



Legislation Text

File #: O-1718-10, **Version:** 1

CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCE O-1718-10 UPON SECOND AND FINAL READING: AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORMAN, OKLAHOMA, AMENDING SECTION 21-201 OF CHAPTER 21 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF NORMAN TO REINSTATE YEAR-ROUND WEEKLY PICKUP OF YARD WASTE; AND PROVIDING FOR THE SEVERABILITY THEREOF.

BACKGROUND: The Sanitation Division is one of the Utilities Enterprise Funds. All revenues for the Enterprise Funds are derived from its customers. Norman is one of the very few cities in the country that requires its citizens to vote on the utility rates. For several years prior, expenses were outpacing revenues and in 2010 a sanitation rate increase was recommended. On August 24, 2010 a three-year rate increase of \$1.00 per year for residential customers was requested but was defeated by Norman voters. After the voter rejected rate increase, Council directed the Sanitation Division to develop several cost saving proposals to reduce expenses.

One of the cost saving items suggested was to reduce yard waste collection from weekly to once per month during the winter months. On September 20, 2010 City Council adopted Ordinance No. O-1011-19 limiting the yard waste collection to once per month during the months of December, January and February.

DISCUSSION: Yard waste collection is accomplished with the use of a single professional Sanitation Division driver and several temporary help. Limiting yard waste collections to once per month created a significant increase in the workload for that week. Additional temporary helpers and over time was needed to accomplish the work of once per month collections. Switching to weekly yard waste collections anticipates using the same budget amount for temporary help, just spread over month. During the winter months the sanitation driver and vehicle were used to assist in residential collections and additional work at the transfer station and recycling drop off centers. This work should be able to be continued with a lighter yard waste collection that occurs in the winter months.

The adoption of reduced yard waste collection during the months of December, January and February has not been viewed favorably by residential customers. Although notice is given in customer bills and in newspapers, many customers simply forget about the reduced collections and subsequently call thinking they missed service. In addition, weather is often unpredictable and a late fall can result in many bags of leaves waiting to be collected in December. Conversely, an early spring may result in many customers starting yard work in late February, requiring more frequent yard waste collections. Keeping a consistent schedule of yard waste collections would reduce calls and complaints. Council requested consideration of eliminating the reduced yard waste collection schedule.

Ordinance O-1718-10 amends Section 21-201 of the City Code to reinstate year-round weekly yard waste pickup by the Sanitation Department.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of Ordinance O-1718-10 upon Second and Final Reading.