

MINUTES
Eugene City Council
Work Session
Eugene, Oregon 97401

May 24, 2023
12:00 p.m.

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

Mayor Vinis opened the May 24, 2023, work session of the Eugene City Council in a hybrid format at 101 W 10th Avenue, Eugene OR 97401.

Mayor Vinis recognized that the week of May 21 – 27, 2023 is National Emergency Medical Services Week.

1. WORK SESSION and POSSIBLE ACTION: An Ordinance Concerning Prohibited Camping, Permitted Overnight Sleeping, and Prohibited Activities on Streets, Sidewalks, and Shared-Use Paths, and Amending Sections 4.815, 4.816, 4.860, 4.990, and 5.135 of the Eugene Code, 1971.

City Attorney Kathryn Brotherton introduced the topic and provided background information regarding An Ordinance Concerning Prohibited Camping, Permitted Overnight Sleeping, and Prohibited Activities on Streets, Sidewalks, and Shared-Use Paths, and Amending Sections 4.815, 4.816, 4.860, 4.990, and 5.135 of the Eugene Code, 1971.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Zelenka – discussed how other municipalities are implementing camping prohibitions in response to state law HB3115; supports the City’s decision to not enact city-wide camping prohibitions; noted that prohibitions on camping within specific distances to waterways are not new in the City; believes that the approach the City is taking is appropriate.
- Councilor Semple – asked staff if property owners will maintain the right to have someone cited for trespassing on parking strips; is concerned that camping on shared use areas may impact safety and accessibility; does not support allowing camping on sidewalks or shared use paths; asked if someone could camp against the sidewalk if they maintain at least five feet distance from the curb.
- Councilor Groves – believes that the proposed ordinance is a starting point and may need adjustments in the future; is concerned about the impact of camper possessions and debris on shared use areas; believes the proposed ordinance can help to protect waterways and educational facilities; supports the proposed increased fines; noted that the municipal court judge uses alternative sentencing options when appropriate; noted that the City is seeking a balanced solution for both housed and unhoused residents.
- Councilor Yeh – is concerned that the proposed ordinance is aimed at protecting housed individuals over unhoused; believes that raising fines will negatively impact unhoused individual’s ability to improve their situation; believes that accessibility of sidewalks

and paths are important to the City's active transportation system; would support a map to show where camping is and is not permitted.

- Councilor Leech – is concerned that not providing a map or information about where camping is allowed will continue the cycle of criminalizing being unhoused; noted it costs less to house people than to continue to enforce laws that criminalize being unhoused; is not in support of the proposed ordinance without providing information on where camping is allowed; supports alternatives to fines for camping violations.
- Mayor Vinis – noted that this ordinance is not the only work that Council is doing related to the unhoused population; reminded Council that the ordinance is being proposed to comply with Oregon HB3115 noted that there is a separate process for addressing concerns for the unhoused community; noted that the increased fine is intended to encourage use of the Community Court option to waive fines; asked staff for information regarding the average width of sidewalks and rights-of-way; noted the impact on shared use sidewalks and paths may need to be reviewed in the future.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted that the focus of this ordinance is public health, safety, and accessibility; believes the City needs more camping sites; believes that the Occupy Movement showed that camp sites must have structure and supervision to maintain the health and safety of the site; noted that ordinance outlines a minimum of four feet of clear pathway for accessibility; noted that a letter of trespass is required to have persons removed from an area; asked if the letter of trespass process can be made clearer for the public.
- Councilor Semple – clarified some issues that occurred during the Occupy Movement; does not support increasing fines; does not believe that raising fines will reduce camping; does not support creating a map for camping; stated concern that people will create unofficial maps for where camping is allowed.
- Councilor Groves – clarified that the proposed ordinance prohibits camping within 100-feet of the high bank, not the high-water mark; believes that unregulated camps become dangerous; does not support allowing camping in parking strips; noted various safety concerns related to camping in the parking strip.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked staff to confirm that a letter of trespass is not required to have individuals removed from the parking strip or rights-of-way for residential properties; asked staff to clarify the trespass process difference for residential versus commercial parking strips and rights-of-way; stated that this increased fine can provide the municipal court judge with information that may help with alternative sentencing; supports the increased fine for willful violators.
- Councilor Semple – is concerned about the staffing impact of enforcing this ordinance; asked staff if the ordinance would allow sleeping in the same place repeatedly; asked if someone could sleep anywhere if they are not camping; asked staff to provide information on where sleeping is allowed; asked if sleeping is allowed near the Amazon Channel.
- Councilor Yeh – believes that fines create a barrier to individuals trying to improve their living situation; asked for a report back on the impacts of increased fines over the next year; noted safety concerns around allowing camping on a sidewalk of any size.
- Councilor Clark – believes that vehicles pose a safety hazard to anyone camping in the parking strip; asked if Council's Vision Zero goals were considered while drafting the ordinance; asked about prohibiting camping in the median strips; asked who would do

the work if Council requested an analysis of safe distances from the travel lane, with Vision Zero goals in mind; would like to make data driven decisions about safety standards.

- Councilor Leech – believes this ordinance presents an opportunity to discuss concerns for unhoused individuals; noted that the impact of unhoused camping on Ward 7 residents and businesses is significant; is in support of further work sessions to discuss possible solutions to the unhoused crisis.

MOTION AND VOTE: Councilor Groves, seconded by Councilor Keating, moved to adopt An Ordinance Concerning Prohibited Camping, Permitted Overnight Sleeping, and Prohibited Activities on Streets, Sidewalks, and Shared-Use Paths, and Amending Sections 4.815, 4.816, 4.860, 4.990, and 5.135 of the Eugene Code, 1971, as set forth in Attachment A to this AIS.

VOTE: 6:2 PASSED (opposed by Councilors Semple and Leech)

2. **WORK SESSION: Revenue Committee Scope of Services**

Mayor Vinis introduced Chief Financial Officer, Twylla Miller, who presented information on the Revenue Committee Scope of Services.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Clark – would like the City to work on demand management for unhoused services; asked what percentage of fire and emergency medical services calls are responding to distress of an unhoused individual; believes that the increased unhoused population has increased the calls to emergency services, and that this has negatively impacted the budget; believes that increasing the number of available housing units and the number of homeowners in the community will increase tax revenue and improve the budget deficit.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked staff if the deficit of \$31.5 million is cumulative or annual; asked staff if the budget deficit will be ongoing despite the proposed budget changes; asked to confirm that the options are to change or reduce services, reduce expenses, or create new revenue to solve the budget deficit; asked about the five million dollar funding gap in unhoused services; asked staff to confirm that sustainability and climate change funds are allocated to staffing and not greenhouse gas reduction project funding; asked staff to confirm that the completed emissions reducing efforts were done as scheduled repair and replacement needs and not part of climate change initiatives.
- Councilor Groves – believes the long-term solution to budget issues is economic growth and increased housing density; would like to explore increases in downtown building height limits; is concerned about how the City's effort to increase revenue may impact residents financially; believes that cost of living should be considered with revenue increasing measures.
- Councilor Leech – believes that supporting additional locations for the unhoused community is a priority; asked if seeking grants and other funding is part of the Revenue Committee's scope of work; asked if the recruiting process had begun for creating the committee.

- Councilor Yeh – asked if more specific information will be provided in the next session on this topic; would prefer that funding to unhoused services and climate change projects take priority over other projects; requested more information regarding funding downtown services; would like the City’s role for supporting the unhoused to be more clearly defined and managed.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted his previous request for a work session that focused on unhoused and climate issues, which were both lacking a funding source; believes increasing economic growth is too slow to address urgent needs; asked staff to confirm that \$350 million of increased assessed land value increases the general fund by about one million dollars; outlined the number of large projects needed to increase revenue by five million dollars over the next two years; discussed the positive impact of addressing unhoused and climate issues on the overall budget.
- Councilor Clark – believes that economic and residential development provides long-term budget solutions; outlined new construction goals set by Beaverton, Oregon; discussed how adopting a new construction goal could impact tax revenues.
- Councilor Evans – asked how the City can develop or increase fees for services to the public to decrease the budget deficit.

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

Respectfully submitted,



Katie LaSala
City Recorder

(Recorded by Sara McKinney)

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