



MINUTES

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CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Heikkila called the Meeting to Order at 5:30 p.m.

PRESENT

Mayor Larry Heikkila
Councilmember Ward 1 Austin Ball
Councilmember Ward 2 Lauren Schueler
Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant
Councilmember Ward 5 Rarchar Tortorello
Councilmember Ward 6 Elizabeth Foreman
Councilmember Ward 7 Stephen Holman
Councilmember Ward 8 Matthew Peacock

ABSENT

None

AGENDA ITEMS

1. DISCUSSION REGARDING PROPOSED OKLAHOMA NATURAL GAS FRANCHISE.

Ms. Martie Oyler, Community Relations Manager and Economic Development Support, introduced Ms. Marla Freeman, State Community Relations Manager, and Mr. Dustin Frederick, Managing Attorney for Oklahoma Natural Gas (ONG).

Ms. Oyler said ONG appreciates its relationship with the City of Norman and has 41,000 customers, a Service Center located at 625 North Berry Road, and 24 to 25 employees that rotate in and out of the Service Center.

Item 1, continued:

Ms. Oyler said most of ONG's infrastructure is underground with a 99% reliability rate, which means a lot today. She said the current franchise approved in 1999, with the City of Norman expires in March 2024. She said a franchise is an agreement which defines the roles and responsibilities to use the public ways and the fee is 4.25% in Norman (one of the highest in the State). She said franchise fees are collected on ONG customer bills and paid to the City monthly so the franchise agreement will benefit Norman residents by using that money to support City government. The agreement also provides the proper authority to use the public ways. In the last 12 months, ONG has collected and paid the City of Norman \$1.6 million in franchise fees. She said ONG is proposing an agreement very similar to the existing agreement with the fee remaining the same with additional definitions and revision of some definitions. She said an election date has been discussed for September 12, 2023, and ONG will pay the election fees and any related costs for publication associated with the franchise election. She said ONG has had a franchise with Norman for over 70 years and is looking forward to another 70, 80, or 90 years.

The proposed term of the franchise is 25 years and approval would grant ONG the right to enter upon public ways to install, operate, and maintain a distribution system along, across, over and under the public ways for the purpose of transporting, distributing, and/or selling gas to consumers and the public generally within the limits of Norman. As with other franchises, the grant of a franchise would not be exclusive, meaning other franchises can also occupy the public ways to provide similar services to the extent allowed by State law.

Items submitted for the record

1. Oklahoma Natural Gas Franchise Summary
2. Staff report dated June 20, 2023, from Oklahoma Natural Gas to Kathryn Walker, City Attorney
3. Ordinance O-9899-22
4. Draft ordinance

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2. CONTINUED DISCUSSION REGARDING THE BRIDGE BOND PROGRAM AND POTENTIAL ELECTION.

Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works, said in 2004, Oklahoma was ranked 49th in the nation for on-system (State responsibility) bridge conditions; however, as of April 2021, Oklahoma was ranked seventh (7th) nationally for on-system bridge conditions. As of 2021, Oklahoma's rank for off-system (City responsibility) bridges in "poor" condition is 40th in the nation.

Item 2, continued:

Mr. O'Leary said there are 80 bridges in Norman with a majority being 50 years old or older. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requires all off-system bridges to be inspected biennially and the City contracted with HW Lochner Engineering to perform inspections for the last three cycles. He said Council adopted an annual budget for bridge maintenance in FYE 2018 with an allocation of \$100,000 annually, in FYE 23, Council adopted a bridge maintenance budget of \$750,000, and in FYE 24, Council adopted a bridge maintenance budget of \$1,000,000. The City has spent \$2,050,000 since 2018 for bridge repairs, maintenance, or replacement.

The 2017 inspection cycle identified 18 structurally deficient bridges (poor rating) and the 2021 inspection cycle identified five structurally deficient bridges with 15 bridges being at-risk of becoming structurally deficient.

Mr. Joe Hill, Streets Program Manager, highlighted approximate vehicle weights with the average car weighing one and one-half tons; average fire truck weighing 19 to 20 tons; average standard truck weighing three tons; average garbage truck weighing 28 tons; average ambulance weighing five tons; average plow truck weighing 28 tons; average loaded school bus weighing 17 tons; average loaded cement truck weighing 33 tons; average loaded charter bus weighing 20 tons; and average loaded semi-trucks weighing 40 tons. He said several bridges cannot withstand more than one standard size pick up truck and have weight limit signs posted.

Mr. O'Leary said there have been four bridge failures since 2016 that include Havenbrook Street Bridge, Main Street Bridge, Imhoff Road Bridge, and 60th Avenue N.E. Bridge. The bridge at 60th Avenue N.E. between Rock Creek Road and Tecumseh Road was closed on December 1, 2022, as a precautionary measure due to structural deficiency.

Mr. Hill said Staff compiled data from the bridge inspection reports to generate a rank-ordered list consisting of the City's highest priority locations. Staff contracted with HW Lochner to review the rank-ordered list and generate replacement and/or rehabilitation cost estimates for each location. Using the Discovery Report, Staff began an investigation related to possible funding opportunities and proposed two options for a Bridge Maintenance Bond Program using the same concept as the City's Street Maintenance Bond Program. The options were presented to the Community Planning and Transportation Committee (CPTC) and Option Two was preferred, which would replace three identified bridge locations and eight identified major bridge rehabilitation and maintenance locations. This proposal would be a \$20 million program over a five-year period with a monthly property tax increase of \$3.39 for homes valued at \$100,000, 7.09 for homes valued at \$200,000, and \$10.80 for homes valued at \$300,000.

Mr. Hill highlighted Option Two bridge locations that need replacement that include 60th Avenue N.E., East Post Oak; and Franklin Road. Major bridge rehabilitation locations include Franklin Road; 24th Avenue S.W.; West Robinson Street; Lindsey Street; Boyd Street; Iowa Street; East Robinson Street; and Main Street.

Item 2, continued:

Mr. Hill said Option One of the proposed bond program would replace ten identified bridge replacement locations and nine identified major bridge rehabilitation and maintenance locations. This proposal would be a \$50 million program over a ten-year period with a monthly property tax increase of \$2.44 for homes valued at \$100,000, \$5.10 for homes valued at \$200,000, and \$7.75 for homes valued at \$300,000.

Mr. Hill highlighted Option One bridge locations that need replacement that include 60th Avenue N.E.; North Porter Avenue; East Robinson Street, 72nd Avenue N.E.; Lindsey Street; 24th Avenue N.E.; 36th Avenue N.E.; East Post Oak; Franklin Road; and 36th Avenue N.E. Major bridge rehabilitation locations include Indian Hills Road; Franklin Road; 24th Avenue S.W.; West Robinson Street; Lindsey Street; Boyd Street; Iowa Street; East Robinson Street; and Main Street.

Mr. O'Leary said the ten year plan will allow constructing or rehabilitating two bridges per year, which will eventually take care of all of the bridges in need. His concern with a five year bond election is that if a second five year bond program election failed, the City will not be able to repair or replace further bridges due to no available funding. He said bridges are challenging to design, rehab, or rebuild and he sees value in rehabbing or building bridges for ten continuous years instead of having to stop after five years to pursue another five year bond. He said another consideration is inflation and what that will look like in five years.

Upon a successful bond election, construction activities are proposed to commence within six months. This schedule takes into account initial sale of bonds following the election, current design progress, public bidding process, utility relocation, right-of-way acquisition, and environmental review/permitting as primary factors.

Available election dates are October 10th, November 14th, February 13th, and April 2nd. A tentative election on Tuesday, October 10, 2023, would include First Reading of ballot ordinance on July 23, 2023; Second Reading of ballot ordinance on August 8, 2023; notice to the Election Board on August 10, 2023; and an information campaign in August through October 2023.

Councilmember Holman suggested a November election to allow time to obtain feedback from the public and supports the ten year bond program.

Councilmember Foreman said she prefers a ten year bond program and supports a voter survey.

Next steps for an October 2023, election includes approval of Contract K-2223-152 with Gooden Group, Inc., to perform public surveys and branding information for bridge program; tentative launch date for initial voter attitude survey June 26, 2023; results of initial survey to be provided to Council prior to First Reading on July 25, 2023; and following initial survey, the Gooden Group will help shape informational materials and a follow-up survey closer to the schedule election.

Item 2, continued:

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Proposed Bridge Maintenance Bond Program"

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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

ATTEST:



City Clerk



Mayor

