



CITY OF NORMAN, OK
CITY COUNCIL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING
Municipal Building, Executive Conference Room, 201 West Gray, Norman,
OK 73069
Thursday, August 14, 2025 at 4:00 PM

MINUTES

The Oversight Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in Regular Session in the Executive Conference Room in the Municipal Building, on Thursday, August 14, 2025 at 4:00 PM, and notice of the agenda of the meeting was posted at the Norman 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

Chair Helen Grant called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm

Members Present

Chair Helen Grant
Councilmember Ward 1 David Gandesbery
Councilmember Ward 8 Scott Dixon

Others Present

Councilmember Ward 3 Bree Montoya
Councilmember Ward 6 Joshua Hinkle
Mr. Darrell Pyle, City Manager
Ms. Shannon Stevenson, Assistant City Manager
Mr. Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation
Mr. James Briggs, Park Development Manager
Mr. Lance Harper, Facility & Construction Program Manager
Mr. Wade Thompson, Parks Manager
Mr. Shawn Lloyd, City Care, Senior Director of Homeless Services
Ms. Mallory Lee, City Care, Shelter Director
Ms. Katherine Hammans, Admin Tech III, City Clerk

AGENDA ITEMS

1. UPDATE FROM CITY CARE ON THE OPERATION OF THE EMERGENCY SHELTER.

Ms. Mallerie Lee, City Care Shelter Director, provided an update on the operations at the emergency shelter, referencing presentation slides shared with attendees.

- The shelter provided over 10,000 nights of rest.
- Nightly average: 54 guests.
- Capacity: 52 guests nightly, with one bed reserved for emergencies such as police drop-offs or domestic violence cases.
- During the winter storm period, capacity temporarily exceeded the limit.
- A total of 297 unique individuals were served at the shelter.
- The annual Point-in-Time (PIT) count for Norman recorded 213 individuals experiencing homelessness, with 74 unsheltered.
- Data indicates a potential need for increased shelter capacity in the future.
- The shelter helps reduce police and business interactions with unhoused individuals by providing overnight services.
- Year-to-date, 16 individuals have been successfully housed.
- Veterans served remain a primary focus: 18 veterans have been assisted, with 6 housed and 6 more in the process of transitioning into housing.
- Partnerships with the VA, HUD-VASH, the Continuum of Care (COC), and other community entities have been critical to supporting housing efforts.
- Implementation of tracking through the HMIS system has improved monitoring of incidents, referrals, housing transitions, and advocacy needs.
- In July alone, 14 Coordinated Housing Assessments (CHAT) were conducted, bringing the yearly total to 128.
- CHAT assessments evaluate individual vulnerability to prioritize access to housing resources, serving as a triage system.
- Documentation remains a significant barrier. Many guests arrive without IDs, birth certificates, driver's licenses, or tribal IDs.
- Partnerships with McFarland and First Presbyterian Church provide vouchers for ID replacement.
- Housing voucher waitlists are long, with some individuals still being served from the prior year.
- Estimated costs of required documents:
 - Birth Certificate: ~\$40
 - State ID: \$25
 - Social Security Card: Free in some cases, otherwise costs vary
- All three documents are typically required for housing through Norman Housing Authority.
 - Total cost to get an individual 'document ready' is just under \$100.
 - Real ID requirements add more challenges, with estimated costs around \$89.
 - Rising costs for IDs and essential documents remain a barrier.

Item 1 (continued) UPDATE FROM CITY CARE ON THE OPERATION OF THE EMERGENCY SHELTER.

- Applications have been submitted for Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds and other funding sources to cover ID and document costs as partnerships with local churches run out.
- Councilmember Holman suggested exploring support from Norman Rotary Clubs, which have funded ID fairs in the past. This could serve as an immediate resource while longer-term funding is secured.
- Quarterly resource fairs were discussed as possible opportunities to help residents obtain documents, though it was noted that the most recent event did not provide those services.
- Participants suggested following up with organizers to explore adding such resources at future fairs.
- Warrant-clearing opportunities were mentioned as a resource that could help individuals qualify for housing, since active warrants often appear in background checks and can disqualify applicants.
- Shared housing solutions are being utilized by pairing individuals who already have relationships within the guest community. This approach makes housing more affordable and helps expedite placement into housing.

Case management efforts are focused on securing benefits and stable income for qualified guests. During intake, assessments are conducted to determine available documents, benefits, and programs, ensuring individuals are fast-tracked to receive funds.

- Looking at the gender and age breakdown, most of the shelter stays have been by men, (188), and 102 by women, with seven non-binary guests.
- The largest groups were ages 35 to 44, followed by 45 to 54, then 55 to 64.
- 37 guests were receiving or eligible for SSI.
- 33 guests were receiving or eligible for SSDI.
- 170 guests with mental health disorders.
- 29 guests with developmental disabilities.
- 121 guests needing ADA-compliant housing.

These statistics guide housing placement efforts, ensuring ADA compliance and eligibility through documented disabilities. Documentation also helps determine chronic homelessness status and eligibility for housing programs.

Provider Referrals:

- 38 referrals to DHS, primarily for SNAP benefits.
- 36 referrals to Norman Community Health for mental health services.

Advocates focus on addressing food insecurity, medical needs, and mental health services. Assessments emphasize food access, healthcare, and benefit enrollment to ensure stability for guests.

Item 1 (continued) UPDATE FROM CITY CARE ON THE OPERATION OF THE EMERGENCY SHELTER.

The shelter has recently joined the Norman Community Mental Health Task Force, strengthening partnerships with mental health organizations for more effective referrals.

Gaps in mental health and food/nutrition services, as indicated by referral data, were discussed. The high number of referrals to food and shelter for daytime options supports the need for a potential 24-hour residential shelter. Expanding daytime services could reduce these referral numbers and provide more consistent support for guests.

A question was raised regarding the Diversion Hub option and whether referrals primarily involve women. It was noted that currently referrals are mostly for women, with no known men's options in Norman at this time.

The Diversion Hub is a multi-agency network helping people to receive coordinated, life-stabilizing services as they navigate the criminal justice system in Oklahoma, Cleveland and Canadian Counties in Oklahoma.

The Diversion Hub works with low-level offenders to provide a diversion away from time behind bars and a path towards a better life, which is the best possible outcome for that person and our communities.

A discussion followed about the gender discrepancy in available services and the need for options to support men as well. The Diversion Hub has been in operation in Oklahoma City for several years, and the shelter will explore men's options once they become available.

Veterans' Affairs:

- Shelter Staff made 13 veteran referrals.
- Veterans generally have more accessible housing options through the VA compared to civilians.
- The shelter uses Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), for housing placement and the VA for documentation needs, such as disability letters, homelessness duration, and medical connections.
- Veterans are included in the assessments and placed in the housing queue.

Council Member Hinkle suggested connecting with the Dale K. Graham Veterans Foundation, located at West Lindsay and South Berry. This nonprofit is dedicated to serving veterans and their families, assisting veterans with benefits and provides funding support when possible. The shelter has been partnered with SSVF from Oklahoma City but welcomes the Dale K Graham resource as an additional and potentially faster, more accurate option.

Norman Shelter Plus Care Permanent Supportive Housing Program:

- Formerly operated by HOPE Community Services, as of July 2025, under Norman City Care.
- Provides housing and support for chronically homeless individuals with disabilities (mental, physical, or chronic illness).

Item 1 (continued) UPDATE FROM CITY CARE ON THE OPERATION OF THE EMERGENCY SHELTER.

- Currently manage 12 clients in apartments across Norman and Cleveland County.
- Services include rent payment assistance, supportive services, and programs aimed at achieving self-sufficiency and financial independence.
- This acquisition will strengthen landlord engagement and expand housing opportunities.

Volunteer Program:

- The Norman volunteer platform is now active on the City Care website.
- Volunteers must be 18 years or older.
- Volunteers undergo background checks and training, and their hours are logged.
- Opportunities are available for both volunteer service and community service hours.
- The shelter is currently seeking furniture donations for housed guests. Contact Maggie at citycare.org for donations.
 - The shelter does not currently have a warehouse for furniture donations but may use available city buildings for limited storage.
 - Suggestions were made to coordinate outreach with student housing complexes during spring move-outs for potential furniture donations.
 - Staff noted that donated items must meet certain quality standards (e.g., lightly used furniture, not heavily worn).
- Tours of the shelter are available throughout the year for those interested in learning more about operations and developments.
- School or youth groups may schedule tours during non-business hours but cannot volunteer to serve.

With Cleveland County now housing municipal inmates from Oklahoma City, discussion was held on potential impacts for the City of Norman shelter. Concerns were raised that individuals released in Norman may end up at the shelter rather than returning to Oklahoma City, where they originated from.

It was noted that historically, when inmates were held in Pottawatomie County, the arresting agency was required to provide transportation back upon release. It is unclear whether similar requirements are in place under the new Cleveland County–OKC agreement and legal will research.

Shelter Questions and Data Tracking:

- Need to know where guests are from, jails, hospitals, or other systems of care.
- Intake questions and HMIS data identify “institutions” but do not specify exact types.
- Need to run a survey for a set timeframe to gather more detailed data on guest origins.
- Include guests previous local and the type of institution they came from before entering the shelter.
- Include question asking guests to report if they were arrested by OKCPD and released in Norman.

Item 1 (continued) UPDATE FROM CITY CARE ON THE OPERATION OF THE EMERGENCY SHELTER.

Ms. Lee said it is a good sign the jail was built to scale and with Norman able to house offenders for another county it shows crime rates are running low in Norman. The issue would be if questionnaires show people end up in Norman because they were arrested by Oklahoma City Police Department, OKCPD and released in Norman. It's a way for OKC to get rid of a certain clientele if they wanted to abuse that situation so things need to be tracked accurately

Councilmember Gandesbery asked if City Care will include a question on their survey about where people came from and why. Did they leave jail, incarceration, medical facility, what city, county and state did they come from. Ms. Lee said City Care will put together a simple jot form to be completed by everyone coming in that will allow them to compile the data for reporting.

Chairperson Grant said this is great and asked City Care to present their fall and winter plan at the next meeting and discuss challenges and needs. What resources are given to clients as they leave or are going out for the day? City Care staff were asked if they partner with McFarland and use their list of available resources as a handout for each client served. Ms. Lee said the resource list is hanging on multiple bulletin boards throughout the shelter.

Mayor Holman requested an update on the homeless cleanup team be provided at the next Outreach Meeting.

2. DISCUSSION REGARDING PUBLIC RESTROOMS IN CITY PARKS AND THE TRANSIT CENTER.

Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, provided an update on the status of restroom facilities at two locations: the Transit Center and Andrews Park.

Transit Center Restroom Update

- The Transit Center is located on the corner of Porter and Comanche.
- Transit Center opened October 2023
- Transit Center restroom issues were addressed following a series of infrastructure failures.
- October – December 2023:
 - Water waste lines were replaced.
 - A grinder pump was installed to address restroom blockages.
 - Severe pipe decay was identified, including rusting and flaking, causing debris buildup and flooding.

Ongoing Issues:

- Frequent problems with inappropriate items being flushed.
- Grinder pumps added to help grind and move debris through the sewer lines.
- Facility Maintenance installed a new toilet system with improved water pressure and flow to help push waste further into the sewer system.
- The restroom is open daily from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., coinciding with the on-site third-party security (via Embark).

Item 2. (continued) DISCUSSION REGARDING PUBLIC RESTROOMS IN CITY PARKS AND THE TRANSIT CENTER.

Door Safety & Lobby Closure:

- A handicap actuator malfunction caused the door to be unsafe by closing unexpectedly.
- The lobby was closed for approx. 1.5 weeks due to this safety concern.
- Repairs were completed today, and the lobby is now reopened.

Future Needs:

- The sewer line between the building and the City's main line needs replacement.
- This will be addressed in a future capital improvement project.

Andrews Park Restroom Update:

- The original building dates to before 1973, with restroom facilities added in that year.
- The restrooms were permanently closed in May 2022.
- The current plumbing includes a 4-inch iron pipe, typical of 1970s residential infrastructure.
- Over time, iron pipes rust internally, reducing internal diameter and flow capacity.
- Porta-potties were installed temporarily.
- Used for approximately six months.
- Three different vendors eventually refused to place semi-permanent units due to safety risks from items being disposed of improperly and creating unsafe conditions for cleaning staff.
 - One vendor provided written notice that they would no longer supply semi-permanent porta-potties due to misuse.
 - Examples of items found flushed or stuffed in toilets:
 - A foam bed
 - Pillows
 - Clothing
 - Sleeping bags
- These items clogged vacuum systems, forcing sanitation workers to come into direct contact with human waste, which presented significant health and safety risks.

Mr. Olsen addressed the safety and operational concerns leading to the permanent closure of the restrooms at Andrews Park. The decision to close the restrooms was made in consideration of both public safety and employee safety.

- The type of cleanup required at the Andrews Park restrooms exceeds normal custodial duties.
- Staff had been required to clean hazardous materials, including:
 - Used needles
 - Human waste
 - Encampment debris from homeless sites
- These are not standard tasks such as washing a toilet or sweeping up debris; due to the hazards involved (e.g., drug paraphernalia), the spaces often cannot be touched without special training and personal protective equipment (PPE).

Item 2. (continued) DISCUSSION REGARDING PUBLIC RESTROOMS IN CITY PARKS AND THE TRANSIT CENTER.

- Staff Risks include:
 - Accidental needle sticks
 - Injury from needles falling or being hidden in materials
- Proper PPE and training are required to safely manage this, but such measures were not in place at the time.
- At the time of discussion, the department was engaged in tense conversations with the employee union about these responsibilities.
 - Employees were unwilling (understandably) to perform these tasks without proper safety protocols in place.
 - In many cases, the city had to hire external contractors for these hazardous cleanups.

Additional Risks:

- Incidents include:
 - Individuals locking themselves inside the restroom.
 - An explosive device or fire damaging the facility.
- Repeated instances of uncapped (open) needles found inside restrooms.

During a recent site inspection, Mr. Wade Thompson, Parks Manager, visited the restroom area at Andrews Park to assess the current condition and photograph line-of-sight concerns. Upon arrival, a needle was discovered stuck underneath the restroom door, highlighting the ongoing safety hazard.

Mr. Olsen said, given the poor plumbing infrastructure and elevated risks, a decision was made to keep the restrooms closed indefinitely. Temporary measures have helped, permanent infrastructure improvements need to be made, but Andrews Park remains without a long-term restroom solution.

Alternative Arrangements:

- The nearest alternative restroom is located at the police station.
 - These facilities have extended hours compared to City Hall.
 - As of now, the police station restrooms are closed on Sundays.
- During park rentals, this is the recommended option provided to the public, although it's acknowledged as an imperfect solution.

Mr. Olsen said the continued misuse and hazardous conditions led to three restroom vendors refusing to service the park. The city was unable to secure a vendor willing to provide long-term, semi-permanent restroom services due to health risks and liability concerns. The restrooms at Andrews Park remain closed, and the police station remains the only reliable restroom alternative nearby.

Location & Infrastructure Challenges

- A site map of Andrews Park reflecting the exact location of the restrooms was included in the presentation and shows the line-of-sight/visibility issues.
- The restroom structure is hidden behind a large brick wall and surrounded by vegetation, limiting visibility from multiple angles in the park.

Item 2. (continued) DISCUSSION REGARDING PUBLIC RESTROOMS IN CITY PARKS AND THE TRANSIT CENTER.

Photo Descriptions:

- Photos taken from the northeast side....
 - Shows the restroom obscured by a brick wall.
 - No visibility from the left side of the park.
- Even from the sides, it's difficult to see who may be standing near or against the building.
 - These areas have often been used by individuals staying for long periods.
- Opposite Side View: You cannot see who is entering or exiting the restrooms.
- Playground and Splash Pad:
 - From these areas, line-of-sight is completely lost.
 - No visibility of restroom activity from key park features.

Andrews Park Master Plan:

- The Andrews Park Master Plan was approved by City Council in early 2023.
- According to the plan:
 - The existing restroom building is removed.
 - The area will include a stormwater pond system, which will also serve downtown stormwater infrastructure needs.
- Funding and implementation for the master plan is pending.

Mr. Olsen said the existing restroom building is no longer aligned with the long-term vision of the park. Due to safety hazards, poor visibility, and misuse, the facility will remain permanently closed. The long-term solution involves implementing the master plan, which does not include reconstructing restrooms in their current location.

Proposed Stormwater Detention and Future Restroom Location:

- The Park Master Plan includes a stormwater pond where a man-made ditch currently exists.
- Historically, the area had natural stormwater flow through the center of the park, where the land grade naturally declines.
- If a new restroom were constructed in the future, it would be located further west, in a location with:
 - Excellent line-of-sight from James Garner Avenue
 - Visibility from the police station (as it currently stands)
 - If the station is converted to housing or relocated, restroom visibility and accessibility may change.

Mr. Olsen said even apartments or mixed-use buildings would provide increased "eyes on" the area, which helps deter vandalism and misuse. More people in view means higher chances of reporting emergencies and reducing crime through visibility. While privacy is still a factor inside restrooms, exterior surveillance will help mitigate issues.

Important Considerations:

- Before any new construction begins:
 - The area would need to be cleared
 - Work would begin on the stormwater detention area as part of the park infrastructure upgrade

Item 2. (continued) DISCUSSION REGARDING PUBLIC RESTROOMS IN CITY PARKS AND THE TRANSIT CENTER.

Andrews Park Master Plan:

- Mayor Holman confirmed that the approved Andrews Park Master Plan includes:
 - Three new restrooms in different zones, Identified by “16” on the site plan
 - Southeast corner
 - Central area
 - North side of the park
- All restrooms will be ADA-compliant.

Other Public Restroom Resources near Andrews Park:

- Central Library Restrooms:
 - Will soon reopen to the public with extended access hours.
 - Temporarily closed due to renovations and waterproofing efforts.
 - Will provide a valuable community resource once operational.
- City Hall Restrooms:
 - Open to the public during standard business hours, Monday through Friday, 8 AM to 5 PM.

Playground and dog park updates:

- Reeves Park has five restrooms inside the sports complex.
 - One restroom project was funded and should have been built by now, but the design went out to bid and came back almost \$120,000 over budget. This was nearly 100% more than what had been allocated, requiring a complete redesign.
- Northeast Lions, Rotary, Lions Park, and Legacy Park each have a restroom.
- Little Axe has porta potties, which are regularly cleaned and remain accessible with little negative feedback.
- Lake View is a unique park in Ward 5, which lacks neighborhood development and therefore has limited parkland. A restroom once existed there but was removed due to frequent vandalism.

Solutions discussed included:

- Repairing existing restroom doors (already completed).
- Replacing the iron sewer line with a 6-inch PVC line.
- Installing an industrial grinder to prevent toilet damage.
- Considering demolition and replacement of older restroom buildings.
- Exploring a QR code restroom access system, which allows monitoring of usage time, alerts for vandalism, and user communication (e.g., reporting no toilet paper, soap, or cleanliness issues).

Mr. Olsen also presented the “Portland Loo” as an option. These prefabricated restroom units are equipped with solar lighting and require only water and sewer connections. The estimated costs range from \$200,000 to \$250,000 plus approximately \$50,000 for utility hookups, depending on location. Other portable restroom solutions using QR code systems were also reviewed. These options allow temporary yet secure restroom access while providing usage data and reporting features.

Item 2. (continued) DISCUSSION REGARDING PUBLIC RESTROOMS IN CITY PARKS AND THE TRANSIT CENTER.

The mobile, solar-powered restroom option operates as a temporary toilet with on-site waste collection, serviced by contracted providers. Access is controlled via a QR code app system, allowing monitoring of usage, reporting of issues (cleanliness, supplies, vandalism), and ensuring accountability. The "Good to Go" system was highlighted as a potential model.

Council discussed accessibility concerns, noting that most residents have cell phones, though provisions for those without should be considered. A benefit of QR access is requiring parental supervision for children, increasing safety. Questions were raised Regarding cost, with staff scheduling meetings with providers such as the QR code company and "Throne" for pricing and feasibility.

Other key discussion points:

- A temporary restroom solution could serve Andrews Park until permanent facilities are built.
- Mobile units could then be transported to other parks or events, such as July 4th celebrations.
- ADA accessibility and inclusion of infant/adult changing stations were emphasized as design priorities.
- New restroom designs are considered gender-neutral, individual units to reduce vandalism and improve accessibility.
- Maintenance benefits include simplified cleaning (open layouts and floor drains).

The committee discussed demolition of the existing restroom at Andrews Park: The removal of the existing restroom building at Andrews Park would improve line-of-sight and reduce safety risks. Salvageable stone and materials could be repurposed for future structures. The original structure dates to the 1940s and was renovated in the 1970s. Reinforcing the need for removal is the past vandalism and safety incidents reported by the Police at the current facility.

Stormwater infrastructure and master plan implementation:

- The Andrews Park Master Plan includes detention ponds and stormwater redirection.
- Staff can do some of this work internally (surveying, excavation).
- Demolition and initial stormwater work could be early steps toward master plan implementation.
- Potential to build a new restroom near the skate park, a heavily used and visible area, was highlighted.

Councilmembers have asked Staff to bring back detailed information on mobile restroom solutions, (Throne, QR systems) for review within 30-60 days.

- Staff to bring back detailed information on mobile restroom solutions ("Throne," QR systems) within 30–60 days.
- Signage and public communication to inform residents about existing restroom locations and upcoming improvements.

Item 2. (continued) DISCUSSION REGARDING PUBLIC RESTROOMS IN CITY PARKS AND THE TRANSIT CENTER.

- Council and staff will continue discussions on advancing elements of the Andrews Park Master Plan ahead of future funding (Norman Forward 2).

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 5:19 pm.

ATTEST



City Clerk



Mayor

