day of February, 2026, at 4:00 p.m. and notice of the agenda of the meeting were posted at the 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:

Chairman Peacock called meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

Councilmember Ward 2 Matthew Peacock (Chair)
Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant
Councilmember Ward 8 Scott Dixon

ABSENT:

Councilmember Ward 6 Joshua Hinkle

OTHERS PRESENT:

Councilmember Ward 1 David Gandesbery
Councilmember Ward 3 Robert Bruce
Councilmember Ward 7 Kimberly Blodgett
Mr. Darrel Pyle, City Manager
Ms. Kathryn Walker, Assistant City Attorney IV
Mr. Taylor Johnson, Transit and Parking Program Manager
Ms. Sandra Simeroth, Administrative Technician IV

AGENDA ITEMS

1. DISCUSSION REGARDING FUTURE FUNDING FOR LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

Chairman Peacock opened the discussion to consider potential future funding approaches for local economic development following the City's decision not to proceed with the Cleveland County Economic Development Coalition (CCEDC) contract.

Mr. Darrel Pyle, City Manager, provided an overview of the City's current and historical economic development efforts. He noted that the City's in-house economic development function is currently focused on retail attraction and retention and is led by our Chief Business and Community Relations Officer, Ms. Sara Kaplan.

Mr. Pyle discussed previous staffing structures, including the former Development Services Manager position, which assisted the development community in navigating City processes and reduced conflict between developers and City Staff. Coordination issues have significantly improved since that time. Mr. Pyle said following the decision not to proceed with the CCEDC contract, the City is evaluating alternative economic development models. One alternative discussed would be to create one or more in-house economic development positions. Examples from other municipalities were presented from the City of Edmond and the City of Broken Arrow, which utilize internal economic development staff focused on infill development, downtown revitalization, developer coordination, and interdepartmental collaboration. Related job descriptions were provided to Councilmembers to review.

Mr. Pyle noted that only the City Council may authorize the addition of positions to the City's organizational chart and that any such positions need to be included in the upcoming budget. Potential funding scenarios which could support one senior-level position or a combination of positions were discussed.

Chairman Peacock said since the City did not renew its contract with CCEDC those funds could be repurposed for in-house economic development positions.

Councilmembers discussed the value of in-house economic development staffing. Key discussion points included:

- The benefit of a City Staff member serving as a development liaison to assist developers and coordinate across City departments.
- The potential value of a two-person staffing model or a lead professional supported by an intern to provide complementary skill sets, continuity, and internal checks and balances.
- Consideration of partnerships with the University of Oklahoma for internship opportunities related to economic development.

Mr. Pyle stated that economic development staffing and initiatives would be evaluated within the broader annual budget process. This process balances departmental needs, statutory requirements, and available revenues. Council retains authority to amend the budget and authorize positions during the fiscal year as appropriate. He also noted that in the interim existing economic development funds may be used for strategic initiatives, including regional transit-related evaluation and transit-oriented development opportunities.

Item 1, continued

Councilmembers indicated support for continued evaluation of in-house economic development options. Staff were directed to incorporate the discussion into upcoming study sessions and the budget development process and return with additional analysis and recommendations.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:41 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK

MAYOR