



CITY OF NORMAN, OK
CITY COUNCIL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING
Municipal Building, Executive Conference Room, 201 West Gray, Norman,
OK 73069
Thursday, January 11, 2024 at 4:00 PM

MINUTES

The City Council Oversight Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in Regular Session in the Executive Conference Room on the 11th day of January 2024, at 4:00 p.m. and notice and agenda of the meeting was posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray and the City website at least 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

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

PRESENT

Councilmember Ward 1 Austin Ball
Councilmember Ward 2 Lauren Schueler (Chair)
Councilmember Ward 3 Bree Montoya
Councilmember Ward 7 Stephen Holman

ABSENT

None

OTHERS PRESENT:

Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant
Ms. Kathryn Walker, City Attorney
Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation
Mr. Lance Harper, Facility and Construction Manager
Ms. Shaakira Calnick, Internal Auditor
Ms. April Dosier, Food and Shelter Director
Ms. Lisa Webb, Admin Tech IV, City Clerk Office
Major Jamie Shattuck, Norman Police Department

AGENDA ITEMS

ITEM 1: PRESENTATION OF EMERGENCY SHELTER STATISTICS FOR DECEMBER 2023.

Ms. April Dosier presented the Emergency Shelter report for December 2023. Due to the cold weather, all 52 beds at the shelter were occupied every night.

ITEM 1: (continued) PRESENTATION OF EMERGENCY SHELTER STATISTICS FOR DECEMBER 2023.

For winter preparation, Care A Vans and Food and Shelter have worked on identifying homeless people living in homeless camps and trying to get them out of the cold. Most said they would stay in their campsite out of fear of losing it. The Food and Shelter dining room was opened for shelter and 60 people were put in motel rooms during the cold weather

A special Christmas Day was had at A Friend's House, with a local food truck providing smoked meat and sides for the guests to enjoy Christmas night and the community provided wrapped gifts for each guest to open.

Six guests received a bus ticket to return to OKC to live with family.
12 guests were assisted to get ID's, Birth Certificates and/or Social Security cards.
Four guests moved into permanent housing or a housing program by Food and Shelter. (maintain contact with guests for six months from move)

Councilmember Grant asked about the 18-30 age group and if they are staying at the shelter waiting on housing. Ms. Doshier said some went to OKC as they could not find resources in Norman. Ms. Dosier said there were more disabled guests and people age 50 or older who stayed in the shelter during December 2023.

Councilmember Holman asked if Food and Shelter could get a yearly report for 2023, reflecting how many guests are disabled, number of guest working or have other income like Social Security benefits.

Mr. Lance Harper, Facility and Construction Program Manager, provided an update on the Shelter Building Renovations and a cost sheet for individual items. He has been working with suppliers to obtain discounts on supplies to reduce renovation costs. When the renovations are completed, the building should house approximately 100 people, with separate intake areas and common spaces for the men and women.

Ms. Shaakira Calnick, Internal Auditor, asked if this is not going to be a permanent shelter, why is so much money being spent on the facility. Ms. Kathryn Walker, City Attorney said the funds will not be from the sale of 718 N. Porter, but from funds allocated for the renovation budget. The cost to build a new 24-hour shelter with kennels, will be approximately five million and would need to go to a vote of the people for approval.

Councilmember Holman said the Gray Street location is the only viable option since the city already owned it. Due to its location in the business district it is not ideal, but feels it is better to use for people than as storage. He asked if a 2nd story could be added on to the building, to which Mr. Harper said it could, the buildings are sound, but it would need some significant modifications.

Chairman Schueler said this is not the permanent shelter and the facility can be used for alternative functions in the future. She recommended that the item move forward to the full council. Ms. Walker, City Attorney, said the item would need to include appropriation of funds.

ITEM 2: DISCUSSION REGARDING SOBERING CENTERS

Major Jamie Shattuck, with the Norman Police Department, provided a presentation on Sobering Centers in Oklahoma. Sobering Centers are designed to provide a safe environment for intoxicated individuals to recover from the influence of alcohol and drugs.

The goal of these types of facilities include: providing care for homeless alcohol-dependent people with improved health outcomes, decrease the number of inappropriate ambulance trips and emergency department visits for homeless alcohol-dependent individuals, and create a law enforcement alternative to booking individuals arrested for public intoxication.

Looked at the two different models in Oklahoma:

FIRSTSTEP – OKC Metro Alliance is a Public Inebriate Alternative (PIA) in partnership with the Oklahoma City Police Department

Provides 24/7 alternative to arrest and jail for public intoxication.

Individuals are not under arrest and not charged with any other crime.

Individuals must voluntarily accept PIA admission

Length of stay is 10 hours.

Individuals have access to meals, showers, sleep, referrals to other services and a ride home through a taxi service.

They have approximately 2,500 admissions per year and the benefits of the program are:

PIA individuals avoid court costs and charges

Approximate savings of \$36,730 in taxpayer money per month (\$452,760 yearly)

Police officers save time over conventional jail book-ins.

Cost is approximately \$350,000 per year.

Grand Addiction Recovery Center – Tulsa

Mr. Scott Whitefield, Director of Grand Addiction Recovery Center, shared program information with Major Shattuck. He said there are approximately 700-900 admissions per year and 54% of participants are homeless.

Benefits of the program:

Co-located with both drug/alcohol treatment center and a mental health crisis unit

15-18% of 16-person street outreach team (operates 24/7) and is able to remove an average of 39 people from the streets each month (some of these people revert to homeless status)

ITEM 2: (continued) DISCUSSION REGARDING SOBERING CENTERS

City of Tulsa pays \$250,000 per year for the service, with the program being supplemented by other sources as well. The City contribution was calculated from the savings of booking someone versus checking into the sobering center.

Major Shattuck provided the Norman Police Department 2023 statistics for the committee.

634 Arrests for public intoxication type behaviors, (both juvenile and adult) as well as alcohol and /or drug related types of intoxication.

56 of these individuals were arrested for public intoxication two or more times.
One individual was arrested 48 times over the past four years.

Characteristics of individuals using sobering centers for multiple visits are:

Male
Homeless
History of alcohol dependency and abuse
Have other health related issues, (physical and psychiatric)
Other drug use

Recommendations for a Sobering Center in Norman:

Design should treat a root cause of homelessness (alcohol and drug addiction)
24/7 operation
Medical staff onsite
Multiple admission methods (Police, Social Services, Walk-ins, local Healthcare agencies)
Co-located with other services such as mental health care and detox/addiction services
Operated by a third party, not the City of Norman

Councilmember Holman and Grant both expressed their support for the Grand Addition Recovery Center Program in Tulsa, agreeing the sobering center would be preferable to sending someone to jail for a night out and ruining their record.

Councilmember Holman asked if Major Shattuck could provide some data on how much time it takes to book someone and the cost associated with the arrest to determine the approximate savings by using a sobering center.

Chairman Schueler, Councilmembers Holman and Grant expressed support for exploring cost sharing with County Sheriff and other police departments in Cleveland County and committee members anticipate future conversations on potential sobering center partnerships.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:16 p.m.

ATTEST:



City Clerk





Mayor