



CITY OF NORMAN, OK CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

Municipal Building, Executive Conference Room, 201 West Gray, Norman,
OK 73069

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 at 5:30 PM

AGENDA

It is the policy of the City of Norman that no person or groups of persons shall on the grounds of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, place of birth, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, marital status, including marriage to a person of the same sex, disability, relation, or genetic information, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination in employment activities or in all programs, services, or activities administered by the City, its recipients, sub-recipients, and contractors. In the event of any comments, complaints, modifications, accommodations, alternative formats, and auxiliary aids and services regarding accessibility or inclusion, please call 405-366-5424, Relay Service: 711. To better serve you, five (5) business days' advance notice is preferred.

CALL TO ORDER

AGENDA ITEMS

1. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING THE RESULTS OF THE HOMELESS SHELTER SURVEY.
2. DISCUSSION REGARDING THE DESIGN, TIMELINE AND COST ESTIMATES FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A HOMELESS SHELTER.
3. CONTINUED DISCUSSION REGARDING POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS TO THE GUEST ROOM TAX ORDINANCE.
4. CONTINUED DISCUSSION REGARDING POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS TO THE NORMAN CITY CHARTER.

ADJOURNMENT



CITY OF NORMAN, OK STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 01/06/2026

REQUESTER: City Council

PRESENTER: Kathryn Walker, Assistant City Attorney

ITEM TITLE: DISCUSSION REGARDING POTENTIAL CHARTER AMENDMENTS

BACKGROUND:

During the Council Retreat this past summer, Council discussed possible upcoming election topics. One of the topics discussed included some changes to the Charter. These included increasing the stipend for elected officers (currently a maximum of \$100 per month), changing the beginning date for Councilmember and Mayoral terms to coincide more closely with the election date, and an expansion of possible certifications for the position of City Auditor.

Staff previously provided the rejected language provided to the voters in 2022 related to stipend and terms. Staff also provided proposed language that would provide more flexibility for the type of certifications that would qualify an applicant for the position.

Council last discussed this topic on October 28, 2025. Feedback given at that time was to prepare the amendments related to the City Auditor position for the April election. In order to meet election deadlines for the April election, Ordinance O-2526-35 amending the City Charter and Ordinance O-2526-36 calling an election for such purpose are currently slated for Council consideration on First Reading on January 13, 2026 and Second and Final Reading on January 27, 2026.

Regarding increasing the stipend for elected officers and modifying the beginning date of Councilmember and Mayoral terms, Council desired additional discussion. If consensus is reached on these additional Charter Amendments, they could be added to Ordinance O-2526-35 and O-2526-36 for consideration in time for the April election.

DISCUSSION:

Elected Officers Stipend: A chart comparing Councilmember stipend/salary for other cities was previously provided. An updated version adding data for Tulsa, Broken Arrow and Moore is attached. Additional information is included related to implementation of compensation increases. Article 23, Section 10 of the Oklahoma Constitution prohibits changing the salary or emoluments of any public official after his election or appointment, or during his or her term of office, unless by operation of law enacted prior to such election or appointment. Any change to compensation must become effective during the following term for all elected officials.

Some cities require a vote of the citizens before stipends can be increased because the amount of Councilmember compensation is included in the Charter. Other cities, like Edmond and Lawton, are empowered by their Charter language to adopt compensation increases by ordinance.

Norman's most recent Charter Review Commission ("CRC") considered and ultimately recommended language amendments to the Charter that would provide for a stipend increase. The proposed language set an initial annual rate of increased compensation to take effect with the next term of office - \$8,100 for the Mayor, and \$5,400 for Councilmembers. It also called for the Mayor, with the consent of Council, to appoint a five-member Compensation Commission to determine and set the appropriate monthly stipend for the Mayor and Councilmembers based on the consumer price index, the City's overall budget, and other relevant factors every three years thereafter. The Compensation Commission would be appointed every three years and any increase in stipend approved by the Commission would not become effective until the following Council or Mayoral term, as applicable. The summary from the CRC's Final Report and language previously considered by the voters is attached for reference. Ultimately, it was rejected in 2022 by a vote of 57.2% opposed, and 42.8% in favor.

Term Beginning Date

Prior to 2003, the terms of the Mayor and Councilmembers expired "at the time fixed for the last regular meeting of the Council in April". In 2003, voters approved the current language that sets the expiration of mayoral and councilmember terms on the first Tuesday of July. The most recent CRC considered and ultimately recommended language amendments to the Charter that would essentially revert back to the version pre-dating the 2003 amendments. Rather than fix the expiration date for the last regular meeting in April, the CRC proposed that terms begin the Tuesday following the date of the run-off election, which is held each April. Care was taken to ensure no current terms were impacted by the change, including terms for which candidates had already filed for election. As discussed in October, the dates have been updated to reflect this. The ordinance language is attached for your review.

Staff will be available at the Council Study Session on January 6, 2026 to discuss these items further and answer any questions.

Article II, Section 1 – Stipend increase for Mayor and Councilmembers.

Background:

The 2005 CRC unanimously recommended a compensation increase for the Mayor and Council members. The City Council did not elect to include the compensation increase in a municipal vote. In 2015, Article II Sec. 1's verbiage changed from "compensation" to "stipend" per the CRC's recommendation. However, the 2015 CRC did not consider changing the actual stipend amount.

The most recent proposed stipend increase appeared in the Resolution No. R-1819-66 drafted in December 2018. No specific increase amount was requested.

A chart comparing Norman's stipend amount with other cities' stipend amounts/salaries was presented to the CRC during its August 12, 2019 meeting. The Committee discussed the range of stipend amounts in other cities and there was consensus to move forward with a modest increase in a format that would simplify the payment process (instead of tracking the number of meetings attended to establish the stipend amount). The Committee asked that language be drafted to recommend a stipend between \$450 - \$650 per month (\$5,400 - \$7,800 per year) for Councilmembers and \$675 - \$975 per month (\$8,100 - \$11,700 per year) for the Mayor.

At its meeting in September, the Committee reviewed the drafted language and discussed other ways to gauge the appropriate compensation so that it would not require a Charter change every time the stipend was changed. Some suggested tying future increases to a set marker – employee wage increases, consumer price index, etc. but others expressed concerns about putting forward a structure that would guarantee a regular stipend increase without regard to overall budgetary concerns. Ultimately, the Commission appeared to reach a consensus and asked that language be drafted that requiring a Compensation Commission to be appointed and make recommendations for stipend increases every three years.

After looking at the implications of using either the term "stipend" or "salary" and whether the amount of each may impact status of the elected official as an "employee" of the City, it appears stipend is an appropriate term for these purposes regardless of the amount. A stipend is generally defined as a fixed sum of money paid periodically for services or to defray expenses. Whether it is called a stipend, wage or salary is immaterial for Internal Revenue Service purposes. Elected officials are explicitly excluded from the definition of employee in the context of the Employment Security Act, 40 O.S. s. 1-210, Federal Fair Labor Standards, 29 U.S.C.A. s.203, and the Family Medical Leave Act, 29 CFR s.825.102.

The CRC discussed possible language at its October 2019 meeting and voted unanimously to recommend the language set forth below.

Language Adopted by the CRC:

Section 1. - Elected Officers: Powers and duties; stipend.

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The Mayor shall receive an annual stipend of [\$8,100 - \$11,700] for his or her service per annum, payable monthly beginning with the mayoral term that begins in 2022. Each of the

Councilmembers shall receive an annual stipend of [\$5,400 - \$7,800] per annum, payable monthly, beginning with the terms that begin in 2022. The Mayor, with the consent of Council, shall appoint a five-member Compensation Commission to determine and set the appropriate monthly stipend for the Mayor and each of the Councilmembers shall receive based on the consumer price index, the City's overall budget, and other relevant factors every three years thereafter. Said Compensation Commission shall be appointed every three years and any monthly stipend increases approved by the Commission shall not become effective until the following Council or Mayoral (as applicable) term., a stipend for their services, fifty dollars per month, plus ten dollars for each regular or special meeting attended, provided, however, that no Councilmember shall receive more than one hundred dollars total stipend for any given calendar month.

Stipend Increase Comparison Chart

Mayor

City	Citation	Monthly Stipend/ Salary	Attendance Fee Per Meeting	Total Yearly Stipend/Salary
Norman (Current)	Charter Art. II Sec. 1	\$50	\$10 *Each regular council meeting and special meeting. Total monthly stipend may not exceed \$100.	Approx. \$840-\$1,200
Stillwater	Charter Art. II Sec. 2-3	No Salary	\$100 *Each regular council meeting only	Approx. \$2,400
Oklahoma City	Charter Art. II Sec. 33	\$2,000	n/a	\$24,000
Edmond ¹	Code Tit. II Chapter 2.04.040	\$1,000	n/a	\$12,000
Midwest City	Charter Art. III Sec. 5	\$400	n/a	\$4,800
Lawton ²	Code Art. 2-1-1-103	\$1,666.67	n/a	\$20,000
Tulsa ³	Code Title 4, Section 100	\$15,833	n/a	\$190,000
Broken Arrow ⁴	Code Ch. 2, Sec. 2-16	\$1,000	n/a	\$12,000
Moore	Charter Art. II, Sec. 2-3	\$500	n/a	\$6,000

¹ Edmond approved an ordinance doubling the compensation amount on April 26, 2021. It became effective on July 1, 2021.

² Lawton approved an ordinance double the compensation amount on December 10, 2024. It became effective on July 1, 2025.

³ Tulsa operates under a Strong Mayor form of government where the Mayor manages the day-to-day operations of the City.

⁴ Broken Arrow's last compensation increase was adopted by ordinance on March 4, 2025 and took effect with the terms of office commencing on April 14, 2025. Councilmember pay is also subject to the same cost of living adjustments received by employees as determined by the City Manager. The ordinance forbids the Council from revisiting the issue of compensation for City Council again until April 1, 2029.

Stipend Increase Comparison Chart

Councilmembers

City	Citation	Monthly Stipend/ Salary	Attendance Fee Per Meeting	Total Yearly Stipend/Salary
Norman (Current)	Charter Art. II Sec. 1	\$50	\$10 *Each regular council meeting and special meeting. Total monthly stipend may not exceed \$100.	Approx. \$840-\$1,200
Stillwater	Charter Art. II Sec. 2-3	No Salary	\$50 *Each regular council meeting only	Approx. \$1,200
Oklahoma City	Charter Art. II Sec. 33	\$1,000	n/a	\$12,000
Edmond ⁵	Code Tit. II Chapter 2.04.050	\$700	n/a	\$8,400
Midwest City	Charter Art. III Sec. 5	\$300	n/a	\$3,600
Lawton ⁶	Code Art. 2-1-1-103	\$833.33	n/a	\$10,000
Tulsa ⁷	Charter Art. II, Sec. 2	\$2,000	n/a	\$24,000
Broken Arrow ⁸	Code Ch. 2, Sec. 2-16	\$750	n/a	\$9,000
Moore	Charter Art. II, Sec. 2-3	\$200	n/a	\$2,400

⁵ Edmond approved an ordinance doubling the compensation amount on April 26, 2021. It became effective on July 1, 2021.

⁶ Lawton approved an ordinance double the compensation amount on December 10, 2024. It also provided additional compensation for the Mayor Pro Tem. It became effective on July 1, 2025.

⁷ Tulsa's charter previously provided for an initial salary of \$12,000 per year, with future increases determined by majority vote of the Council. Increases were not effective until the following term. A 2014 amendment to the Charter removed the power of Council to change its salary by its own vote.

⁸ Broken Arrow's last compensation increase was adopted by ordinance on March 4, 2025 and took effect with the terms of office commencing on April 14, 2025. Councilmember pay is also subject to the same cost of living adjustments received by employees as determined by the City Manager. The ordinance forbids the Council from revisiting the issue of compensation for City Council again until April 1, 2029.

Section 2. - Term of office.

The term of Councilmembers shall be for a period of two years. The terms of Councilmembers chosen to represent Council wards two (2), four (4), six (6), and eight (8) shall ~~expire~~begin on the first Tuesday of July of the next even numbered year after their election through July 2026. Beginning in 2028, the terms of Councilmembers chosen to represent even-numbered wards shall begin at six-thirty in the evening (6:30pm) on the first Tuesday following the date of the scheduled run-off election for such offices.

The term of Councilmembers chosen to represent Council wards one (1), three (3), five (5), and seven (7) shall ~~expire~~begin on the first Tuesday of July of the next odd numbered year after their election through July 2027. Beginning in 2029, the terms of Councilmembers chosen to represent odd-numbered wards shall begin at six-thirty in the evening (6:30pm) on the first Tuesday following the date of the scheduled run-off election for such offices.

Each elected officer shall continue to hold and to perform the duties of his office until his successor is elected and qualified, unless he is removed or forfeits his office under other provisions of this Charter.

~~The term of office of the Mayor elected at regular elections,~~ Elections for Mayor shall be occur every three (3) years. The term of the Mayor shall ~~expire~~begin on the first Tuesday of July and each three (3) years thereafter through July 2028. Beginning with the 2031 election, and every third year thereafter, the term of the Mayor shall begin at six-thirty in the evening (6:30pm) on the first Tuesday following the date of the scheduled run-off election for such offices.

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