

## CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MINUTES

March 3, 2020

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in a Study Session at 5:30 p.m. in the Municipal Building Council Chambers on the 3rd day of March, 2020, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT:

Councilmembers Bierman, Carter, Hall, Holman, Petrone, Scanlon, Scott, Wilson, Mayor Clark

ABSENT:

None

Item 1, being:

### PRESENTATION FROM DR. GABRIEL BIRD REGARDING THE NORMAN FLAG PROJECT.

Dr. Gabriel Bird said he has been leading a project to redesign the City's flag because he believes the City would benefit from a new, simpler flag. He said the current flag will remain as the City's logo so nothing will be changed on City vehicles, signs, etc.; however, the flag that will be flying on flag poles around town will be different. He said the flag will not be copyrighted so anyone can use the image for anything they want. He said 30 flag designs have been submitted so far and the public has two more weeks to submit their designs along with a description of what is behind the design and its meaning as it pertains to Norman. He hopes to have a final flag design ready for a public vote by April then make a presentation to Council in June for adoption by June 14th, which is Flag Day.

Item 2, being:

### CONTINUED DISCUSSION REGARDING NORMAN FORWARD PROJECTS AND OTHER MUNICIPAL FACILITIES NEEDS.

Mr. Jason Cotton, Director of Program Management Services for ADG, said tonight's discussion will be a continuation of last week's presentation regarding NORMAN FORWARD (NF) and other municipal projects currently needing additional funding to meet the vision of the projects, i.e., Municipal Complex Renovation, Emergency Operations Center, (EOC), City Maintenance Complex, homeless facility, etc.

Mr. Cotton highlighted previous topics that included an update on a recent funding analysis; current juncture of whether to reduce scope of projects or find a funding mechanism to supplement current project budgets; project groupings; NF original vision/funding; current funding needed for each project; and an aggregate funding analysis.

Item 2, continued:

Mr. Cotton said in January 2008, the Municipal Complex Master Plan Study was completed; in November 2008, voters approved \$11.2 million for Municipal Complex renovations; in September 2015, an updated space analysis and cost estimate was completed for the Municipal Complex renovations; in September 2019, an updated cost estimate was completed for the Municipal Complex renovations; in November 2019, the new Central Library opened; and in January 2020, Staff met to discuss funding deficits for the Municipal Complex renovations.

In April 2014, voters approved a \$6.5 million Public Safety Sales Tax (PSST); in December 2016, an architect and engineer was selected for the design of the EOC; in December 2017, preliminary estimates for the EOC were received; in October 2019, the value engineering process for the EOC was concluded; and in January 2020, Staff met to discuss funding deficits.

In April 2014, voters approved an \$870,000 PSST for fire apparatus and Fire Maintenance Facility; in July 2019, the University of Oklahoma (OU) transferred the Cleveland Area Rapid Transit (CART) system for non-campus transit to the City; in September 2019, an architect and engineer was retained for Fleet Maintenance, Fire Maintenance, and Parks Maintenance facilities; in November 2019, voters approved a Public Transit Sales Tax (PTST) to fund operations and maintenance needs; in January 2020, preliminary estimates were received for architectural and engineering services and Staff met to discuss funding deficits and alternative funding if Federal Transit Authority (FTA) grants were not transferred to the City.

Municipal Complex

Mr. Cotton said the 2008 Municipal Complex Master Plan included relocating the Central Library (Building D); moving Building A departments to Building D; moving the Utilities Department from Building C to Building D; constructing a Senior Center in Building D; moving Municipal Court from Building B to Building A; and remodeling a portion of Building B for Police Department expansion.

In 2015, \$2.8 million in work was completed at Building D (i.e., new heat and air system, new lighting, flooring, etc.) and the Senior Center was contemplated to be located off-site leaving expanded growth space in Building D. Mr. Cotton said \$820,000 in additional remodel projects for the Parks and Recreation Department, Building 201 renovations, and minor remodeling of Building C, as well as Buildings A and B improvements as previously planned were discussed.

In 2019, a comprehensive review of space utilization was completed for expanded renovations at Buildings B and C that included estimated inflation, contingency, and furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FF&E) for an estimated amount of \$22.5 million. The original budget for the Municipal Complex renovation was estimated at \$11.2 million and the current additional estimation of \$22.5 million will leave an \$11.3 million deficit.

Item 2, continued:

Emergency Operation Center (EOC)

In April 2014, a PSST election for \$6.5 million was approved by voters and in December 2016, an architect and engineer selection was made. In January 2017, a needs assessment was prepared for a 27,000-foot facility and in December 2017, after careful consideration by the Citizens' Public Safety Oversight Committee and City Staff, a schematic design was prepared for a 22,000-foot facility for an estimated cost of \$14.5 million. A value engineering process was prepared for a reduction in the project to include changes in materials; removal of vehicular gates and access control; reduction in parking; removal of site cameras; and reduction in door and window energy ratings. In November 2019, a letter from the Citizens' Public Safety Oversight Committee informed Council of the project reductions and costs. The current estimated cost of \$14.5 million will leave an \$8 million deficit.

Fire and Fleet Maintenance

In April 2014, a PSST election for \$870,000 was approved by voters for a Fire Maintenance Facility. In July 2019, CART transferred non-campus routes to the City and the transfer of FTA funding and construction of a Transit Maintenance Facility was discussed. In September 2019, architect and engineering services were retained for Fleet Maintenance, Fire Maintenance, and Parks Maintenance. In November 2019, a PTST was approved for transit and in January 2020, preliminary design and estimates were received for architect and engineering services for a Transit Maintenance Facility. Also in January 2020, the City discovered it would not receive the FTA funding the University of Oklahoma (OU) had been required to pay back due to the transfer of the transit system.

City Maintenance Complex (North Base)

The City had proposed a City Maintenance Complex be located at the North Base property for maintenance facilities for the Fire Department, Parks Department, and Public Transit. The Fire Maintenance Facility was proposed to be 7,300 square feet with two parking bays, restrooms, office space, and vehicle wash bay. The Fleet Maintenance Facility was proposed to be a 17,500 square foot facility with eight service bays, administrative space, restrooms, breakroom, and tools, tires, and parts storage. The original budget for these facilities was an estimated \$3 million and current funding is estimated to be \$8.8 million leaving a \$7.9 million deficit.

Mr. Cotton said the total deficit for the Municipal Services Project is \$27.2 million and the total deficit for NORMAN FORWARD Projects is \$85.5 million for a total overall deficit of \$112.7 million.

Item 2, continued:

Mr. Cotton said options for the projects include reducing NORMAN FORWARD scopes to match available funding or securing additional funding to execute all projects as envisioned by the community. He said Option I reduces the NF project scopes; pushes Municipal Complex renovations to a later date; constructs the EOC as documented; and addresses the need for funding Fleet, Parks, and Transit Maintenance Facilities. He said there are implications in the park projects that have a domino effect, i.e., if softball/football does not get properly funded they cannot move out of Reaves Park in order to expand the youth baseball program at Reaves Park. If there is no room for expansion at Reaves Park that means, there will be no space to expand the soccer facilities at Griffin Park. He said the estimated economic impacts discussed at the NF presentation last week depends on these facilities being a certain caliber and a certain size to attract visitors from out of town, which is a key component to economic impact.

Option II includes securing funding for the NF vision and meeting current needs of all Municipal Service Projects as envisioned. Mr. Cotton said the Municipal Projects are critical for the City to continue providing important services for the community. He said time is of the essence because there are a lot of projects in design, currently being bid, or currently under construction.

Mr. Cotton said ADG has been involved in the MAPS Program in Oklahoma City (OKC) for almost three decades so there have been a lot of lessons learned. One of the big takeaways is that the projects are not about OKC or OKC's Council, it is about the MAPS Program and what that means to the citizens of Oklahoma City. He said everything ADG does in regards to the MAPS Program is viewed through that lens and is their guiding philosophy. He said the MAPS Program would not be as successful if Oklahoma City had not had the courage to ask voters for more money to finish projects as envisioned. He said it is important for the City of Norman to finish their projects as originally envisioned in order to set the tone for anything NF does in the future and NF's legacy.

Mr. Anthony Francisco, Director of Finance, said items being reduced in projects are pretty critical, i.e., EOC was proposed to withstand an F5 tornado because in times of disaster the EOC is the nerve center of the City and that item was removed from the project. Also, bus maintenance is critical because current busses are breaking down leaving riders stranded until they are repaired and running again. He said if Council directs Staff to construct the projects at the scope originally planned, how will the City pay for them? He said the Oversight Committees began cutting the scope of projects and Staff began looking for money, but it became very apparent the City would need funding from a reliable source and would probably need to ask voters for the funding to do these projects right.

Mr. Francisco said from a finance perspective, there are two major ways for the City to obtain the funding. The first major way is a General Obligation (G.O.) Bond and there are good points to financing capital projects with G.O. Bonds. He said unlike a sales tax, which is regressive because it negatively impacts the poorest citizens, bonds are progressive because they are being backed by property tax. He said property tax by definition is an ad valorem tax, which means the higher the value of your property the higher the amount you pay.

Item 2, continued:

Mr. Francisco said mega trends are happening in the City's sales tax base that impacts not only NFST, but also the General Fund, Capital Fund, and PSST. He said Norman is very dependent on sales tax and Oklahoma is the only State where its cities cannot use property tax for operations. He said Norman wants to diversify its revenue base to pay for more things with sources of revenue other than sales tax. If Council directs Staff to move forward with the G.O. Bond proposal, Bond Counsel and Staff would structure the ballot language and ensure it meets the approval of the State Attorney General's Office. He said NF Projects will need to be on one ballot proposition with the Municipal Projects being a separate ballot proposal. He highlighted preliminary impacts of a G.O. Bond proposition stating that a \$100,000 home would pay approximately \$6.61 per month; a \$150,000 home would pay approximately \$10.21 per month; a \$200,000 home would pay approximately \$13.81 per month; and a \$250,000 home would pay approximately \$17.42 per month.

Mr. Francisco said the second major way to obtain funding is to ask voters for a sales tax increase to NFST, PSST, or transit; however, there has been a change in consumer behavior in which customers are buying their products online instead of at brick and mortar retail businesses. He said when customers buy the product in the retail store, the City collects sales tax, but it is much more difficult to enforce sales tax for online purchases. He said because of these mega trends, sales tax in all sales tax revenue funds are falling below projections and this is a problem.

Mr. Francisco said if the City extended the NFST, it would have to be extended for eleven years to pay for the projects. He said MAPS Projects are pay-as-you-go (PayGo) projects and if the money is not there, the projects do not get done and that is different from NF Projects where it was decided not to wait for the money before proceeding with the projects. He said the City has collected approximately \$39 million in NFST, but has built \$69 million worth of projects. He said bond funding would allow current projects to continue and new projects to begin immediately.

Ms. Brenda Hall, City Clerk, said the first opportunity for an election is June 30, 2020, that would require First Reading on March 24, 2020, Second and Final Reading on April 14, 2020, and notice to Election Board on April 15, 2020.

Public Comments/Questions

Ms. Lisa Williams said she has children that swim and play soccer so NF is very important to her and part of the reason her family moved to Norman instead of Edmond in 2016, was because of the proposed Indoor Aquatic Center. She thought the Aquatic Center would be built in 2018, and urged Council to continue with the NFST and proceed with the bond proposal to get these projects built.

Ms. Gale Hobson, Chair of the Senior Center Ad-Hoc Committee, said the Ad-Hoc Committee recently unanimously voted to recommend locating the Senior Center on the Norman Regional Hospital (NRH) Porter Campus (Inspire Norman) instead of at Reaves Park. She said this would allow the complete project to be built as envisioned by the senior community instead of in phases as proposed at the Reaves Park location. She urged Council to seek funding as quickly as possible.

Item 2, continued:

Public Comments/Questions, continued:

Mr. Eddie Sims, Chair of the Public Safety Oversight Committee (PSOC), said the Committee identified the needs from events that have taken place in Norman. He said the Committee wants a functional facility with room for growth in the future and it will never be cheaper to do the project correctly than now. He said the 22,000 square foot option is one the Committee can support and it gives the City all the essentials needed for an EOC facility. He said it is not reasonable to have a building without offices and dispatch capability for the future so do it now and do it right.

Ms. April Heiple, Director of Food and Shelter for Friends (FSFF), said she voted and advocated for NF's investment in Norman's future; however, she has always believed there was a gap in NF for a group of people that did not have an investment in their quality of life. She is taking this opportunity to look at the gaps in NF and said the homeless deserve an investment from their community as their lives literally depend on such an investment. She said she spoke with people living on the streets about what they needed to get out of their homeless situation and prepared a simple needs assessment. The three top needs include a permanent night shelter, permanent supportive housing, and a job training/placement center. She asked Council to consider helping the homeless community while considering NF and municipal projects.

Mr. Rob Norman said collectively and individually senior citizens, swimmers, ball players, soccer players, etc., are Norman and not small special interest groups. He said the groups participation is a mass participation all across Norman and are all so much more than what they were in 2015. He said Norman is more because of the vision and legacy of NF that serves all age groups from small children to seniors. He said OKC stepped up and did what it needed to do and has robust programs for their community and Norman can have that as well. He said Norman can have the facilities voters approved in 2015, and citizens realize the funding mechanism for those projects is not enough to get the projects done right so he supports the bond proposal and looks forward to having a chance to change Norman's destiny. He said build the projects and build them to be accessible to everyone from the standpoint of affordability, who can play, and who can get transportation to and from the facilities.

Mr. Mel Cosler said there is an opportunity cost to waiting. It seems that citizens voted for projects and have waited for so long that costs have doubled. He said the City should move faster on the projects so we do not end up in this boat again. He said it would be fair to the citizens of Norman to let them know what the tax burden is per capita and how that compares to other communities in the State and Nation. He said he has compassion for the vulnerable population, but the City should not give anything away for free. He said there is a certain percentage of people that cannot take care of themselves and Norman has an obligation to take care of them, whether they have a physical or mental illness, but at the same time the City needs to be careful to not give something away with no expectation of work or some type of contribution from the recipient to ensure they have "skin in the game."

Item 2, continued:

Public Comments/Questions, continued:

Mr. Kent Nicholson, Member of the Multi-Sport and Indoor Aquatic Center Ad-Hoc Committee, said he has been involved in the Pisces Project for more than 20 years trying to get a facility built in Norman that would ensure the survival of swimming in Norman. He said the facility being proposed by the Ad-Hoc Committee is the absolute right facility for Norman and anything less would be a big mistake. He wants to build the facilities right and vote for more financing to get these projects done. He urged Council to step up and do what is needed.

Mr. Mario Rosas said he is here on behalf of Ball Clubs of Norman and said baseball has been a big part of his family's life and his children have played in Edmond, Stillwater, Chickasha, Blanchard, Tuttle, Mustang, Ada, Washington, OKC, Choctaw, Bridge Creek, Tulsa, Purcell, and Moore, but the one place they have not played is Norman. He said the Ball Club has big plans and big visions for what they want youth baseball and softball to be in the Norman community and updating the facilities is critical to what is envisioned for youth sports. He voted for NF and the Ball Clubs of Norman have put their own money into existing facilities and will continue to do so because the goal is not to get rich off these facilities, but to enjoy their use.

Ms. Christy Fuentes with the Griffin Park Ad-Hoc Committee and Norman Youth Soccer said she appreciates what NF has brought so far because it has benefited Norman so she is here to continue that support for NF and the additional projects to come. She said NF does not just have an economic impact, it has a community impact.

Ms. Erinn Gavaghan, Executive Director of Norman Arts Council (NAC), said NAC is very supportive of NF projects being completed to their fullest capabilities. NAC understands these projects are good for the entire community and urged Council to consider the G.O. Bond funding solution and include one percent (1%) for public art. She said art is how future societies will remember what is done today.

Mr. Stephen Ellis said he supports Ms. Heiple's comments regarding the needs of the homeless population in Norman. He said his children played soccer and softball, which are fantastic sports for children, but the best lesson for Norman's children is the inspiration of becoming an inclusive community. He is more than willing to vote on a "sports" package, but believes there needs to be a package to include homeless issues and inclusive community needs. He said Council needs to think beyond who is in the room tonight and pay serious attention to the needs of all the communities in Norman. He said G.O. Bonds are the right way to finance these projects and Norman needs to diversify its tax base.

Mr. Tracy Gordon said he is a member of the Adult Softball/Flag Football Ad-Hoc Committee and has four children in sports in Norman. He said Norman has a great culture of being all inclusive and all the projects discussed tonight impact Norman residents from young to old. He said the community has an obligation to support these projects to get them done. He urged Council to move forward with a vote to get these projects on track and completed because sports bring people together and that spills over into other aspects of the community. He said Norman is a unique community and he wants to keep this passionate momentum going and transform the community.

Item 2, continued:

Public Comments/Questions, continued:

Mr. Mark Campbell said everyone wants all the NF Projects to be state-of-the-art projects, which is known as “lifestyle inflation.” He said the Ad-Hoc Committees have dug in their heels and said “world class” facilities or nothing at all and although he voted for NF Projects to make a better community he believes competitive interests are taking over. He does not believe Norman can afford the larger projects and would rather use that money on community needs, i.e., Sunday bus service, affordable health care, affordable housing, etc.

Lauralie, eight years old, said she loves soccer and would really like the fields to be fixed.

Everly, seven years old, said she loves soccer and would really like the field to be fixed because all the soccer people need better fields so they do not have to play somewhere else.

Mr. Mike Fowler said the idea for NF started in 2010 with four individuals that grew to twelve individuals by 2012. The group hired the Ripken Design Group to perform a market and feasibility study of what Norman should be looking at in regards to facilities, sports complexes, park upgrades, libraries, etc. He said there was a long list of projects originally submitted, which the group narrowed down and in that process he began to inform the Mayor of what the group was doing, the number of projects anticipated, and estimated costs for those projects. He said approximately \$155 million in projects were chosen for a NF vote, which are some of the very same projects being discussed tonight. He said there has been some inflation to the projects since 2015, and the citizens of Norman have already spoken about how they feel about NF. He said there is clearly a will of the people tonight to continue moving forward and completing this list of projects. He encouraged Council to move forward with the G.O. Bond proposal to complete the projects as envisioned. He said NF is about the children, grandchildren, and families in this community, not about economic impact so he supports the NF Projects. He would also support an additional \$5 million for homeless community needs.

Ms. Alva Brockhaus, member of the Indoor Aquatic and Multi-Sport Facilities Ad-Hoc Committee, said Council should be bold and look forward to what Norman needs now and 50 years from now. She said Norman has the opportunity to complete these NF Projects the right way and benefit the entire community.

Ms. Linda Price, member of Public Safety Oversight Committee (PSOC), Citizen Financial Oversight Board (CFOB), and former City employee, said NF is very important and she supports a vote to get the projects done right. She said it is just as important to maintain City facilities and the EOC needs to be done correctly because this facility is hugely important for the community. She said there are so many needs to be addressed and homeless needs are among the most important because it is not going away. She said progressive G.O. Bonds are the only solution because sales tax is not a consistent source of revenue.



Item 2, continued:

Public Comments/Questions, continued:

Ms. Cindy Rogers, member of CFOB, is concerned that not long ago the City was asking voters for a Stormwater Utility Fee (SWU) stating stormwater is a major need and priority, but voters did not approve the proposition. She is worried about voter fatigue because of the recent transit sales tax passage and feels the City may be rushing the G.O. Bond proposal because of the low interest rates. She believes the community will support NF Projects, but it is harder to get them to support the real needs, such as the SWU. She felt the City should put needs before wants. She is also worried about separating the ballot questions because voters might vote for NF Projects, but reject the Municipal Complex Projects so she believes they should be one question.

Mr. Paul Arcaroli suggested Council take this opportunity to clean the slate and look more creatively about how projects can be funded. He said the City needs a SWU, needs to protect its lakes, infrastructure maintenance, etc., so there are lots of important needs. He said although the NF Projects are nice, they are wants not needs. Also, he is Vice President of the Senior Union and the recommendation from the Senior Center Ad-Hoc Committee is not necessarily the position of the Senior Union that represents 23,000 seniors in Norman. He urged Council to look at that recommendation carefully and ask very hard questions about what that will mean for the senior community.

Mr. Ryan Robinson said he did not know how the City can build anything less than what the Ad-Hoc Committees have recommended for each project. He said the NF Projects were never about making money off the backs of the children, they are about quality of life, but if the City can generate money from the projects then that would be great. He said bringing other communities into Norman for sports will generate business for restaurants and other retail businesses in Norman. The City needs to invest in its future and spend money to do that, which means going back to the voters. The City needs to invest in municipal facilities as well and he supports taking care of the homeless who are the most vulnerable population.

Council Comments/Questions

Councilmember Carter said he enthusiastically supports the G.O. Bond proposal because this is for the kids, the seniors, and the citizens of Norman. He said these projects have already been approved by the voters of Norman, but the projects need to be done right. He said G.O. Bond funding gives citizens a certainty of doing these projects as envisioned and time is of the essence because the community has waited five years for these projects and wants them completed.

Councilmember Scott said she would support a G.O. Bond proposal, but not a sales tax increase or extension. She would also support one-percent (1%) for public art. She said Norman needs to prioritize projects for the most vulnerable in the community.

Item 2, continued:

Council Comments/Questions, continued:

Councilmember Petrone asked for a separate cost breakdown for the Indoor Aquatic and Multi-Sport Facilities and Mr. Cotton said the Indoor Aquatic Center estimated cost is \$35.7 million and the Multi-Indoor Sports Facility estimated cost is \$23.1 million for a total estimated cost of \$58.8 million.

Councilmember Petrone asked if Staff had met with Ball Clubs of Norman regarding the Reaves Park plans. Mr. Rosas said yes, members have been involved in the Ad-Hoc Committee discussions and there are some small issues being discussed. Councilmember Petrone encouraged Ball Clubs of Norman to send Council any changes in the plan they would like to see addressed. Mr. Rosas said it is important to have an inclusionary field, which has not been addressed to his knowledge. Mayor Clark said Council is looking at a Miracle League for Norman inclusive sports field and that may not be in Reaves Park, but Council and Staff are reviewing alternate locations that would be more accessible for the disabled community.

Councilmember Petrone asked about the safety of bridges in Norman and Mr. Scott Sturtz, City Engineer, said Norman currently has 77 bridges and about 16 of those are considered critical with another three that will become critical soon. He said most of the bridges were built prior to 1950 and bridge inspections are conducted every two years. He said five bridges need to be replaced as quickly as possible and costs for construction only would be \$900,000 to \$1.4 million for each bridge. He said Staff is also recommending an increase in the maintenance budget from \$100,000 per year to \$400,000 per year.

Councilmember Petrone said the condition of the bridges is concerning to her and she would like to discuss adding \$900,000 to \$1.4 million per bridge to the bond proposal for five bridges, \$500,000 annually for bridge maintenance, and \$5.6 million for bridge construction only plus design and land acquisition.

Mayor Clark felt a future Transportation Bond would be more appropriate for bridge needs.

Councilmember Petrone said she would like to add \$7 million for a homeless day shelter to ensure capital costs are included in this bond. She said the homeless population are residents and deserve the same quality life as everyone else.

Councilmember Bierman said it has been stated that NF Projects and Municipal Complex Projects must be separate ballot issues and asked why they cannot be in one ballot question. Mr. Jeff Raley, Floyd Law Firm, said the City is dealing with the single subject rule, which is bound by City ordinance as well as the rule for questions to the voters. He said bond counsel will do its best to comply with that rule and also comply with Council's wishes.

Item 2, continued:

Council Comments/Questions, continued:

Councilmember Bierman said stormwater has been a top priority since she has been on Council yet nothing is being done since the vote failed. She said impervious surfaces have increased throughout the City and with the exception of purchasing a storm drain camera truck, very little else had been done for this very major problem. She said that will weigh heavily in her decision on the bond proposal. Mr. Francisco said when the SWU proposal was put before voters and the voters turned that down, the need did not go away so that may be something Council will want to consider. He said a SWU and/or bridge bond funding proposal would need to be separate ballot questions.

Councilmember Bierman said the Ripken Study states, "Although a recreational pool can be profitable and provide the Norman community with year round recreation options, competitive pools are less feasible. A free standing 25 meter by 25-yard pool is an acceptable size for competitive swimming and common in the high school level and below, but is not expected to be operationally profitable. While the facility will always operate at a loss, the revenues from a recreational pool or potential operating efficiencies can mitigate these losses to make the entire complex an operationally break-even venture. If the City of Norman feels a strong need for competitive pool, a 25 meter by 25-yard facility is the best option." She said a 50 meter by 25-yard pool was in the original proposal and current funding is for a 25 meter by 25-yard pool so how did the City end up with 50 meter by 50-yard pool? Mr. Kent Nicholson, member of PISCES, said the original PISCES proposal was for a 50 meter by 25-yard pool. He said the only difference is a cool down pool in the current proposal because the original idea was to connect the Indoor Aquatic Center to the current YMCA Facility and the YMCA pool would have been used as the cool down pool.

Mr. Dan Schemm, Director of Visit Norman, said Visit Norman has been working with the Huddle Up Group who works with communities all over the country to determine what tournament quality facilities mean in other places. He said they have surveyed rights holders for different sports events and what tournament facilities mean to rights holders that host tournaments and for swimming it was a 50-meter pool with ten lanes.

Councilmember Bierman said another point in the Ripken Study states, "It is highly recommended that the City of Norman secure commitments from competitive teams prior to moving forward with construction." She asked what commitments the City has secured and Ms. Brockhaus said Sooner Swim Club is willing to commit \$50,000 per year by way of pool rental and to do that they have to be able to double the team size. She said this is not a problem because Sooner Swim Club has always been constrained by the dimensions of the available 25-meter pool so to double the club size they would need a 50-meter pool.

Mr. Jud Foster, Director of Parks and Recreation, said Norman Regional Hospital (NRH) has committed \$50,000 per year as well and the City has \$175,000 per year programmed in the NFST all dedicated to help offset operating costs.

Item 2, continued:

Council Comments/Questions, continued:

Councilmember Bierman asked what will happen if sales tax decreases in the next couple of years and Mr. Francisco said if that happens, Council will have difficult decisions to make and this would not just impact NF, the larger concern would be the General Fund (GF) and all the personnel paid from the GF as well as impacts to the PSST and Capital Fund.

Councilmember Bierman said she would like to see a detailed proposal on a homeless shelter before sending it to a vote.

Councilmember Wilson said she is having a hard time adding bigger projects that will have to be maintained on limited funds and does not feel comfortable asking for \$113 million especially after recent budget cut discussions. She said homeless solutions are a higher priority for her because the City needs to take care of its most vulnerable population. She needs to see a balance of projects before she is able to support a bond proposal.

Councilmember Holman asked what the City's bonding capacity is and Mr. Francisco said there is no legal limit for what is being proposed. Councilmember Holman said there are a lot of needs in the City that require money, i.e., NF Projects, Municipal Complex renovations, Americans with Disabilities (ADA) improvements, stormwater, bridges, etc. He said the City could suffer from some paralysis if Council sits and thinks about all the things that are needed, but nothing will be done if Council cannot decide what projects to move forward. He said they are all important projects, but upgrades to the Information Technology (IT) Department is part of the Municipal Complex Project and they protect all the sensitive information of all the citizens of Norman that pay utilities. He has always felt moving the Municipal Court out of the Police Department (PAD) building and into their own building is an extremely important project because right now the Municipal Court has one single court room for a population of over 125,000. He said the PAD building is in terrible condition and it is hard to recruit quality officers to a department when they look at the brand new PAD buildings in Moore, Edmond, Yukon, and Oklahoma City that are state-of-the-art with protected entryways and parking lots. He said Norman Police Officers do not have that protection inside or outside of the building. He said the facilities for female officers are not ideal because the building is so old and inadequate for current needs.

Councilmember Holman said he did not know the specific needs of the homeless community, where a facility would be located, how the facility would be operated, or how it would be funded. He would be interested in answers to these questions, but does not believe a homeless shelter will solve Norman's homeless issues.

Councilmember Holman said an August vote would be more attainable and it will never be cheaper to do these projects as envisioned than right now. He said several NF Projects have been completed, but sales tax has not been keeping up with projections made in 2015, which were accurate at that time. He said there has been a drastic change in consumer habits over the last five years that were unforeseeable.

Item 2, continued:

Council Comments/Questions, continued:

Councilmember Holman said the City should not continue to rely on sales tax for NF Projects and G.O. Bonds are the best way forward, which he can support. He believes citizens will understand the importance of the Municipal Complex Projects, which can help provide better customer service and easier navigation of City Departments. The EOC is a very important project and being able to withstand a F5 tornado is extremely important to keep City government functioning in the event of a disaster. He is interested in exploring bridges in the next five-year road bond or Council can address one or two in this bond proposal. He said the City should do the projects it can right now and do them right because Council cannot solve all the City's problems at once.

Councilmember Scanlon said NF Projects are promises made by the City and the City needs to keep those promises. He would like to see more details about locating the Senior Center on the NRH Porter Campus because he thought Reaves Park was the senior community's choice. He said the City cannot just "get by" on the EOC Project as it is absolutely vital the City have a storm proof facility with adequate room for current and future needs. He said the Municipal Court and PAD facilities are in poor condition, have cramped quarters, and are terrible working environments so the City needs to do better by these departments. He said residents deserve privacy when discussing personal issues with police and they do not get that privacy in the current facility.

Councilmember Scanlon said he has worked on the committee discussing the homeless population in Norman and is not sure the City should invest in a super large facility or if the City should even invest in the operations of such a facility. He suggested the City put forward some ideas and throw some seed money that way, but ultimately a facility will require the Continuum of Care that already exists as well as donations from local businesses. He said Food and Shelter for Friends is a noble facility and all homeless issues need to be coordinated between them and the many agencies in Norman that are involved in homeless issues.

Councilmember Scanlon said he participated in the Committee on stormwater that developed a prioritized list of needs. He said the City needs to make progress on stormwater even if it is baby steps and this is an opportunity to take a baby step.

Councilmember Scanlon said a G.O. Bond is the way to go and the City should stop continuing to count on sales tax revenue for some of these projects. He said rushing this to a vote in June may be too soon, but Council does not want to delay this too long so August may be a good target date.

Councilmember Hall said she appreciates all the heartfelt comments tonight and the work put into preparing the information presented. She asked if there is a limit on the number of proposals that can be put on a ballot at the same time and Mr. Francisco said from a legal standpoint no. He said Oklahoma City had thirteen proposals and they all passed in addition to a sales tax increase and extension of an existing sales tax.

Item 2, continued:

Council Comments/Questions, continued:

Councilmember Hall said she supported the NF proposal in 2015, and continues to support NF Projects. She said the City is at a crossroads now to decide what path to take and feels the City has set an expectation for the community not only on what was originally proposed, but how the City has executed and built several NF Projects to completion. She said the completed projects have set a high bar for what is expected in other NF Projects and what may seem like a want to some may be a need for others. She supports the bond proposal and giving the community an opportunity to vote. She has heard the phrase “do it right” over and over again and she believes doing it right is going big and asking to complete the projects in the manner the Ad-Hoc Committees have recommended after months and months of work. She is concerned about splitting the NF Project and Municipal Complex Projects into separate questions because she can envision a scenario where one might pass and the other fails. She said all the projects being discussed are quality of life projects and there are benefits to employees who deserve excellent facilities to work in and not be compromised along the way because the project could not be done right. She said the projects benefit the community as well by providing better customer service and better public safety.

Councilmember Hall said she supports continuing to explore what is needed for a homeless day shelter and how to continue to care of the homeless population in Norman. She would also like to see some high priority stormwater projects on the ballot and asked about the most pressing capital stormwater projects.

Ms. Carrie Evenson, Stormwater Program Manager, said there are over 60 projects identified in the Stormwater Master Plan (SMP) in 2009, and only three to four have been done. She said the bigger projects involve stream bank stabilization, which can affect backyards and bridges, as well as localized flooding across the City. She said maintenance needs would be funded through a SWU because bond money cannot be used for maintenance.

Councilmember Hall said Council has a lot of information to absorb and would like to discuss the pros and cons of a June versus August election. She said this could be an opportunity to address a lot of needs the City has been discussing and Staff has been working on for years.

Mayor Clark said the common bond with the projects being proposed is the community has already supported these projects and she is concerned that adding additional projects may jeopardize the passage of the others. She is willing to discuss an August election; however, the City must move quickly and keep it further from other elections in 2021. In regards to stormwater, the SWU has failed twice and unless the projects are on City property, they will require a 60% vote. She said bridges fall under transportation and Council can discuss bridges for the next transportation bond election. She said the City needs to concentrate on what can be done now because the list of needs will always be long. She said the City owes it to the community to move forward with a bond vote and although Council decides what is placed on the ballot, the voters decide whether or not the projects get done.

Item 2, continued:

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "City of Norman Municipal Project Funding Analysis," Norman City Council Study Session dated March 3, 2020 prepared by ADG, Inc.
2. 2020 Homeless Services Needs Report prepared by Food and Shelter

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The meeting adjourned at 9:33 p.m.

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ATTEST:

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City Clerk

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Mayor