

## MINUTES

### Eugene City Council Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

May 9, 2022  
5:30 p.m.

**Councilors Present:** Emily Semple, Matt Keating, Alan Zelenka, Jennifer Yeh, Mike Clark, Claire Syrett, Randy Groves

**Councilors Absent:** Greg Evans

Mayor Vinis opened the May 9, 2022, work session of the Eugene City Council in hybrid in-person and virtual format.

#### 1. **WORK SESSION: Biennial Budget Process**

City Manager Sarah Medary introduced and gave a presentation on the topic with Assistant Finance Director Vicki Silvers.

##### Council Discussion:

- Mayor Vinis - recalled that the next step was to dive into assessing what each department is currently doing and asked if that is an ongoing process.
- Councilor Clark - commented that he prefers a zero-based budget approach and would like to start from zero each year because of the flexibility and capacity to change direction rather than the possibility of spending issues in a two-year budget; shared it is hard to decide which way is better and asked for details on the difference between both processes; appreciated the creativity given to the process.
- Councilor Zelenka - stated priorities are set when the budget is set, and history and investments matter; commented that investments are made in services because of their importance, and rarely do they become unimportant; shared an example of a budget process where the dedicated funding is separated out; noted they continually have conversations about how to spend money from small amounts of the budget rather than talking about priority services; asked how the new process differs from a services-based approach as was done in the past.
- Councilor Groves - said as a department head, a biennial budget process would have been be great because there is a longer horizon in which to plan; commented that as soon as a budget process is finished it is started again and with limited staff capacity; said he is interested in exploring what a new process might look like and seeing continuity in the budget; asked how this process would line up with areas where the City works with other jurisdictions that might be on an annual budget schedule; asked if this can be constructed in a way that doesn't create another layer of complexity; commented that the year-by-year approach is choppy and he would like to have a long-term view.
- Councilor Keating - asked what the role the citizen members of the Budget Committee play in a biennial budget process and whether an incoming councilor could potentially

touch or influence a budget twice in a four-year period; asked if there any best practices or pitfalls that the City could utilize or avoid by examining other municipalities.

- Councilor Clark - commented he could see this interacting differently with bond and levies over time as they come back for approval at different times throughout the year; said things could get complicated when there is down cycle year in the budget when cuts are made; shared an example of a library levy and how the funding cycle could get complicated with the biennial budget process; asked if this will be less of a problem with a two-year budget because issues can be anticipated or if it will exacerbate the issue.
- Councilor Zelenka - said a priority-based budget has a limited amount of revenue with modest increases and is a zero sum budget; asked how this changes in priority-based budgeting; said he looked forward to having more discussion; shared that most of his budget experience has been with a one-year process but he had the opportunity to work with a two-year budget and felt input and accountability do not change much; noted the time and effort staff have to put into the process can change significantly.
- Councilor Semple - commented she likes that the public engagement comes before the planning of the budget; said she feels this is more inclusive and friendly approach.

## **2. WORK SESSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: Jail Services Update**

City Manager Sarah Medary introduced the topic. Court Operations Supervisor Sarah Callegari gave a presentation on the topic along with Judge Greg Gill.

### Council Discussion:

- Councilor Clark - commented on an old senate bill that changed where people served their sentences depending on the length of the sentence and asked if Judge Gill was familiar with that bill; asked how many beds would be needed if the jail had capacity to hold people until their hearing; commented that he hears complaints from police officers that there is not capacity to hold people until their hearing; asked if would it be worthwhile to construct Eugene-specific jail cells; asked what Council can do to help get more available beds; asked how Judge Gill would handle a local version of Measure 11 that allowed the Judge to mandate sentences; encouraged staff to look into what the state is doing on Measure 110 in terms of budgeting.
- Councilor Keating - asked if the defendants are getting justice by not being seen in-person; asked if virtual appearances for court are here to stay; asked Judge Gill to share his thoughts about assessing jail time or fines and how the community service piece is connected.
- Councilor Syrett - clarified that OSH stands for Oregon State Hospital in reference to mental health behavioral issues; asked what the cost of operating the Springfield jail is.
- Councilor Groves - asked how long the Springfield and Lane County jails will be operating with limited capacity; asked if the Lane County jail has talked about increasing the number of beds; asked if there have been any discussions with Lane County about building more available beds within the existing footprint of the facility; asked if there are any collaborative efforts between Springfield and Lane County to increase capacity for mental health and addiction services; asked about another wing opening at the state hospital in Junction City; commented that ballot measure 110 stipulates that there will be 15 state-wide drug treatment centers built, and asked how

the state can violate the rule; asked if there is discussion with League of Oregon Cities about starting legal action; shared his interest in starting legal action to hold the state accountable for dropping the ball.

- Councilor Semple - commented that pre-pandemic the jail was used to capacity and asked why the empty space in the jail is not being used; asked how a person who is arrested on a felony gets sentenced to jail if there is no space; asked how many beds there are for females; asked about community service programs and what some examples of diversion and problem-solving court would be; asked if community court use is increasing now that the pandemic is slowing.
- Councilor Yeh - commented that she is proud to be in a community where the court's focus is on how to get the best outcome for people and when jail time is appropriate; asked for clarification on jail beds not being available; asked if there is a timeline for when jail bed capacity becomes a critical problem and what solutions are being worked on; shared she feels uncomfortable having this conversation without a solution in sight, and feels that this is not something the Judge can correct; asked if funding is sufficient to contract with other county jails.
- Councilor Clark - shared that ballot measure 110 was discussed in a neighborhood association meeting and asked why nothing is set up; suggested that staff give examples of what drug treatment looks like and mandate drug treatment once the standard is set; commented that he hopes Eugene can play a part in defining the standard of appropriate drug treatment.
- Councilor Groves - asked if virtual hearings and arraignments could happen in a jail located between Eugene and Portland.
- Councilor Keating - asked about the single best thing that is happening or can happen to reduce recidivism; shared some history about Springfield jails and his concern about where a person is placed based on gender identity; asked what mechanisms are in place in terms of equity and safety for a person who might be in transition and identified as LGBTQIA.
- Mayor Vinis - stated it is clear that Council would like the opportunity to be actively engaged in both the question of capacity and the delivery of mental health services and drug addiction services.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Brooke Freed  
Deputy City Recorder

*(Recorded by Niyah Ross)*

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