

Resolution 2025-0239

Resolution Supporting a Sales Tax Election to Fund Public Safety including the New Oklahoma County Jail

Whereas, public safety is always a priority and concern for the community; and

Whereas, the current Oklahoma County Jail, constructed in 1991, has faced persistent issues since opening including overcrowding, structural deficiencies, and inadequate facilities including the omission of a dedicated medical/mental health clinic, program space, natural light deficient, and outdoor recreation space all of which is compromising the safety and well-being of inmates and staff; and

Whereas, in December 2016 the Oklahoma County Criminal Justice Advisory Council (CJAC) consisting of representatives from the cities of Oklahoma City, Midwest City, Edmond as well as members of the community, including the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce, released a study regarding criminal justice reform; and

Whereas, upon completion of the study CJAC, at a Board of County Commissioners on December 6, 2021 recommended construction of a new county jail at a new location; and

Whereas, the Board of County Commissioners upon recommendation of CJAC approved of a general obligation bond from Oklahoma County voters; and

Whereas, in June 2022, Oklahoma County voters approved a \$260 million bond issue to construct a new jail facility to address these critical concerns; and

Whereas, due to inflation and increased construction costs, the estimated expense for the new jail has risen dramatically, creating a significant funding shortfall that jeopardizes the project's completion; and

Whereas, the U.S. Department of Justice has been monitoring the current jail since 2003, and failure to construct a new facility may result in federal intervention, potentially leading to higher costs imposed directly on residents through increased property taxes; and

Whereas, Oklahoma County is the only county in the state without a sales tax, and implementing a county sales tax is a viable solution to generate the necessary funds to construct and operate the jail and provide for public safety in Oklahoma County; and

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Citizens Bond Oversight Advisory Board recognizing the urgent need to support public safety and to replace the current jail to ensure the safety and security of our community, supports the proposal to hold a special election seeking voter approval for a county sales tax dedicated to funding the construction and operation of a new Oklahoma County Jail; and

Be it further resolved, that the Citizens Bond Oversight Advisory Board encourages all residents of Oklahoma County to participate in the upcoming election and to consider the long-term benefits of investing in a modern, safe, and efficient public safety initiatives.

APPROVED by the Citizens Bond Oversight Advisory Board of Oklahoma County this 21st day of January 2025.

**Citizens Bond Oversight Advisory
Oklahoma County**

Chair

Member

Member

Member

Member

Member

Member

ATTEST:

Maressa Treat, County Clerk