

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

May 17, 2023
12:00 p.m.

Councilors Present: Emily Semple, Matt Keating, Alan Zelenka, Jennifer Yeh, Mike Clark, Greg Evans, Lyndsie Leech and Randy Groves

Mayor Vinis opened the May 17, 2023, work session of the Eugene City Council in a hybrid format at 101 W 10th Avenue, Eugene OR 97401.

1. **WORK SESSION: Police Auditor and Civilian Review Board Annual Reports**

Mayor Vinis introduced Interim Police Auditor Leia Pitcher, who was joined by the Civilian Review Board chair, Carolyn Williams, and vice-chair Jose Cortez. The group presented the Police Auditor and Civilian Review Board annual reports.

Councilor Discussion:

- Mayor Vinis – appreciated that the Police Auditor and Civilian Review Board reports were presented together; believes the combined reporting helped to capture the diversity of cases and community concerns around police effectiveness and conduct.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked for the Civilian Review Board’s key takeaways from the Eugene Police Department’s School Safety Practices training; asked staff for information from Eugene Police Department regarding recent bomb threats to South Eugene High School; asked for clarification on the School-To-Prison Pipeline training they received.
- Councilor Groves – recognized the importance of the Civilian Review Board, the work they do, and how it impacts the credibility of the Eugene Police Department; noted that the most common complaint he receives about Eugene Police is that officers are unable to respond to calls; asked if increased 911 call volume is affecting response reliability and times; asked staff to provide more detailed information on response times.
- Councilor Semple – noted the importance of having a place for the community to report complaints and concerns; asked if the Civilian Review Board’s minutes are publicly posted; noted the good variety of cases reviewed by the Civilian Review Board; believes that the Civilian Review Board’s recommendations on cases are an important part of the process.
- Councilor Keating – asked if body-worn cameras were adding to the difficulty of classifying complaints; asked if both audio and video recordings are reviewed as part of the complaint process; asked if the Police Auditor and Civilian Review Board members have suggestions on improving the body-worn camera policy; asked if camera muting is accidental or intentional; asked about the rollout of the public reporting portal and potential improvements; asked about frequent reporters and people who receive repeated complaints; commended the Eugene Police Department that of the 300 complaints, only 14 generated allegations of misconduct

with no deadly force incidents; asked how maintaining the anonymity of reporters impacts the collection of relevant data.

- Councilor Yeh – asked if City staff will assist in the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion assessment; asked how the Police Auditor will research the state’s new rules for deadly force investigations.
- Councilor Clark – asked how often complaints are based on a misunderstanding of the services provided by Eugene Police Department.

2. **WORK SESSION: Fire Marshal’s Office and Unsafe Building Program**

Assistant City Manager Kristie Hammitt introduced Fire Chief Mike Caven and Deputy Chief Travis Worthington, who provided an update on the Fire Marshal’s Office and the unsafe building program.

Councilor Discussion:

- Mayor Vinis – appreciated the new placard system for unsafe buildings.
- Councilor Clark – asked what preventative safety measures Council should consider as housing density increases.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked what determines when an abandoned or vacant building is placarded; asked about the top three causes of fires; asked how the inspection process addresses and corrects uncovered violations; asked how HAZMAT response and permitting operates outside of the city limits; asked staff if Eugene Springfield Fire would respond to a HAZMAT issue at the oil tank facility north of Eugene, and if that facility has a permit with the City of Eugene.
- Councilor Groves – asked if building placard information is stored in the pre-emergency planning and 911 computer-aided dispatch system; noted that State regulations apply to the Kinder Morgan oil tank farm north of Eugene; asked if the growing population density will affect response times; stated that taller buildings require more firefighting resources.
- Councilor Yeh – asked if every fire is investigated; asked if the 250 investigations mentioned in the Fire Marshal’s report include Eugene Police Department investigations or only Fire Marshal’s Office investigations.
- Councilor Keating – asked when the placard system was implemented; asked what percentage of abandoned and vacant buildings have been placarded; asked if placarding applied to both residential and commercial buildings; asked if the City could implement a tax on unused or unoccupied properties; asked what percentage of buildings in similarly sized communities are vacant, underutilized, or abandoned; asked what percentage of inspected buildings in other communities fall into safe, caution, and unsafe categories.
- Councilor Semple – asked how to report unsafe buildings.
- Councilor Clark – asked how the department is responding to the potential hazards of lithium batteries in electric vehicles.
- Councilor Keating – provided national statistics for gas station fires.

Mayor Vinis adjourned the meeting at 1:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Katie LaSala
City Recorder

(Recorded by Ellie Harwell)

Link to the webcast of this City Council meeting [here](#).