

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MINUTES

May 5, 2020

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in a virtual study session at 5:30 p.m. hosted in the Municipal Building Council Chambers on the 5th day of May, 2020, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted in the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

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

ABSENT: None

Item 1, being:

DISCUSSION REGARDING THE PROPOSED FYE 2021 CITY OF NORMAN BUDGET – ENTERPRISE FUNDS.

Ms. Kim Coffman, Budget Manager, said Council reviewed the General and Special Revenue Funds Budget on April 7, 2020, and will review the Enterprise Funds Budget tonight. The Capital Fund Budget was reviewed on November 19, 2019, February 18, 2020, and April 21, 2020; a Finance Committee mid-year budget review was held on February 20, 2020; a public hearing regarding the budget was held on April 14, 2020; another public hearing regarding the budget will be held on May 26, 2020; a follow-up meeting regarding the budget may be held, if needed, on June 2, 2020; and final adoption of the budget is proposed for June 9, 2020. She said Enterprise Funds are operated in a manner similar to private business enterprises where the intent is that costs of providing goods or services to the general public are financed or recovered primarily through user charges. She said Enterprise Funds include Water, Sanitation, and Water Reclamation, with two sub-funds in Water Reclamation that includes Sewer Maintenance and New Development Excise Tax.

Water Fund

Mr. Ken Komiske, Director of Utilities, said water production runs 24 hours per day, 365 days a year, and produces over 4.3 billion gallons annually. He said the Line Maintenance Division maintains over 606 miles of water pipe and 6,100 fire hydrants; repairs an average of 180 water line breaks each year; replaces over 8,000 feet of old deteriorated/undersized water mains; repair and maintain over 1,000 fire hydrants each year, and maintain over 40,000 water meters.

Mr. Komiske highlighted the water rate history as follows:

- ❖ Inverted block rate adopted in 1999 to encourage conservation. Progressive rate structure charges higher rates to highest quantity water users and affects about 25% of residential customers;
- ❖ March 2006: Water rate increase approved;
- ❖ August 2010: Water rate increase failed;

Item 1, continued:

Water Fund, continued:

- ❖ January 2015: Water rate increase was approved to current levels to fund Water Treatment Plant (WTP) Improvements and additional two million gallons per day (mgd) of groundwater supply; and
- ❖ A water rate increase is needed in FYE 21 to fund upcoming projects.

Mr. Komiske highlighted current residential rate structures for Norman as follows:

| Gallons | Rates (per 1,000/gallon) |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| Base Fee | \$6.00 |
| 0 – 5,000 | \$3.35 |
| 5,001 – 15,000 | \$4.10 |
| 15,001 – 20,000 | \$5.20 |
| Over 20,000 | \$6.80 |

The City currently charges a summer surcharge of \$.35 per 1,000 gallons during July and August for usage of 20,000 gallons per month or more. There is also a mandatory year round odd/even watering rotation schedule for customers.

Ms. Coffman highlighted a comparison of residential water rates for several communities, i.e., Ardmore, Bartlesville, Broken Arrow, Edmond, Enid, Lawton, Midwest City, Moore, Oklahoma City, Ponca City, Stillwater, and Tulsa as well as out of state communities, i.e., Lawrence, Kansas; Denton, Texas; and Lubbock, Texas.

Mr. Komiske said major revenue assumptions for the Water Fund in FYE 20 include an estimated growth rate of 1.9%. Effective as of August 1, 2016, water connection charges for all meter sizes are as follows:

- ❖ 3/4" meter \$1,000
- ❖ 1" meter \$1,667
- ❖ 2" meter \$6,667

A proposed water rate increase not shown in the budget is anticipated to be voted on in January 2021, with First Reading in October 2020, if Council decides to move forward with a water rate election.

Water Fund expenditure assumptions include:

- ❖ \$1,238,330 budgeted for interim water purchase contract from Oklahoma City (OKC) (a take or pay contract at \$2.33 per 1,000 gallons in 2020, an expected increase of 5%);
- ❖ \$1,148,314 for Central Oklahoma Master Conservancy District raw water purchase, which includes the replacement of Del City's raw water line and Norman's share is 43%;
- ❖ \$148,936 included in FYE 21 Budget for Capital Equipment replacement purchases and other equipment (Water Treatment and Water Line Maintenance);
- ❖ Ending fund balance estimated to be \$10,023,902 (balance in FYE 22 will be negative \$28,199,123).

Item 1, continued:

Water Fund, continued:

Mr. Komiske highlighted water projects as follows:

- ❖ Major projects to be complete in FYE 21:
 - WTP Phase II Improvements: ultraviolet disinfection, ozone treatment, and new chemical building and equipment storage - \$35.6 million to be completed in the summer of 2020;
 - FYE 15 Water Wells/Supply Lines - \$10.7 million;
 - Backwash Tower Rehabilitation - \$280,000;
 - Robinson Street Water Line, Phase II, Brookhaven Creek to Water Tower - \$3.2 million;
 - Robinson Street Water Line, Phase IV, 24th Avenue N.E. to WTP - \$2.3 million
 - Segment D 24-inch Water Line, Phase V, Timberdell Avenue: Chautauqua Avenue to Jenkins Avenue and Jenkins Avenue: Timberdell Avenue to Constitution Avenue - \$4.5 million; and
 - Parsons Street Water Line (west of Campus) – \$860,000.
- ❖ Major new projects for FYE 20/21:
 - Water Line Replacement: Flood Avenue to Venture Boulevard - \$3.5 million;
 - James Garner Avenue Extension Water Line Replacement: Library to Robinson Street - \$930,000;
 - New Building for Line Maintenance - \$1.6 million;
 - Porter Avenue Water Line Replacement – \$550,000;
 - Jenkins Avenue Water Line Replacement - \$700,000;
 - Urban Water Line Maintenance and Fire Hydrant/Valve Upgrades completed by Line Maintenance crews - \$300,000 to \$400,000 annually; and
 - Southlake Addition Water Line Replacement - \$1.2 million.
- ❖ Major new projects for FYE 21 and beyond:
 - Wellfield Blending - \$2.2 million (additional \$14.4 in FYE 22 for solution for Department of Environmental Quality chlorination requirements);
 - Initiate Advanced Metering Infrastructure - \$360,000 (additional \$14 million in FYE 22);
 - Corrosion Control Study - \$75,000 (Lead/Copper Rule);
 - Cyber Security - \$175,000 (America’s Water Infrastructure Act); and
 - Water Tower Coating - \$1.1 million (Cascade Boulevard and Boyd Street).
- ❖ Future Water Projects (subject to funding) include:
 - Hall Park Water Line Replacement - \$440,000;
 - Flood Avenue Water Line: Gray Street to Robinson Street - \$1.9 million;
 - Annual Water Line Replacement Program - \$2.9 million annually;
 - Southeast Norman Water Tower - \$3.5 million;
 - Robinson Street 30-Inch Water Line: 24th Avenue N.E. to Flood Avenue - \$5.3 million; and
 - Alameda Street 24-Inch Water Line: 24th Avenue N.E. to Carter Avenue - \$3.5 million.

Item 1, continued:

Sanitation Fund

Ms. Coffman said the Sanitation Division collects more than 100,000 tons of waste annually; offers three recycling drop-off centers that collect more than 1,400 tons annually; collects approximately 29,000 tons of yard waste annually that is placed in the Compost Facility; and offers curbside recycling through Republic Services with a 90% participation rate and collects more than 5,000 tons of recyclable material annually.

Ms. Coffman highlighted a comparison of residential sanitation rates with other communities, i.e., Ardmore, Bartlesville, Broken Arrow, Edmond, Enid, Lawton, Midwest City, Moore, Oklahoma City, Ponca City, Stillwater, and Tulsa as well as out of state communities, i.e., Lawrence, Kansas; Denton, Texas; and Lubbock, Texas. She said services include spring and fall clean-up days; once a week solid waste collection; once a week yard waste collection; free brush drop-off; three recycling drop-off recycling centers; free compost (when available); and residential curbside recycling.

Major revenue assumptions for the Sanitation Fund include user fees of \$17.20 per unit per month which includes a \$3.00 curbside recycling charge and \$0.20 for the Oklahoma Solid Waste Management charge; additional polycart for a charge \$7 per month; and estimated revenue at a growth rate of 1.7% per year.

Mr. Komiske said Major Sanitation Fund expenditures include:

- ❖ \$2,117,984 for fleet related replacement purchases;
- ❖ \$2,000,000 for landfill tipping fees;
- ❖ Recycling Contractor expense budgeted at \$1.5 million (3.3% increase);
- ❖ FYE 21 ending fund balance is \$7,900,159; and
- ❖ \$1.58 million to pay off bond six years early (2010 -\$3.59 million to build Transfer Station at 3.45%).
- ❖ Household Hazardous Waste Facility (Material Recovery Facility) - \$1 million;
- ❖ Container Maintenance Facility - \$860,000;
- ❖ Purchase adjacent property to Compost Facility - \$350,000; and
- ❖ Compost Facility Scale House - \$160,000.

Major Sanitation Fund projects to be begin in FYE 21 include:

- ❖ New Sanitation Facility - \$1.78 million

Water Reclamation Fund

Mr. Komiske said Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) has an average flow of 10.4 mgd with 97% to 98% removal of contaminants. He said the Oklahoma Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Renewal Permit now has spring, summer, and winter designations with different criteria, which makes sense because in the winter, water is able to hold more oxygen and algae does not grow as fast. In summer, fish are more active and compete with algae for oxygen in the water and people are playing in the water so the criteria is more restrictive. The original permit was issued for warm water aquatics so the City just has to make sure the water was clean enough to preserve and promote warm water fish, but now the permit is issued for primary body contact and recreation,

Item 1, continued:

Water Reclamation Fund, continued:

which means the effluent must be cleaner and even though people cannot drink it, they play in it. The City also had to change its testing from five days per week to seven days a week.

Mr. Komiske said Sewer Line Maintenance maintains almost 500 miles of sewer lines and over 12,000 manholes; cleans over 1.4 million feet of sewer lines each year; and inspects and records over 250,000 feet of sewer lines. He said over the last 20 years, the City has reduced sanitary sewer overflows by 90%.

Ms. Coffman highlighted comparable residential water reclamation rates for the cities previously mentioned and said Lawton is the only city with a lower rate than Norman.

Mr. Komiske said major revenue assumptions for the Water Reclamation Fund include residential wastewater service rates increased in November 2013. Current rates are \$5.00 base plus \$2.70 per 1,000 gallons of treated wastewater. He said user fee revenues for FYE 21 are budgeted at a projected 1.9% increase from FYE 20. The FYE 20 fund balance is projected to be \$3.08 million and \$300,000 in FYE 21.

Mr. Komiske highlighted Water Reclamation Fund expenditure assumptions as follows:

- ❖ Major projects for FYE 20 carried into FYE 21
 - Reuse pilot study - \$1.6 million;
 - Line Maintenance Building - \$1.6 million (shared with Water Fund);
 - Adjacent land purchase - \$340,000; and
 - Storage Building - \$720,000.
- ❖ Future Major Projects for FYE 21
 - Reuse Pilot Study - \$1.4 million;
 - Centrifuge Replacement - \$2.5 million; and
 - Main Control Building Renovation with Laboratory - \$350,000 of \$3.5 million total project.

Mr. Komiske said the main source of the Sewer Maintenance Fund revenue comes from a \$5.00 per month sewer maintenance charge and \$0.50 per month Capital Improvement Charge. He said *all* Sewer Maintenance Rate Projects must be on a pay-as-you-go basis. Since 2001, over 433,000 feet of sewer lines have been rehabilitated. The City has reduced sanitary sewer overflows by 90% because of the sewer line rehabilitation.

Mr. Komiske highlighted Sewer Maintenance Fund projects as follows:

- ❖ Major projects for FYE 20 and FYE 21
 - Bishop Interceptor Replacement - \$2.6 million (with \$0.9 million Sewer Development Fund);
 - Brookhaven Creek Interceptor - \$5 million;
 - Sewer Maintenance Plan 17 - \$2.3 million; and
 - Sewer Maintenance Plan 18 - \$4 million.

Item 1, continued:

New Development Excise Tax Fund

The main source of revenue for the New Development Excise Tax Fund comes from new construction building permits based on wastewater generated. Mr. Komiske said FYE 20 revenues are projected to be \$1.8 million (\$1.1 million from residential projects and \$0.85 million from commercial projects); however, that revenue is dependent on how much development takes place.

Mr. Komiske said future projects include Summit Valley Interceptor Project - \$207,000 (with \$360,000 from Water Reclamation Fund), the Bishop Interceptor Replacement Project - \$940,000 (with \$2.6 million from Sewer Maintenance Fund), and Brookhaven Creek Interceptor - \$500,000 (with \$500,000 from Sewer Maintenance Fund).

Total Utility Rates

Ms. Coffman highlighted comparisons for total utility rates for several Oklahoma communities, i.e., Ardmore, Bartlesville, Broken Arrow, Edmond, Enid, Lawton, Midwest City, Moore, Oklahoma City, Ponca City, and Tulsa as well as out of state communities, i.e., Lawrence, Kansas; Denton, Texas; and Lubbock, Texas. She said Norman has the lowest rates of all comparable communities, except Ardmore. She said except for Ardmore, Norman's rates are lower than any other City listed, which includes a Stormwater Utility Fee that many of the cities have; however, Norman is one of the few that does not.

Questions/Comments

Councilmember Holman said the City Council election will be held in February so it would make sense to use that date for a water rate increase election as well to avoid back-to-back elections. He said other communities, such as OKC, can raise their utility rates approximately 5% annually, but Norman cannot and when Norman has to purchase water from OKC then Norman has to pay that higher rate.

Councilmember Holman asked why Norman is paying 43% of Del City's raw waterline replacement costs and Mr. Komiske said the Bureau of Reclamation built the reservoir, pump system, dam, and conveyance lines to Norman, Midwest City, and Del City so all three cities are linked forever paying a shared cost of all infrastructure. He said Norman uses approximately 43% of the water from the reservoir so Norman is obligated to pay 43% of any infrastructure projects.

Councilmember Holman said the Lindsey Street water tower has been an iconic piece of Norman for years and looks different than other water towers in Norman. He would like to keep the water tower as a historical structure and was excited to hear that it may be used for non-potable water and irrigation purposes for Reaves Park. He suggested the University of Oklahoma (OU) may be interested in paying half the cost of painting the tower using their logo on one side and City of Norman on the other side. Mr. Komiske said the Lindsey Street water tower does not use a lot of water so the tank remains full, which is not good for many reasons. He said the water tower should take in water to mix with the water already stored inside for continuous movement of the water, but the Lindsey Street water tower does not do that so the City would have to add a mixing chamber

Item 1, continued:

Questions/Comments, continued

as well as repainting the tower. He said Staff discussed removing the water tower rather than repainting it and adding the mixing chamber or using it only as a non-potable water supply.

Councilmember Holman said the Boyd Street water tower was repainted within the last ten years and asked about the lifetime of paint on a water tower and Mr. Komiske said it can vary from ten to fifteen years. He said in the summertime, water towers have condensation on the bottom creating mold that can eat through the paint over time.

Councilmember Holman asked about the potential for a Groundwater Treatment Plant and Mr. Komiske said the City will soon have 40 water wells and if environmental regulations keep getting tighter, the City will eventually have to treat well water and it would be less costly if the City had a central location to blend and treat all well water. Councilmember Holman said that could also help the City by not having to purchase water from OKC.

Councilmember Holman asked if land has been acquired for the southeast Norman water tower and, if so, what is that cost? Mr. Komiske said land acquisition will be part of the project cost since the City does not have a location yet and does not own land in southeast Norman, but he is not sure what that cost would be. He said this project is in the long range plan and even though the City does not have the money for the project it is important to look at what utility infrastructure will be needed in the next ten to fifteen years, especially in areas growing in population like southeast Norman. Councilmember Holman suggested developers for the proposed Destin Landing Addition might be persuaded to purchase land for the water tower since it will benefit their development.

Councilmember Holman said he is excited to be thinking about a Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facility because he receives a lot of questions from constituents about what to do with HHW and telling them to wait for the once a year HHW event is an uncomfortable conversation to have. He said providing a year round facility would be beneficial for Norman residents.

Councilmember Holman said the last wastewater rate increase was in 2013, and asked if another rate increase is anticipated and Mr. Komiske said, for the foreseeable future, the next big project will be the Indirect Potable Reuse Pilot Project to see how the water will need to be treated to make it usable again. He said Council will need to look at equipment needed and cost of treating that water to determine whether or not those costs will be part of the WTP or WRF or shared.

Councilmember Bierman said Cleveland County had mentioned paying some costs for the waterline replacement on Robinson Street if it included the fair grounds and asked if that had been discussed. Mr. Komiske said there are ongoing discussions, but the fair grounds are north of Robinson Street and changing direction of the waterline project will cost more money than going straight down Robinson Street.

Councilmember Bierman said she receives a lot of complaints and questions about the changes in recycling, i.e., not recycling glass and certain plastics, and looking into the future, she felt it would

Item 1, continued:

Questions/Comments, continued:

be more beneficial for the City to have its own Material Recovery Facility. She said one of the newest trends that has not yet been fully embraced by the United States (U.S.) is full incineration with zero emission, which would replace recycling and sanitation. She said, in the Oversight Committee, she is starting the discussion about investigating an Incineration Facility versus current sanitation and recycling expenditures. She said the City is doing the best it can with what it has, but landfills are not a long term sustainable solution nor is sending recyclables overseas.

Mr. Darrel Pyle, City Manager, said he is working on an opportunity to bring that technology into Norman on a pilot scale as well as a mechanism to finance a pilot program with private sector funding. He said there are technologies that are amazingly clean and could result in long term changes on how products are packaged.

Councilmember Carter said he would support and encourage a water rate increase next year as well as a \$3 Stormwater Utility Fee (SWU) again. He believes a flat \$3 SWU would be more appealing to voters versus a fee based on square footage of impervious surface.

Councilmember Petrone said she is looking forward to learning more about incineration of trash and recyclables. She asked if the City is currently drilling new water wells in order to stop purchasing water from OKC and Mr. Komiske said that is the goal; however, that will depend a lot on permit regulations.

Councilmember Petrone agreed with Councilmember Holman that a water rate increase election should be combined with the City Council election in February to save money, but at the same time Council is currently proposing an election this year for increased funding for NORMAN FORWARD and Municipal Complex Projects. She has reservations about the City's current economic condition and whether or not the City is putting wants before needs as well as voter fatigue.

Councilmember Petrone asked how much land the City will be purchasing for \$350,000 adjacent to the Compost Facility and Mr. Komiske said Staff is still in the process of negotiating that, but it could be up to 20 acres.

Councilmember Petrone said she thought Council was supposed to meet periodically to discuss connection fees and asked if that could be scheduled in June. Mr. Komiske said that discussion will be part of the overall review of utility rates and even though connection fees do not have to be voted on by the public, the fees needs to be included in the discussion.

Councilmember Scanlon asked if Midwest City and Del City will be sharing the cost for the water reuse pilot project since the treated water is proposed to go back into the reservoir they use and Mr. Komiske said no. He said Norman is the City that needs the water and will be the City treating the water to place back into the reservoir and those cities have indicated no interest in participating.

Item 1, continued:

Questions/Comments, continued:

Councilmember Wilson asked if there is a way to structure a SWU as its own entity instead of being under another utility and Mr. Anthony Francisco, Director of Finance, a lot of municipalities in the east combine stormwater systems with sanitary sewer systems, but that is very foreign in Oklahoma. He does not know that it would be illegal, but it would certainly be unusual and subject to a lot of disagreement because it is so foreign.

Councilmember Wilson said Mr. Komiske mentioned that back in the day lead paint was used on to the Lindsey Street water tower and she just watched the documentary on the Flint, Michigan, water crisis so the very idea of lead in the water scares her because it cannot be safe even for irrigation purposes.

Councilmember Hall thanked Staff for their hard work on tonight's presentation and projects in the que. She wants to make sure the Utility Department and Public Works Department are working together on the Porter Avenue Projects to have all the dots connected for a successful project that is important to her Ward.

Councilmember Hall asked why the City waits so long between rate increase elections for the Enterprise Funds because these are needs that keep the City operating and she wants to better understand why the City has to keep putting off projects. Mr. Pyle said that is typically a reality factor of political will because it is not a popular thing to do and it costs political capital to do so, but the longer the City waits the more money the City has to ask for. He said there is value of moving into a regular rotation and taking incremental bites instead of waiting ten years and asking for a large increase. Councilmember Hall said Staff is doing their due diligence in long range planning and Council needs to take these needs seriously so she is looking forward to that conversation.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "City of Norman Fiscal Year 2021 Budget – Enterprise Funds," dated May 5, 2020

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Item 2, being:

CONTINUED DISCUSSION REGARDING A POSSIBLE GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND ELECTION TO INCLUDE AN ECONOMIC STIMULUS RECOVERY PACKAGE FOR SMALL BUSINESSES.

Mr. Pyle said the Economic Development Advisory Board (EDAB) has a regularly scheduled meeting on May 7th, at which time Staff will present the same presentation being submitted tonight. He said EDAB's discussion and recommendations may give Council some insight to consider and Mayor Clark said feedback from EDAB will be very helpful.

Item 2, continued:

Ms. Sara Kaplan, Retail Coordinator, said a survey of Norman businesses was conducted on April 17 through April 30, 2020, to assess business sentiment during the Stay-at-Home order and received 384 responses. She said the survey numbers have not changed significantly from last week, but she has a few survey questions with greater detail.

Ms. Kaplan said industry sectors include Sector 11: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting; Sector 21: Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction; Sector 22: Utilities; Sector 23: Construction; Sector 31-33: Manufacturing; Sector 42: Wholesale Trade; Sector 44-45: Retail Trade; Sector 51: Information; Sector 52: Finance and Insurance; Sector 53: Real Estate, Rental, and Leasing; Sector 54: Professional Scientific and Technical Services; Sector 55: Management of Companies and Enterprises; Sector 56: Administrative; Sector 61: Educational Services; Sector 62: Health Care and Social Assistance; Sector 71: Arts, Entertainment, and Recreational; Sector 72: Accommodations and Food Services; Sector 81: Other Services (except Public Administration); Sector 92: Public Administration; and non-profit organizations. She said the majority of survey responses came from Professional Scientific and Technical Services and Retail Trade followed closely by Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation; Accommodations and Food Services; and Health Care and Social Assistance.

Ms. Kaplan said a majority of the sectors have been in business ten or more years, 60% lease their business space, 70.9% do not have an online sales component, and 58.9% were considered an essential business. A majority of the business' main concerns were losing business (customers, projects, etc.), meeting payroll, paying rent and utilities, and employees wellbeing. Many stated they were at risk of closing permanently if they did not make some serious decisions or changes over the next six months.

Mr. Kaplan said 53% of businesses stated they were interested in access to capital either in the form of grants or loans and information on financial assistance within the next 90 days. She said 50% of those businesses were sole ownership.

When asked if the business had applied for funding from any of the federal economic packages including the Payroll Protection Program (PPP) or Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL), or from other sources there were 378 responses that included applied for PPP – 64.6%; applied for EIDL – 29.9%; did not apply for funding – 22.8%; applied for traditional Small Business Administration (SBA) loan – 7.7%; applied for line of credit or loan from a bank – 4.8%; and applied for Oklahoma Manufacturing Reboot Program – 0.3%.

When asked the current status of funding applied for there were 301 responses that included have not received a response – 28.6%, received funding – 47.5%, and denied funding – 3.3%.

When asked the reason for not applying for funding there were 107 responses that included not eligible – 37.4%, not aware of options – 16.8%, and had trouble with paperwork – 6.5%.

Ms. Kaplan said several of the answers submitted seem to say that if their business could open back up they would probably be okay.

Item 2, continued:

Councilmember Scott asked if the City conducted a similar survey for essential workers who are non-business owners, but were also impacted by the pandemic and Ms. Kaplan said no, this survey was specific to businesses. Councilmember Scott asked if it would be possible to conduct a survey for essential workers and Mr. Pyle said the City would need to identify a database to hit that target audience as opposed to just putting out questions to the general public. He said Staff can research to see if there is a mechanism in place for that.

Councilmember Scott said Council is discussing a bond election for an economic stimulus recovery package for small businesses so Council needs to consider including a stimulus package for individuals similar to what the federal government provided.

Councilmember Bierman agreed with Councilmember Scott and said if a person is self-employed they are out of luck in obtaining a small business loan or grant. She said there are a lot of data collection companies that can provide information on specific demographics. She would like to see what the stimulus recovery package would look like, what the maximum amount would be, how the program is going to be administered, how the applications are going to be received, who will receive the applications, and what type of reporting and oversight will be provided. She would like to restrict applications to those that did not receive federal assistance.

Mr. Pyle said the survey was done to capture the businesses, including sole ownership, entrepreneurs, etc., that fell through the cracks of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. He said the survey was business focused because the CARES Act money was business focused, but finding out where the gaps are will be achievable.

Questions/Comments

Councilmember Wilson asked if there is anything the City can do about the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission's (OESC) unemployment response because it is unacceptable. Mayor Clark said State leaders are just as frustrated as everyone else about the system's failure.

Councilmember Petrone said she heard the State set money aside for the manufacturing industry so she would like more information on the State economic package so the City of Norman is not asking residents to increase their property taxes through a bond election when money can be obtained from the State. If the bond money is supposed to be a "life raft" to those that need it then Council needs to be thinking inclusively about who needs the life raft and what other programs are available.

Councilmember Hall said however the program is structured, she wants to make sure money reaches people that have been left out of the process.

Councilmember Holman said he agrees with all the comments made tonight especially regarding looking out for citizens that have been impacted the most. He said NORMAN FORWARD Projects will only cost more money the longer the City waits and he is not confident the bond election will pass in this serious economic environment caused by the pandemic.

Item 2, continued:

Questions/Comments, continued:

Councilmember Scanlon said the bond election is scheduled in August and if it passes, it will be November before the funds become available, but the economic recovery need is now so it would be helpful to identify alternative funds from the State.

Councilmember Scanlon said the NORMAN FORWARD Projects need to be what citizens envisioned, but \$83 million is a lot of money to be asking for in this economic climate so maybe Council could think about dividing projects into three or four bond issues over the next few years.

Councilmember Carter said NORMAN FORWARD Projects have all been vetted by voters and he has faith that voters will approve the sale of the bonds. He said in terms of the economic development component, he is concerned about the individuals that have lost their jobs and cannot pay rent or utilities and felt a job training component would go farther than an economic stimulus component.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Reboot Norman – Business Needs Assessment," dated May 5, 2020

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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

ATTEST:



City Clerk



Mayor

