

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

June 22, 2022
12:00 p.m.

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

Councilor Syrett opened the June 22, 2022, work session of the Eugene City Council in hybrid format at 101 W. 10th Avenue, Suite 114, Eugene, OR 97401.

1. **WORK SESSION: Eugene Springfield Fire Governance**

Assistant City Manager Kristie Hammitt and Interim Fire Chief Scott Cockrum presented information on the Eugene Springfield Fire Governance review process.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Groves – stated the Eugene Springfield Fire system has been good so far; noted it was built to make a better, more efficient system; recalled major fire events in the past that reinforced how important the joint system is; noted for this joint effort to work long-term it will require two committed partners with mutually beneficial results; recognized the Springfield Council and Brenda Wilson with Lane Council of Governments for their efforts on this project.
- Councilor Clark – echoed Councilor Groves’ statements and expressed appreciation for Councilor Groves for his work on the original project; expressed appreciation for the individuals at the fire department for making this project work; stated he hopes the work being done in the future will make it easier for those involved to report to a single entity to make it easier for staff.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated he supports the work to strive for better service and more fire safety; stated he originally had concerns about cross-subsidization and control over the fire teams; asked what the decision process will be, by whom it will be determined and what the City Council involvement will be; noted the use of committees are useful for screening and compiling information for Council; noted that he does not approve of sub-committees making decisions; asked about the best way to get answers to several questions without taking up all of the time in this work session.
- Councilor Semple – expressed appreciation for the work and research done to present this topic; asked if the staff who work in this joint venture are happy with the current situation.
- Councilor Groves - expressed appreciation for the union and their involvement in this project; noted this process is not meant for the sub-committee to make decision but to summarize the information for the city councils of Eugene and Springfield to make a determination on; noted that he continues to speak to many firefighters personally and many have indicated they would prefer to move forward with this process and finalize it.

- Councilor Yeh – stated it is impressive how cohesive and unified the Eugene Springfield Fire Department appears from the outside; said she likes the process and looks forward to hearing the pros and cons about each option.
- Councilor Keating – expressed appreciation for all at Eugene Springfield Fire for keeping the communities safe; noted that the difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff is listed as a weakness in the materials provided; asked staff to expand on how the proposed modifications would improve the economies of scale and recruitment and retention issue; noted that a termination of this agreement would be a failure; inquired if there are specific items of contention that are preventing this from becoming a permanent merger.
- Councilor Syrett – noted she was on the Budget Committee when this plan was first proposed and the financial savings presented were significant; expressed appreciation for all involved in this project; noted that the union involvement has been important and appreciated.

2. WORK SESSION: Safe Sleep Sites Update

City Manager Sarah Medary introduced Homeless Systems Policy Manager Peter Chavannes and Policy Analyst Regan Watjus, who presented an update on the Safe Sleep Sites Program.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Zelenka – expressed appreciation to the staff who have worked on this issue; noted Eugene is a leader in the country in addressing a universally difficult problem that impacts the entire west coast; noted that this program has had great success and moved a lot of people on to more stable housing; stated that the sites have minimal turnover, indicating that they are well-managed; noted Attachment B shows that vehicle camping complaints are one third of what they were one year ago; stated that the downside is that there are over 900 people on the wait list for just three sites; noted that this is expensive and there is not enough funding to make this system sustainable; stated he supports both suggested motions; asked staff to clarify if the year-to-date number of people served has actually dropped dramatically from last year; asked staff to clarify if it is calendar year or fiscal year; noted that the majority of the unhoused being served are white; asked how the current resident status is determined; asked if individuals are asked where they lived prior to becoming homeless; asked staff to clarify the numbers presented in regards to current resident status.
- Councilor Groves – expressed appreciation for the good work done on this matter; stated he will support both motions; asked if the turnover rate has been calculated for all sites combined; stated that he has observed that the streets are looking better, however those who are causing issues are becoming more pronounced; noted he would like to talk about strategy for how to address the behavioral problems that are being created and impacting community residents and businesses; noted that there is not ongoing funding for this system; asked if staff are aware of any federal standard that classifies someone living in an RV or trailer as housed or unhoused; asked staff to clarify if an RV or trailer is considered a vehicle; noted he would like staff to research the previous question and bring back an answer in a future work session.

- Councilor Keating – noted on that page 21 of the agenda item summary reports there are over 3,000 people listed as Eugene residents and this information contradicts the allegation that the unhoused individuals are coming from other locations to Eugene for services; asked staff if this information appears accurate to them; inquired where the snapshot of information comes from to report the current residents aspect; stated he would like to get information regarding the vaccination status of the unhoused in a future work session; discussed information listed on the Eugene website; noted concern that many sites are not taking applications and not all individuals have access to the internet to complete applications for safe sleep sites.
- Councilor Clark – thanked staff for the reports; expressed appreciation for staff’s honest answers to questions at this meeting; stated he would like to see follow up information regarding current residents to determine how long an individual lived in Eugene prior to becoming unhoused; asked for clarification of the total number of available spaces when all proposed sites are open; asked what the operational expenditure is annually; stated that the annual cost per person for these programs is \$10,000 per year; asked staff for the current total number of unhoused individuals in the community; noted that if there are 3,000 unhoused individuals, only 10 percent of that population are being assisted and more accurate data is needed; added that Council needs to reexamine the strategies being used.
- Councilor Syrett – asked staff if the waitlist includes duplicate counts of individuals who are on multiple waitlists.

MOTION AND VOTE: Councilor Keating, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to approve authorizing the Everyone Village site for co-location of multiple Safe Tent site groups, based on the large size of the property
PASSED: 7:1, opposed by Councilor Clark

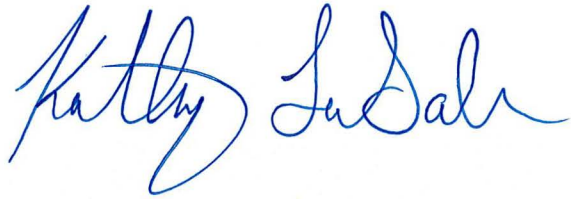
MOTION AND VOTE: Councilor Keating, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to direct the city manager to set a public hearing to consider an ordinance amending Ordinance No. 20650 (temporary establishment of “safe parking” and “safe tent” sites that are larger than allowed under section 4.816 of the Eugene Code, 1971); and extending its sunset date.
PASSED: 7:1, opposed by Councilor Clark

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Semple – asked what the sunset date would be extended to.

Councilor Syrett adjourned the meeting at 1:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Katie LaSala". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Katie" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "LaSala".

Katie LaSala
City Recorder

(Recorded by Sara McKinney)
Webcast of meeting available [here](#).