

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Virtual Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

May 17, 2021
5:30 p.m.

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

Mayor Vinis opened the May 17, 2021, work session of the Eugene City Council in virtual format.

1. **WORK SESSION: Ad Hoc Committee on Police Policy- Report to Council**

City Manager Sarah Medary introduced and gave background on the topic. Multicultural Liaison Kazim Zaidi gave an overview of committee outcomes, Volunteer Facilitator Mo Young discussed community engagement lessons, and Lead Staff Kevin Alltucker gave an overview of common themes with the CSI engagement process.

Council Discussion:

Mayor Vinis - thanked all involved in this process for their important work; thanked all for holding the space in their lives for this emotional and challenging work to be done; reminded Council why this committee was created, noting that it is not time to entertain any motions for specific recommendations at this time but rather reflect on the information shared; commented the plan is to take adequate time with this important topic.

Councilor Clark - appreciated the vastness of the work and thanked the community members who were willing to be open and honest about the changes they want to see in police policy; shared some suggestions that involved the core job of a police officer and asked what law enforcement means; said he would like to know what authority the City has on some of these laws; suggested all policy changes get fully vetted with community input and Chief Skinner's perspective; said he looks forward to vetting these suggestions more thoroughly.

Councilor Evans - commented the report does a good job of summarizing the complexity of law enforcement; shared the need for opportunities for the officers to positively engage with youth in the community; said he would like to see a better system for officer training around social services and civil rights and address deficits officers might have to be able to build relationships and be able to better respond to community needs; said would like to see the City develop a more robust way to create deeper relationships with community members, particularly with BIPOC and LGBTQ+ communities.

Councilor Groves - shared it would be helpful to know the legal limitations of the recommendations and would like to hear from Chief Skinner and how these recommendations fit with similarly situated public safety organizations; asked for more information about critical incident stress debriefs and what services the City offers to proactively prevent youth from entering the criminal justice system; shared the importance of seeing how these recommendations for reform touch on other areas in the re-envisioning process.

Councilor Keating - expressed appreciation for this healthy, open discussion about policing; noted one recommendation regarding the use-of-force had a unanimous vote for the expansion of non-sworn response service officers and an unarmed response team for non-emergency calls requesting assistance; recognized the great work CAHOOTS does; asked to see a cross reference with the state police reforms, what EPD currently implements, what is in the works to implement and the CSI work; called attention to the number of abstentions around open

carry within the City limits such as at public demonstrations; asked to hear from CAHOOTS on their capacity to establish a needs analysis in order to implement some of these recommendations should Council move forward with some of the policy recommendations. Councilor Semple - said the work was impressive and expressed gratitude for everyone who dedicated their time and energy to this committee; shared her excitement about the number of ideas and suggestions; said she is looking forward to the changes this work will create. Councilor Syrett - commented that the committee did incredible work and noted the excellence and thoughtfulness of the conversation and the report; shared her willingness to fully understand the recommendations and specific implementation impacts; said this is the best report given to Council and gave kudos to staff responsible for generating the report; commented that there's been a lot of work put in so far and there's more work yet to come to move forward in considering and adopting some of the recommendations; said that input from the Police Chief, Police Auditor and the City Municipal Court Judge is critical; voiced the need to give the rest of the community an opportunity to give Council feedback on the report; explained the intent of the proposed motion.

Councilor Yeh - expressed appreciation to staff for constantly looking for ways to respond to and support the needs of the committee; said the recommendations are extremely important and are just as valuable as some of the conversations that occurred at meetings; said she felt the best decisions are made when there's a diversity of experiences and perspectives represented and this process has illustrated that well; mentioned her recollection of a comment made by a committee member pertaining to how one mistake can have dire consequences because of lack of positive interaction with police; shared the final meeting filled her with hopefulness for the future.

Councilor Zelenka - shared that Council's intent in creating the committee was to lift up and hear voices not traditionally heard and get new points of view and ideas, particularly from BIPOC groups; commented some recommendations can be implemented, some need to be investigated further and others the City can lobby for at the state and federal level; commented that Council has been working on police reform for a while, noting the positive work already done and the reputation Eugene has for being a leader; said he looked forward to talking about de-escalation training, being more culturally responsive in hiring and recruitment policies, making police policy and practice better and making sure there is an appropriate response for any given circumstance.

Mayor Vinis - shared the last meeting had a sense of fragile hope that was profound; said she was struck by a comment made by the mediator about how we engage influences the answers we get; commented that while the intent of this body is to create policy and to act on policy, another important aspect of this work is to step away from transactional relationships and into real relationships to build ongoing trust.

MOTION AND VOTE: Councilor Yeh, seconded by Councilor Syrett, moved to direct the City Manager, Municipal Judge and Interim Police Auditor to analyze the report by the Ad Hoc Committee on Police Policy to provide Council a path forward, their analysis should include categorizing the recommendations based on actions needed to advance the recommendations. Report back to council with an update and potential next steps before summer break and provide this information to the individuals and organizations that are participating in the Ad Hoc Committee on Police Policy at that time. **PASSED 8:0**

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Clark - asked what is meant by the phrase "the path forward" and that means in terms of the information Council will receive; asked for more information on ramifications, consequences and outcomes from an analysis on a full community standpoint.

- Mayor Vinis - commented this motion would be the initial step to categorize the report recommendations.
- Councilor Groves - supported creating a framework to process the information; asked if the action will include an evaluation to ensure legality of implementation.
- Councilor Zelenka - shared his preference for specific motions; said Council should create the categories to sort the information, adding more specificity will better serve Council; asked how this work would be moved forward and for clarification of what was meant by “pathways”; preferred to see a lot more specificity as to what Council wants to get from the report being reviewed.
- Councilor Keating - shared he normally prefers specificity and will welcome more general community feedback and specificity in phase two; said he interprets “path forward” as potential implementation of one, some, many or all of the recommendations; said this broad approach allows for a healthy conversation about what Council can legally do, what process for reforms are in place or being done currently, and what stakeholder engagement or resources need to be invested to implement the recommendations; suggested the community engagement piece happens simultaneously to the staff review of the report in order to enter phase three on the same page.
- Councilor Syrett - shared she felt the motion is specific enough and encouraged not being too directive in how to address the work; said this approach can give Council a possible roadmap and a framework for determining what works best after the experts do the analysis; supported input from the Chief of Police.
- Councilor Clark - shared that he hopes another bucket/category would be proposed policy changes to flag for potential unintended consequences or impacts (legal or resource) that Council may not be thinking of; would like a process to reveal the unseen and unintended consequences if a policy change is implemented.
- Councilor Evans - commented that before moving forward, Council needs to figure out what is legal to ensure that whatever policy change is being considered is not viable; said he felt this motion will help determine what boundaries Council will have in terms of what Council can do to move forward with sensible recommendations; shared some of his son’s experiences as a person of color and the inappropriate questions he is asked by officers without probable cause;

MOTION: Councilor Syrett, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to direct the City Manager to schedule time for a community forum on the Ad Hoc Committee Police Policy recommendations. The intent of community forum is to have a public comment period dedicated to receiving community member’s input and responses to the recommendations presented in this report.

Council Discussion

- Councilor Clark - offer as a friendly amendment a request to hear the Police Commission’s thoughts first before opening it up to the community.
- Councilor Syrett – declined to accept the amendment because the workload and timeline are unknown for the Police Commission and the Police Commission will provide valuable feedback at some point; said she felt that communication should happen with the Police Commission in a deliberate way.
- Councilor Zelenka - shared that he sits on the Police Commission and expects the policy recommendations will be vetted by that group and will be one of the categories that comes back from the auditors.
- Councilor Evans – reminded Council why this committee was created and the importance of getting different views and perspectives; supported receiving extensive public input before Council starts talking about and shaping any changes; shared the Police Commission has historically not

been a diverse committee and does not represent the voices of the marginalized communities that need to be heard in this process.

- Councilor Syrett - responded that the Police Commission will need more time to offer informed input and will need some staff support; expressed interest in what they have to say.
- Councilor Clark - appreciated the conversation and said he looks forward to help with guiding the process; encouraged holding a couple of public forums on this topic.
- Councilor Keating – agreed that the Police Commission’s feedback is welcome, but it is overly prescriptive at this point to include their involvement in the motion; said it should be part of the engagement process.

VOTE ON MOTION: PASSED 8:0

Meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Beth Forrest
City Recorder

(Recorded by Niyah Ross)

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