

## MINUTES

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

July 26, 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 July 26, 2021, work session of the Eugene City Council in virtual format.

#### 1. **WORK SESSION: Ad Hoc Committee on Police Policy Update**

City Manager Sarah Medary, Police Auditor Leia Pitcher and Presiding Municipal Court Judge Greg Gill gave an update on the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Police Policy.

##### Council Discussion

- Councilor Syrett – acknowledged that the committee provided the opportunity for the city manager, police auditor and presiding judge to collaborate on this work, which has never been done before, and hoped Council will continue to find initiatives that encourage this type of collaboration in the future; appreciated the matrix to help sort the recommendations, the timeline, and the sounding board with a standard set of questions to have the correct screening.
- Councilor Zelenka - echoed Councilor Syrett's comments, noting the next-level thinking of putting three minds together and getting good results; appreciated the complexity of the work and the update being in a simple matrix format; said it is a valuable tool for what to do next because it is complicated to move such diverse recommendations forward; commented on the bucket status and asked what those categories might be.
- Councilor Groves - commented that this is a good way to proceed with this process and the matrix can evolve as work is being done and new information comes to light; commented he does not feel qualified to tell the Police Chief what weapons he needs; shared that in his former career he had a good network to consider and create changes and hoped EPD has that kind of process to make sure informed decisions are being made; noted the City's good intentions to make hard decisions.
- Councilor Yeh - commented that the model makes sense, has flexibility along with transparency and can be tracked; said the initial bucket idea has been greatly improved and she likes the idea of coming back to Council in May; shared the process is rooted in community input and involvement and the information should be going back and forth; praised the hard work done and acknowledged the hard work ahead.
- Councilor Keating - shared this is very serious work and should be used as template to tackle other tough issues such as abatements for climate change and implementation of the TAC report; supported adding a column for advocacy for what is beyond Council's realm from an intergovernmental perspective; praised the approach and template and encouraged use of this model for housing and climate.
- Councilor Semple – expressed appreciation for the chart as a great example of quick information exchange; praised the clarity of the report and how it made working on this project more pleasant and easier.
- Councilor Evans - appreciated the good work done by the leadership team and the ad hoc committee; shared Council will need to drill down through the process because it might take longer than expected; gave an example of training and shared that he would like that piece to be a focus for change in order to understand the relationship and history of police with people of color

and other people who have been traditionally marginalized and targeted; shared the history of police as slave catchers and the many powerful and influential people who were involved in lynchings, murders, and disappearances of people of color; said people are challenged with these relationships with the police; said Council needs to look at the human relationships between police officers and the community, as this is the only way any of this work will be fruitful.

- Councilor Syrett - asked staff to plan to give council periodic briefings on the roles of the other boards, commissions, other interdepartmental teams, the authority of the police chief, collective bargaining agreements and what training looks like locally and at the State level; shared her knowledge of the process of forming some of the other boards, and noted other councilors might need to be educated on that history; said she was willing to serve on the sounding board; clarified what the “in progress” and “under review” columns mean and requested a greater distinction between the two; agreed with Councilor Keating that this work can be used as a template for climate recovery goals and progress on the TAC report.
- Councilor Keating - asked for clarification on who makes up the sounding board and whether it is a body of persons appointed by the Mayor.
- Mayor Vinis - shared that briefings will be helpful for Council and the public who will be following this.
- Councilor Evans - commented that a missing piece in this work is the role of the Police union, noting that negotiations between the City and the police chief are going to be critical to whatever is recommended in terms of what can and cannot be done and how the rank-and-file officers do their jobs; requested feedback from the Police union to get a complete picture.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** Councilor Yeh, seconded by Councilor Syrett, moved to approve the criteria, matrix, timeline, and project approach as outlined in the agenda item summary for evaluating the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Police Policy.

**PASSED: 8:0**

## **2. WORK SESSION: Response to Hate Crimes**

Police Chief Chris Skinner and Human Rights and Neighborhood Involvement Manager Acting-in-Capacity Fabio Andrade gave an overview of the EPD response to hate and bias crimes.

### Council Discussion

- Councilor Clark – said he requested this work session on what work council can do to increase the penalties for hate crimes because there has been an uptick of hate-related incidents in the community since last year; stated it is considerably more important to address this issue today and do so in a way that people will think twice if the penalties are more severe; expressed support for the recommendations, noting that it is not acceptable for a person to act with a level of intimidation; asked about the frequency of Asian hate crimes and inquired about an incident where paintballs were shot at a home of an Asian resident.
- Councilor Keating - said he supported the recommendations, but does not know if the increase in the fine is enough and would like to increase the fines to send a unambiguous message that this type of activity is not tolerable in Eugene; shared stories of hate and bias crimes against LGBTQ+ people, noting that reports are significantly lower than the number of these crimes actually committed; asked what the outreach efforts have been to promote increased reporting of hate and bias crimes and to create trust; asked what the relationship is in regard to language and action by Lane County Corrections.
- Councilor Evans - asked if there is a “heat” map showing where these incidents are occurring in the community and asked if these crimes are happening in one part or spread throughout the community.
- Councilor Zelenka - said he liked where this work is going and supported the motions, noting crime and intimidation for displaying a noose is an obvious addition and increasing the fine seems to

make sense; said the judge has discretion over the fine based on what is just and proportional in the judge's mind and, asked whether the judge was involved in the proposal; asked if the 2021 data is included; shared there were 72 hate and bias crimes reported in Eugene and only two Portland, over a one-year period which points to major differences in how crimes are reported; asked if anyone has the true scale of the hate and bias crimes occurring locally.

- Councilor Yeh – said she was happy to support these changes but was not confident that increasing the fine will change behavior, as many people either do not consider the consequences while committing a crime or are never caught and made to face the consequences; said she would like to hear about preventative measures that the City is taking and if resources are needed to work on this issue; asked if there is a formal plan on how outreach to community members will be done; noted there are hot spots around high schools and asked whether this means high school students are the victims or are making poor choices.
- Councilor Groves - stated this work is incredibly important to the community and the presentation is timely; asked if the City or the Police Chief has a profile of who the people are who are committing these crimes; appealed to the public that it is everyone's responsibility to call in when injustice or hate activity occurs in the community and to be vigilant in protecting those in the community who victims of this abuse and criminal behavior.
- Councilor Evans - asked if the City has specific information on the use of other symbols of intimidation such as the confederate flag and crosses planted in people's yards; shared his personal experience as a recipient of a hate and bias crime when he moved to Eugene; said it is problematic that people and other entities do not trust the system; asked how many incidents involved the display of confederate flags which he likened to displaying Nazi symbols in Jewish neighborhoods; asked Chief Skinner to describe what his department is doing to track organizations, groups, and gangs who may be racist and are perpetrating some of these activities.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** Councilor Yeh, seconded by Councilor Syrett, move to direct the City Manager to prepare an ordinance and schedule a public hearing on a code amendment adding the crime of intimidation by display of a noose. **PASSED: 8:0**

**MOTION AND VOTE:** Councilor Yeh, seconded by Councilor Syrett, move to direct the City Manager to prepare an ordinance and schedule a public hearing increasing the maximum monetary penalty for violating EC 4.731 to \$6,250. **PASSED: 8:0**

Meeting adjourned 7:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Beth Forrest  
City Recorder

*(Recorded by Niyah Ross)*

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