



MINUTES

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in Conference in the Executive Conference Room of the Norman Municipal Building on the 28th day of May, 2024, at 5:00 p.m., and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray Street 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Heikkila called the Meeting to Order at 5:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Mayor Larry Heikkila
Councilmember Ward 1 Austin Ball
Councilmember Ward 2 Lauren Schueler
Councilmember Ward 3 Bree Montoya
Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant
Councilmember Ward 5 Michael Nash
Councilmember Ward 6 Elizabeth Foreman
Councilmember Ward 7 Stephen Holman

ABSENT

Councilmember Ward 8 Matthew Peacock

1. DISCUSSION OF CITY OF NORMAN BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES.

Ms. Jeanne Snider, Assistant City Attorney, provided an overview of the City's advisory and oversight structures, explaining the roles and differences between boards, commissions, and committees.

Definitions and distinctions were reviewed, including:

- Boards – Often supervisory, investigatory, or advisory in nature.
- Commissions – Typically composed of appointed individuals with relevant experience.
- Committees – Delegated to study, act on, or report on matters.

Different types of entities were described, including recommendatory, oversight, advisory, and quasi-judicial bodies. Ms. Snider acknowledged the important service provided by community volunteers on these bodies and thanked them for their ongoing dedication.

Proposed Structural Changes and Discussion

Planning Commission Appointments

- Council affirmed a proposal to require one Planning Commission member from each Ward and one at-large member.

Tree Board and Board of Parks Commissioners (Parks Board) Consolidation

- A proposal to consolidate the Tree Board and Parks Board was discussed.
- Due to ongoing development of a comprehensive Tree Ordinance, Council agreed to delay action on dissolving the Tree Board.
- Council expressed interest in designating a Parks Board position for a member with urban forestry expertise, similar to technical requirements on other boards.

Animal Welfare Oversight Committee

- The committee has functioned since 2002–03 via resolution but lacked formal structure or term limits.
- Proposed changes include:
 - Three-year staggered terms.
 - Membership expanded to include individuals with specific expertise (veterinarian, animal welfare representative, rural area resident—preferably from Ward 5).
 - Existing long-serving members will transition off gradually to preserve institutional knowledge.
- Council supported codifying the committee and formalizing appointment and rotation structures.

Board of Adjustment Expansion

- Membership increased from five to seven members.
- Adjust the required vote for action from three to four members.

Norman Election Commission

- Membership count adjusted from five to seven.

Norman Youth Council Update

- No changes to name proposed at this time.
- Program will retain fall department visits and introduce a new advocacy project model. Students will select a project of interest and present outcomes to the City Council at the final meeting
- Council expressed support for the changes and enthusiasm for upcoming student presentations.

Council discussed whether new committees are needed for senior issues, transportation, or budget. Council concluded these issues are adequately addressed in existing boards and commissions. A previous mention of forming a Core Norman Development Committee was raised. Council requested staff revisit prior notes and discussions to determine whether formal action is needed, or if the informal community group currently addressing these issues is sufficient.

Summary and Next Steps

- Council consensus was to:
 - Proceed with codification of the Animal Welfare Oversight Committee.
 - Delay consolidation of the Tree Board until the Tree Ordinance is finalized.
 - Finalize ordinance changes related to Planning Commission, Parks Commission, Board of Adjustment, and Election Commission.
- Staff will prepare formal ordinance language for Council review and include it in an upcoming agenda, likely the second meeting in June.

2. DISCUSSION REGARDING ESTABLISHING AN INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER AND POLICIES.

Internal Auditor Shaakira Calnick presented a comprehensive overview of the value of internal auditing, its role in municipal governance, and the current progress of establishing internal audit functions within the City of Norman. Internal auditing is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve organizational operations. It supports achievement of objectives by improving risk management, control, and governance processes. Its primary objectives include ensuring compliance, mitigating risks, improving operations, and enhancing accountability.

Ms. Calnick said risk assessments are currently underway across 13 City departments. Once completed there will be the development of a risk-based triennial audit plan. The audits will be conducted based on identified risks. She said the issuance of finding and recommendations will be advisory, not directives. Staff would monitor implementation of corrective actions, which are developed by department management.

- Benefits of Internal Audit:
 - Promotes compliance with city, state, and federal laws.
 - Identifies inefficiencies and enhances fiscal responsibility.
 - Mitigates risk and protects Municipal assets and reputation.
 - Provides transparency and trust through assurance to stakeholders.
- Internal Audit Process:
 - Planning: Define objectives, scope, and allocate resources.
 - Fieldwork: Evidence collection, testing, and risk assessment.
 - Reporting: Document findings and recommendations.
 - Follow-Up: Monitor implementation of corrective actions.
- Governance Structure:
 - Establishing governance ensures effectiveness, independence, and credibility.
 - Key components include:
 - Internal Audit Charter.
 - Oversight by Finance Committee acting as the Audit Committee.
 - Policies and procedures for operations.
 - Adherence to a Code of Ethics and professional standards (IIA, GAGAS, COSO).
- Call to Action:
 - City Council support is requested for the establishment of formal governance for internal audit.

Council Discussion:

- Clarification on Recommendations:
 - Recommendations are developed by Internal Audit through analysis, field visits, and national best practices.
 - Councilmembers requested transparency in identifying sources for recommendations in public audit reports.
 - Councilmembers comments emphasized the importance of data-driven findings rather than opinions.

Council Discussion, continued

- Audit Procedures and Independence:
 - Discussion highlighted that department management may accept, reject, or modify recommendations.
 - Multiple tiers of review exist: Internal Audit, City Attorney, City Manager, and ultimately the City Council.
- Timing and Next Steps for Audits
 - Risk assessments to be completed by end of June.
 - Audit Charter and policy drafts are under review.
 - Request for Council feedback on Charter by mid-June.
 - Finalized audit plan anticipated in July, potentially for presentation to the new Council.
- Charter and Policy Feedback:
 - Mayor and City Attorney provided edits; Council input still being gathered.
 - Discussions included clarifying language such as replacing "approve" with "consider for approval" to reflect Council's authority without obligation.
 - Consideration of organizational fit based on Norman's structure versus other municipalities.

The Council expressed appreciation for the Auditor's professionalism and transparency.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

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ATTEST:



City Clerk





Mayor