

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Virtual Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

September 20, 2021
5:30 p.m.

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

Councilors Absent: Alan Zelenka

Mayor Vinis opened the September 20, 2021, work session of the Eugene City Council in virtual format.

1. **WORK SESSION: Financial Update**

City Manager Sarah Medary and Finance Director Twylla Miller gave a financial update.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Keating - referenced the funding consideration slides and asked when the last time this municipality adjusted the local fuel tax rates in Eugene; suggested it was worth exploring an increase in the fuel tax.
- Councilor Clark - said the largest source of City revenue is property taxes and encouraged the council to consider and make policy decisions that would increase the amount of property taxes generated, including incentivizing construction and annexations.
- Councilor Syrett - noted there are limits on what gas taxes and aviation fuel taxes can be used for; commented that denser housing has a greater impact on revenue relative to costs than single-family dwellings.
- Councilor Clark - said he felt the multi-family vs single-family comparison was based on faulty assumptions and reiterated that building more homes on the land and annexations will increase the tax base and the City's ability to respond with services.
- Councilor Groves - expressed concern that raising fuel costs will push people to fuel up at other locations and the City will lose money; encouraged understanding what the local market looks like.
- Mayor Vinis - asked if property tax increases from MUPTE's expiring were included in the financial assumptions.
- Councilor Evans - asked whether implementation of a utility tax or fee was considered.
- Councilor Keating - supported exploring a tax on utilities that offer incentives to switch to fossil fuel use and a tax on unoccupied housing.

2. **WORK SESSION: 2020 Census and Ward Population Update**

Policy Analyst Jason Dedrick gave an update on the result of the 2020 Census and presented two scenarios for ward redistricting.

Council Discussion:

- Councilor Syrett - commented that Ward 7 experienced the most growth and that this is reflection of how great the area is; appreciated the rational approach taken to identify possible ward changes; supported Option 1 but said both options should move forward for public comment.
- Councilor Clark - complimented the work done to synthesize the data and develop options; supported the City Manager's recommendations for public engagement; commented that north and

northwest Eugene are growing and encouraged a commensurate increase in funds for park development.

- Councilor Keating - commented that nothing is being decided tonight except whether to advance the recommendations; stated south Eugene needs more rentals and economic diversity will be added to Ward 2 with this plan; supported advancing the two recommendations.
- Councilor Groves - commented the options as presented makes sense; noted that Ward 8 includes the vast majority of Eugene's commercial industrial area and its ongoing issues, and said responding to those issues might be more effective if additional councilors represented these constituents; asked whether council should consider a third scenario that splits the industrial area in other wards.
- Councilor Clark - stated he would appreciate seeing another option to split some of the industrial area into another ward, noting it would have little impact on population and could be a good idea.
- Councilor Evans - commented if his ward line extended south it would take some of the Roosevelt Blvd. area and several smaller neighborhoods that connect with the industrial area.
- Councilor Keating - welcomed Councilors to come to an LRAPA meeting and talk about the JH Baxter Company; voiced concern that the suggestion to add another option deviates from the direction Council gave staff to determine what the new ward boundaries would be and said he felt it would be inappropriate to ask staff for a third option at this point.
- Councilor Syrett - commented that it is a responsibility of the Council act within its authority to address JH Baxter issues regardless of which ward it is located; said she would not support a last-minute change to add a third scenario.
- Councilor Groves - encouraged his colleagues to reach out across ward boundaries to address difficult issues.
- Councilor Evans - commented that each ward has its unique challenges and Ward 6 is experiencing an affordable home challenge, noting the price of rentals is increasing and using as an example a mobile home park was recently bought by a developer and will result in the displacement of senior citizens.

MOTION AND VOTE: Councilor Yeh, seconded by Councilor Syrett, moved to initiate community engagement on ward boundary scenarios. **PASSED: 7-0**

Meeting adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Beth Forrest
City Recorder

(Recorded by Niyah Ross)

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