

CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL SESSION MINUTES

November 16, 2021

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in a Special Session at 6:30 p.m. hosted in the Municipal Building Council Chambers on the 16th day of November, 2021, 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 Foreman, Hall,
Holman, Lynn, Peacock, Schueler,
Studley, Tortorello, Mayor Clark

ABSENT:

None

Item 1, being:

PUBLIC HEARING ON RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING WARD BOUNDARY CHANGES FROM THE REAPPORTIONMENT AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETING.

Motion to Conduct a Public Hearing made by Councilmember Ward 7 Holman, Seconded by Councilmember Ward 4 Hall.

Voting Yea: Mayor Clark, Councilmember Ward 1 Studley, Councilmember Ward 2 Schueler,

Councilmember Ward 3 Lynn, Councilmember Ward 4 Hall, Councilmember Ward 5 Tortorello, Councilmember Ward 6 Foreman, Councilmember Ward 7 Holman, Councilmember Ward 8 Peacock.

The Public Hearing was Conducted.

Ms. Kathryn Walker, City Attorney, said under the City Charter, the Reapportionment Ad Hoc Committee (RAHC) is appointed to meet, review, and make recommendations on ward boundaries as soon as practicable following each federal census. The Federal Decennial Census was conducted in 2020 and data was issued in 2021 after a number of delays due to the pandemic. The City Charter requires the RAHC to adopt a resolution that recommends either retention or adjustment of boundaries after it has held a public meeting. If Council adopts the recommendations to change ward boundaries, such changes must also be adopted by ordinance.

According to the Charter, wards should be formed to equalize, as nearly as practicable, the population of the wards. In addition, each ward should be formed of compact, contiguous territory with boundaries drawn to reflect and respond to communities of common interest, ethnic background, and physical boundaries, to the extent reasonably possible. Ward lines shall not create artificial corridors, which in effect separates voters from the ward to which they must naturally belong.

Ms. Walker said Council will have the option to listen to public comments regarding RAHC recommendations and follow those recommendations or bring forward different boundaries than

Item 1, continued:

what is recommended. The standards found in the Charter and in State law are very similar to what is found across the country. The United States (U.S.) Supreme Court has said that population equality is the paramount objective of apportionment or redistricting and is commonly known as the “One Person One Vote” standard, which is a means of protecting voters.

The U.S. Supreme Court states that when drawing wards, cities can deviate from absolute population equality to accommodate traditional districting objectives, like maintaining communities of common interest and creating geographic compactness. As long as the maximum population deviation between the largest and smallest ward is less than 10%, the local ward map is presumed to comply with the “One Person One Vote” standard. Ms. Walker said the RAHC worked hard to keep within the boundaries set by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Ms. Walker said the State is also redrawing its boundaries, but has not completed that process. She said the City does not know where any realigned precincts will be so the RAHC had to work with current precinct boundaries.

Council appointed the RAHC in January 2021; the Census Bureau released redistricting population data on August 12, 2021; RAHC met on September 2, 2021, September 8, 2021, and September 27, 2021; held a public hearing on October 21, 2021; and Council is conducting its public hearing tonight.

The proposed plan reduced the overall range from the mean ward population to 1,604 persons, which is 10.02% of the mean ward population of 16,003. All wards are modified by the proposal, which could potentially affect ward-specific appointments to the Greenbelt Commission, the RAHC, and the Public Safety Sales Tax (PSST) Citizen Oversight Committee. Existing ward-specific appointees will be allowed to finish their term before the new boundaries will be applied.

Ms. Walker said if the resolution is adopted, an ordinance would be prepared for First Reading on December 14, 2021, with Second and Final Reading on January 18, 2022. The ordinance would go into effect on February 10, 2022, and would not impact current terms of Councilmembers or 2022 Council Elections.

Ms. Joyce Green, Geographical Information System (GIS) Services Manager, highlighted the ward boundary recommendations:

- Starting population of Ward One was 15,018 and has an ending population of 16,083;
- Starting population for Ward Two was 14,845 and has an ending population of 16,757;
- Starting population for Ward Three was 14,824 and has an ending population of 16,943;
- Starting population for Ward Four was 14,129 and has an ending population of 15,897;
- Starting population for Ward Five was 16,610 and has an ending population of 15,229;
- Starting population for Ward Six was 18,515 and has an ending population of 15,344;
- Starting population for Ward Seven was 18,309 and has an ending population of 16,067; and
- Starting population for Ward Eight was 15,776 and has an ending population of 15,596.

Item 1, continued:

Members of the public expressed concerns about growth, some opposed movement of boundaries within their ward, some made suggestions on different ward boundaries, some were fine with the recommendations made by the RAHC, and some stated their voices had been silenced during the RAHC public meeting.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Reapportionment Public Hearing," dated November 16, 2021
2. Reapportionment Ad Hoc Committee Staff Report dated November 16, 2021

Participants in discussion

1. Mr. Michael Blunck
2. Ms. Teresa Elam
3. Ms. Karen Goodchild
4. Mr. Tom Hackelman
5. Mr. Fred Pope
6. Ms. Maggie Logue
7. Mr. Jonathan Kindel
8. Mr. Mark Wagner
9. Mr. Alex Torvi
10. Mr. Rick Lubbers

Motion to Close Public Hearing made by Councilmember Ward 6 Foreman, Seconded by Councilmember Ward 1 Studley.

Voting Yea: Mayor Clark, Councilmember Ward 1 Studley, Councilmember Ward 2 Schueler, Councilmember Ward 3 Lynn, Councilmember Ward 4 Hall, Councilmember Ward 5 Tortorello, Councilmember Ward 6 Foreman, Councilmember Ward 7 Holman, Councilmember Ward 8 Peacock.

The Public Hearing was closed.

* * * * *

Item 2, being:

DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION RETAINING OR ADJUSTING CURRENT WARD BOUNDARIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH CRITERIA IN THE CHARTER AND AS SET FORTH IN U.S. SUPREME COURT AND OKLAHOMA SUPREME COURT JURISPRUDENCE.

Motion to amend the ward boundaries recommended by Reapportionment Ad Hoc Committee.

Moved by Ward 5 Councilmember Tortorello, Seconded by Ward 3 Councilmember Lynn.

Item 2, continued:

Ayes: Ward 3 Councilmember Lynn, Ward 5 Councilmember Tortorello, Ward 6 Councilmember Foreman, Ward 7 Councilmember Holman.

Nayes: Mayor Clark, Councilmember Ward 1 Councilmember Studley, Councilmember Ward 2 Schueler, Councilmember Ward 4 Hall, Councilmember Ward 8 Peacock.

The Motion Failed and the Ward Boundaries were not adjusted.

Items submitted for the record

1. Resolution RAHCR-2122-1
2. Norman Reapportionment Ad Hoc Committee minutes of September 2, 2021, September 8, 2021, and September 27, 2021
3. Proposed Ward boundary map dated November 16, 2021

Participants in discussion

1. Mr. Michael Blunck
2. Mr. Mark Wagner
3. Ms. Karen Goodchild
4. Mr. Rick Lubber
5. Mr. Alex Torvi

Motion to adopt resolution recommended by Reapportionment Ad Hoc Committee.

Participants in discussion

1. Ms. Karen Goodchild
2. Mr. Tom Hackelman
3. Mr. Michael Blunck
4. Mr. Mark Wagner

Moved by Ward 7 Councilmember Holman, Seconded by Ward 4 Councilmember Foreman.

Ayes: Mayor Clark, Councilmember Ward 1 Studley, Councilmember Ward 2 Schueler, Councilmember Ward 4 Hall, Councilmember Ward 7 Holman.

Nayes: Ward 3 Councilmember Lynn, Ward 5 Councilmember Tortorello, Ward 6 Councilmember Foreman, Ward 8 Councilmember Peacock.

The Resolution was Adopted.

* * * * *

ADJOURNMENT

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 9:25 p.m.

* * * * *

ATTEST:


Deputy City Clerk


Mayor

