

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Virtual Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

September 13, 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 September 13, 2021, work session of the Eugene City Council in virtual format.

1. WORK SESSION: Community Safety Initiative Update

Assistant City Manager Kristie Hammitt gave an update highlighting the progress of the Community Safety Initiative (CSI) and next steps. Lead Staff Kevin Alltucker gave an overview of the community CSI engagement processes. Police Chief Chris Skinner gave an update and timeline on the calls-for-service metrics from his department. Finance Director Twylla Miller gave an update on the payroll tax collection.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Evans - commented that a reason he voted for CSI was because of the shortage of officers and that makes the community far more unsafe than it is when there's slow response time to service calls; shared that he had the opportunity to talk to line officers and heard a consistent theme that officers are frustrated, tired, feel like expectations about what they can respond to are unrealistic; asked about coordination of mental health services with Lane County and providing a system that can adequately respond to existing needs.
- Councilor Keating - shared his experience of going on a ride along with officers and witnessing the multitude of unanswered calls and how stretched law enforcement officers are; asked for more clarity on community safety services related to homelessness stated in section three of the ordinance; asked about the relationship between the County and City in light of the accusation from a County Commissioner on misapplying tax authority.
- Councilor Groves - commented that the disparity between resources and demands for service continues to widen for EPD response; asked what is driving the call increase; shared his appreciation for the team working to stay on top of quality-of-life issues; expressed concern about the mental health of officers and how this is addressed in the department.
- Councilor Syrett - said the report was thorough; asked what the CSI Project Manager position responsibilities are; commented that a business constituent gave good feedback on the tax collection process and that some of those changes are being implemented; asked if there is ongoing funding for homelessness and youth services programs that is connected to the CSI; asked which current programs gained funding through this initiative.
- Councilor Clark - asked Chief Skinner how he feels about the capacity and understaffing problems and whether he would make any adjustments in spending from what was forecasted two years ago; asked what the bare necessities are to serve victims.
- Councilor Yeh - asked Chief Skinner about the challenges with hiring employees and how he is planning to move forward if the trend continues.
- Councilor Zelenka - commented the appeal of the CSI was to increase capacity and the ability to respond problems in many difference service areas; shared his concern about the mental health of officers and the City of Eugene s ability to retain them; asked how this circumstance is being assessed and how it will impact fulfilling the goals of the CSI; asked how long the cycle takes before

an officer is hired; asked if poaching employees from other agencies is a tactic used by EPD; asked what is needed from Council for the next steps

- Councilor Semple - shared frustration over her efforts to get more officers hired and now the City finds itself further behind in staffing; appreciated the Chief's methods in dealing with the staffing shortage.

Meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Brooke Freed
City Recorder (AIC)

(Recorded by Niyah Ross)

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