

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

July 26, 2023
12:00 p.m.

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

Mayor Vinis opened the July 26, 2023, work session of the Eugene City Council in a virtual format at 101 W 10th Avenue, Eugene OR 97401.

1. **WORK SESSION: Strategic Plan**

City Manager, Sarah Medary, gave a brief introduction to the topic before City Manager's Office Chief of Staff, Brooke Freed, and Policy Systems Analyst, Jason Dedrick, presented information on Strategic Planning.

Councilor Discussion:

- Mayor Vinis – appreciated the presentation and clarity that was provided.
- Councilor Zelenka –stated the presentation linked the Council goals and the Strategic Planning retreat well; asked how to distinguish between goals that are already under way and ones that have not yet been started.
- Councilor Groves – looks forward to seeing details coming from different departments; stated is the importance for community members to see what action items Council is focusing on and how it impacts them; would like progress updates on action items to be brought forward as available.
- Councilor Clark – noted his concern that the metrics and measures in the presentation would be recorded after decisions were made; asked if there is a way to get better advanced information on decisions being made; would like to get better information in advance for better decision-making about strategic goals.
- Councilor Yeh – believes that the process to allow staff to work on the strategic plan was a good choice; would like to explore how to get good advice and input on topics before taking action.
- Mayor Vinis – stated that the City does sometimes use outside sources to assist with information and research on topics.
- Councilor Semple – believes that the Community Survey was a complex item to breakdown; believes that staff brought a good grouping of challenges into the report.
- Mayor Vinis – stated that the number of requests for work sessions has been a struggle and the strategic plan can help prioritize work session requests and scheduling.

MOTION: Councilor Groves, seconded by Councilor Zelenka, move to approve the direction outlined in the strategic plan set forth in Attachment A to the AIS.

VOTE: PASSED 6:1 (Opposed by Councilor Clark)

2. **WORK SESSION: City Manager Updates**

City Manager, Sarah Medary, provided updates on the Multi-Use Center at the Lane County Fairgrounds and the request for \$15 million to support this project.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Yeh – asked to clarify if the state and federal funds have been verified; asked to clarify if the \$3.5 million from the Eugene Emeralds is a combination of equipment and rent and not a cash being investment into the facility construction; asked if there is any commitment from the Eugene Emeralds to put money toward the construction of the proposed facility; asked if the Eugene Emeralds have made a commitment to stay in Eugene if the facility is approved.
- Councilor Groves – asked if a pro forma has been completed for anticipated income and revenue for the proposed facility; asked if a per-ticket surcharge would go to the City or the County; asked if a surcharge can be charged for non-high school related sporting event tickets; believes that a surcharge would be a way to contribute back to the community.
- Councilor Evans – asked the City Manager to confirm the deadlines for a decision and project completion; asked if a bond measure would be a City, County or combined initiative; asked what the timeframe would be for putting a measure on the ballot; asked if any numbers have been determined for fees and/or system development charges.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated that this project discussion has been mainly with Lane County; thought the \$10 million contribution from the Eugene Emeralds was toward construction cost; noted his surprise that the \$10 million would be considered prepaid rent; stated the Eugene Emeralds actual cash contribution toward construction is \$0; is concerned about long-term maintenance and commitment from the Eugene Emeralds to remain in Eugene; expressed concern about the lack of monthly rental income and how it would impact maintenance costs of the facility; thinks a county revenue bond to the voters makes the most sense.
- Councilor Clark – asked what Lane County has agreed to do to support this project; asked if the County has agreed to allow the project construction at the fairgrounds; asked if Lane County Commissioners have had a conversation about selling the fairgrounds; has historically supported the Eugene Emeralds but the cost of this project is high; stated that he is skeptical of the cost but open to looking at options.
- Councilor Semple – stated that the Eugene Emeralds are important to the community; has received concerns from residents regarding the impact of a stadium on the area; stated that the recent budget showed a large gap; asked if the stadium is as important as other items in the budget; does not believe that system development charges would cover the ongoing cost; does not support using public funds to support a private business; asked how the City could justify such a large investment in this project.

- Councilor Evans – asked if there has been any discussion regarding off season program opportunities for the facility; thinks that Council needs to consider what, if any, master planning has been completed by Lane County; believes that convention space should be considered with this plan to attract mid-level conventions at a multi-use facility.
- Councilor Semple – is concerned about the open-air arena sitting empty and unused in off season; asked if the Eugene Emeralds leave how the facility would be used; is concerned about livestock not being accommodated at the location; is hesitant to commit funds to a project that lacks funding.
- Mayor Vinis – stated that the County has not yet committed funding to the project; asked the Eugene Emeralds and others about private funding options from donors; has concerns that the City has been asked to fund a project that lacks commitments from other funding sources.
- Councilor Zelenka – thinks the Eugene Emeralds are important to the history and future of Eugene; stated that the funding gap is \$43 million; asked where the remaining funds would come from if the City agreed to devote \$15 million; asked about overall costs of donating the funds; stated a revenue bond through Lane County level may be the best option.
- Councilor Yeh – believes the Eugene Emeralds are worth investing in; stated interest in exploring how the City can help support the team through fees and permits; stated that a large investment in the facility deserves a formal request with all of the information about the initial and ongoing costs, and maintenance; believes that exploring a bond is a good idea.
- Councilor Groves – likes the idea of a bond but believes Council needs more information; asked City Manager to look into ticket surcharge for sporting venues as a revenue stream.
- Councilor Leech – would like to hear more about the facility cost and ongoing maintenance.
- Councilor Evans – asked if Council can get a comprehensive report on the questions asked today regarding the timing and cost of this project; would like the voters to have a say in how public dollars are spent; wants to explore a fee assessed if the Eugene Emeralds decides to leave Eugene.
- Mayor Vinis – asked the Eugene Emeralds and Lane County to include the City in discussions in the future regarding this project.
- Councilor Evans – asked if Council would be having a special work session during Council break to discuss this topic.

Mayor Vinis adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Katie LaSala
City Recorder

(Recorded by Sara McKinney)

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