

## MINUTES

### Eugene City Council Hybrid Public Hearing and Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

July 18, 2022  
5:30 p.m.

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

Councilor Syrett opened the July 18, 2022, Public Hearing and Work Session of the Eugene City Council in hybrid format at 101 W. 10th Avenue, Suite 114, Eugene, OR 97401.

#### **1. PUBLIC HEARING - 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**

Sarah Medary provided background information and introduced the topic.

Councilor Syrett opened the Public Hearing.

1. Richard Locke – opposed extending the safe tent and vehicle site ordinance.

#### Council Discussion

- Councilor Groves – noted that he looks forward to the day when Safe Sleep Sites are not needed.
- Councilor Semple – stated that the Safe Sleep Sites should be extended; noted that there are still many unhoused and providing a safe place for them to sleep is important.
- Councilor Keating – shared his recent experience with an unhoused individual with severe injuries; noted that the Safe Sleep Site ordinance extension is needed; stated a need for a stabilization center to open prior to 2025.

#### **2. PUBLIC HEARING – An Ordinance Amending Transient Lodging Tax Code Provisions in Chapter 3 of the Eugene Code, 1971, to Enable Tax Collection by the Oregon Department of Revenue on the City’s Behalf and Providing for an Effective Date**

Sarah Medary provided background information and introduced the topic.

Councilor Syrett opened the Public Hearing.

There were no speakers for the Public Hearing.

Councilor Syrett closed the Public Hearing.

### **3. WORK SESSION: Discussion Regarding Irkutsk, Russia Sister City**

City Manager, Sarah Medary, introduced the topic and gave background information regarding the Russia Sister City.

Policy Analyst, Jason Dedrick, presented information regarding Irkutsk, Russia Sister City, and options for moving forward.

#### Council Discussion

- Councilor Groves – noted that he has changed his position on this topic due to recent conversations and he now supports a suspension or revocation of the relationship.
- Councilor Clark – noted he is concerned about the money and people involved in supporting the program; asked staff to elaborate on the program further; asked staff if the City has heard from the sister city board regarding the issue; stated that the sister city relationships are important to maintain.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted that Council does not know if the letter sent to Irkutsk’s Mayor was received; provided a brief overview of the original intent of the sister city programs; noted he would prefer to suspend the Irkutsk program as a sign of respect to Ukraine.
- Councilor Yeh – noted that the sister city program needs reevaluation as it is a government-run program in other countries; stated that the program deserves a re-look to determine if it is being properly run and funded; stated that she would support suspending the Irkutsk relationship and reevaluating at a later time.
- Councilor Syrett – stated that she is in support of suspending the Irkutsk program under the current circumstances; noted she is in favor of reevaluating the sister city program at a later work session.
- Councilor Evans – stated he is in favor of suspending the Irkutsk relationship but not terminating it completely; noted he is in favor of reevaluating the sister city program; indicated he would like Council to consider sending any funds set aside for the Irkutsk program to Ukraine relief efforts; asked staff to come back with a comparable Ukrainian city to consider supporting.
- Councilor Semple – noted that the people-to-people purpose of the sister city program is not happening and due to Russian aggression in Ukraine, she would support suspending the Irkutsk program; noted that she does not support revocation of the program; said that this is an important program and needs more attention and effort.
- Councilor Keating – noted appreciation for the previous efforts from Council in sending \$10,000 to Ukraine for relief efforts; noted that there is a need for a partnership with a Ukrainian city; stated Council should explore sister city relationships in Africa, South America and beyond; asked what a timeline would be for examining and possibly expanding it; expressed appreciation for the way the community has embraced Ukrainian athletes during Oregon 22; stated that the best way for Eugene to show that it promotes peace is to suspend the Irkutsk program.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked staff how the \$10,000 sent to Ukraine was used.

- Councilor Evans – noted that he was approached regarding a sister city with Cologne, Panama at a time when the budget was tight; noted that he would like to discuss this at a later work session.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** Councilor Keating, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to suspend the sister city relationship with Irkutsk.

**VOTE: PASSED 8:0**

#### **4. WORK SESSION: 5<sup>th</sup> Street Market Expansion Project Update**

Will Dowdy, Community Development Director, presented a 5<sup>th</sup> Street Market expansion update.

##### Council Discussion:

- Councilor Semple – asked staff if the baggage building, a historic building, is being removed as part of the proposed expansion; noted that a two-story building would block much of the view of Skinners Butte so a taller building would not be much different.
- Councilor Groves – noted that 325 new housing units is a huge thing for the current housing crisis; noted that populating the downtown area is a good way to help combat behavioral issues; stated he is very interested in how Council will proceed; asked staff what discussions or actions need to take place to lift or raise the 150-foot limit in the C-Zone in the core of downtown; noted that some developers have indicated that projects would work better with a higher height limit; asked the City Attorney how long ago the 150-foot limit was set.
- Councilor Keating – noted he is in favor of building up instead of out; stated his preference would be to have the location of the proposed building and parking flipped to not box off an area by the railroad; asked staff if there would be a setback for the proposed building; asked what the price point will be for the proposed housing units and if it will be luxury housing; asked staff to clarify if the units will be market-rate housing or income-qualified; stated it would be prudent for Council to revisit Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption options; asked when the last time Council adjusted the Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption parameters.
- Councilor Syrett – noted her enthusiasm for more housing downtown; asked how soon the item would come back to Council if the process for a code change were initiated; asked if commercial setbacks would apply to this project; noted that the Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption program does require either a percent of the units have an income threshold or the developer contribute a portion of dollars to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund; noted that the trust fund has been put to good use already.
- Councilor Clark – stated that the Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption program is a significant part of the Housing Implementation Plan and increasing housing downtown; stated he would be opposed to ending the Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption program; noted that the decision was made for Eugene to grow up and densify downtown rather than expand boundaries; stated this project fulfills a number of longstanding Council plans that have been made over the years; noted that easing height limitations is needed to move forward with the plan to densify and build up in Eugene.

- Councilor Zelenka – noted that the new setbacks would apply citywide and he would be surprised if it did not apply in this instance; stated he would have great concerns regarding allowing waivers for any setback; asked staff what the residential height limitation is; noted that C-2 zone height limit is 120-feet and located all over the city; stated that Eugene is unique in allowing the 120-foot building height in C-2 zones and he would like to have a work session to examine this in the future; noted that he would like to see the Oregon Electric Station and the old train building preserved; noted he is in support of gaining 325 new housing units; stated he is not in favor of Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption program use; stated it would be worth discussing whether or not to increase the affordable housing contribution in the Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption program.
- Councilor Groves – asked when and for how long the Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption program was suspended; asked how many multi-unit housing developments were constructed downtown while the Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption program was suspended; asked staff if the Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption program is an important component in creating compact urban housing in downtown; asked staff if trickle down housing has an impact on the housing crisis overall; asked staff to confirm that there is a provision in the proposed expansion that provides a contribution to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund; asked staff to define moderate priced housing.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted a multi-unit housing structure on Franklin Boulevard that was constructed without the use of the Multi-Unit Property Tax Exempt program; noted that in most instances if a Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption is an option, developers will apply for it.
- Councilor Clark – noted that the Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption revision established that an analysis must be made to determine the economic feasibility of the project and whether the Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption is required prior to coming to Council; stated that any housing that can be built is a very good idea right now; stated that if the University of Oregon succeeds in changing conferences the enrollment numbers could increase drastically and have a major impact on housing.
- Councilor Yeh – noted that an independent financial analysis is done on Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption applications; confirmed that staff would like Council’s questions to bring back answers and information at a later work session or meeting.
- Councilor Syrett – noted that no buildings were built in the core of downtown without the Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption; noted that student housing was the only housing getting funded during the recession; noted that the revised Multi-Unit Tax Exemption program excludes student-focused housing.
- Councilor Keating – noted that there is a plethora of student housing in Eugene; stated he would like a work session on underscoring the need for flexibility with student housing to make it community housing; stated that he is proposing an adjustment to the Multi-Unit Tax Exemption program that increases the contribution to affordable housing.

## **5. WORK SESSION: City Manager Compensation**

Councilor Syrett re-introduced the tabled topic of City Manager Sarah Medary’s compensation from the July 13, 2022, Work Session.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Keating – asked if Councilor Semple would agree to a friendly amendment to insert the dollar figure \$256,000 in place of \$260,000.
- Councilor Semple – stated that it is important to catch up to the industry standard and that \$260,000 is the correct number; noted that Sarah’s evaluation was outstanding and the compensation should be based on that evaluation; stated that she will compromise and accept the friendly amendment.
- Councilor Syrett – accepted the friendly amendment as the seconder of the motion.
- Councilor Evans – asked to clarify whether or not the City Manager is the highest paid employee; asked if Council can put the 10 percent gap into another motion to ensure that the City Manager is 10 percent above the next highest executive in the City.
- Councilor Groves – stated he would like a fair and equitable way that can be explained to the public regarding staff salary; asked if the executive managers are paid 10 percent higher than their division managers; noted that to attract and retain quality executives and talent it is important to have a good methodology that depersonalizes pay structures.
- Councilor Clark – noted concern that the City Manager position is in charge of setting executive pay levels, and developing a structure that ensures the City Manager salary is 10 percent above the executives could create issues in the future; stated that it is important to figure out the exact numbers for the situation, not a range or structure.

**MOTION TO AMEND RESTATED AND VOTE:** Councilor Semple, seconded by Councilor Syrett, moved to amend the original motion to set the amount of compensation at \$256,000. **VOTE: PASSED 8:0**

**VOTE ON MOTION AS AMENDED: PASSED 8:0**

**MOTION:** Councilor Evans, seconded by Councilor Groves, move to set the City Manager salary range at 10 percent over the highest paid executive in the city.

City Attorney provided Council with clarifying information to show this motion would set the salary range below the salary that Council previously voted to approve.

Councilor Evans withdrew the motion.

**MOTION:** Councilor Evans, seconded by Councilor Groves, moved to stipulate during annual reconsideration of the City Managers compensation the Council President and Vice President be presented with the highest paid executive salary and the number that is 10 percent higher.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Zelenka – noted that by approving this motion, Human Resources would become the decider of the City Manager salary; stated that Council should not set an automatic salary adjustment and should only provide guidance for future discussions regarding the City Manager salary; suggested a friendly amendment for

Council to adopt a policy that strives to compensate the City Manager at a level that maintains a 10 percent differential with the highest paid executives.

- Councilor Keating – noted that he does not believe that this motion is necessary and he will not support the motion; noted that a pay increase for the lowest wage earners would benefit the workforce greater than codifying a 10 percent pay buffer between the City Manager and the next highest executive.
- Councilor Groves – noted that the information that is stipulated in the motion is not automatic currently and was not received as part of the information for consideration; noted that the motion calls for data to assist Council in determining the salary for the City Manager in the future.

**VOTE: PASSED 6:2**, opposed by councilors Keating and Semple

**MOTION:** Councilor Keating, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to authorize the Council President to execute an amendment to City Manager Sarah Medary’s employment contract establishing a range of \$220,000 to \$281,760 for the City Manager position and for the range to adjust consistent with COLA adjustments for non-represented staff.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Syrett – proposed a friendly amendment to move the top end of the range to \$295,000; stated that comparable salaries for City Manager positions in other municipalities are much higher and to stay competitive \$281,000 is too low; the friendly amendment was accepted.

**MOTION (with friendly amendment):** Councilor Keating, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to authorize the Council President to execute an amendment to City Manager Sarah Medary’s employment contract establishing a range of \$220,000 to \$295,000 for the City Manager position and for the range to adjust consistent with COLA adjustments for non-represented staff.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Clark – asked to clarify the starting number for the range; asked if Council is bound by the charter to determine the City Manager’s pay every year.
- Council Syrett – asked staff to explain the benefit of setting a salary range for the City Manager’s position.
- Councilor Semple – stated that the salary range is unnecessary.
- Councilor Groves – noted that ranges help benchmark across jurisdictional lines, comparables and help negotiate a new employee salary.
- Councilor Syrett – noted that a salary range can help a potential staff member to see what their salary could be; stated that there is good rationale for setting a range.
- Councilor Evans – stated that being able to negotiate within a salary range is important and a common practice; noted that to remain competitive and have a negotiating position to work from, a salary range should be established.

- Councilor Zelenka – noted that a salary range is not necessary but can offer structure to future councils; noted that a salary range would be in line with how other positions are structured in the City.
- Councilor Keating – stated that the City Manager position should not have a salary range and can be established if needed in the future.
- Councilor Clark – noted that the City Manager position should not be treated as any other position in the City; stated that Council should not set a range until it is necessary.
- Councilor Syrett – asked staff to clarify that the motion is specific to Sarah Medary’s contract, not future City Managers.

**MOTION RESTATED AND VOTE:** Councilor Keating, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to authorize the Council President to execute an amendment to City Manager Sarah Medary’s employment contract establishing a range of \$220,000 to \$295,000 for the City Manager position and for the range to adjust consistent with COLA adjustments for non-represented staff. **VOTE: PASSED 5:3**, opposed by councilors Clark, Keating and Semple.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** Councilor Keating, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to authorize the Council President to execute an amendment to City Manager Sarah Medary’s employment contract updating the schedule for Medary’s annual performance evaluation and merit compensation increases. **VOTE: PASSED 8:0**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Katie LaSala  
City Recorder

*(Recorded by Sara McKinney)*

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