

## MINUTES

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

September 29, 2021  
12:30 p.m.

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

Mayor Vinis opened the September 29, 2021, work session of the Eugene City Council in virtual format.

#### 1. **WORK SESSION: American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)**

City Manager Sarah Medary introduced the topic. Library, Recreation, and Cultural Services Executive Director Renee Grube and Central Services Executive Director Mia Cariaga provided a framework and overview of allowable fund uses.

##### Council Discussion:

- Councilor Keating - asked if there is an allocation for small businesses, such as local movie theatres and retail; asked if the second installment could fund a public facing portal that asks for public engagement or input around fund disbursement dollars; asked about the amount of the second installment in 2022; asked if other municipalities have solicited conceptual ideas from residents of the community; asked for a projected timeline for an ARPA manager or potential portal.
- Councilor Clark - asked about the total number of budget committee motions that have already been made for consideration; commented that the greatest need is to leverage money to build more affordable housing in the community.
- Councilor Zelenka - asked how much of the current installment would end up being discretionary; asked about the funds directly related to rental assistance; asked how much this amount is, what is being done with the funds, what the City's role is and what the status of the disbursement is.
- Councilor Groves - stated he agrees with supporting affordable housing, small businesses, and renters; asked how to best use one-time funding for the unhoused; supported the development of shovel-ready projects; said it is important to facilitate clean, accessible streets and infrastructure; asked what type of funding would be available in the various buckets; noted this is an opportunity for transformational work to set up for success in the future.
- Councilor Syrett - asked for clarification on the Cares Act funding; commented that she understands the City has quite a lot discretion on how the funds can be used; shared some ideas to leverage funds for expansion of highspeed fiber beyond downtown, gaps in sidewalks, enhancing library services that were not funded by the approved library levy, restoration of Washington Jefferson Park and to assist neighborhood-based projects for shouldering the burden of unhoused camps.
- Councilor Zelenka - clarified what he meant by the word "discretion"; commented that Council needs to be mindful of the strings attached to the money.
- Mayor Vinis - shared she is supportive of the idea of finding the best use of funds for the affordable housing pipeline; appreciated questions around what the County has and said it will be helpful to keep in mind how the County resources are being applied and what the City uniquely needs as opposed to something that might be more robustly funded at the County level in order to keep a clear perspective, particularly as it relates to shelter, housing and stabilization.

## 2. WORK SESSION: Unhoused Response Update

City Manager Sarah Medary introduced and gave background on the topic. Assistant City Manager Kristie Hammitt and Public Works Director Matt Rodriguez gave an update on the topic.

### Council Discussion:

- Councilor Clark - asked how many spaces are available at the 2<sup>nd</sup> and Garfield location and how many of the people at WJ Park or 13<sup>th</sup> and Chambers are moving into the new site; asked if any work has been done to screen people for the two proposed sites that allow tent camping; commented that there seems to be an assumption that building these sites will alleviate the camping problems at WJ and 13<sup>th</sup> and Chambers.; commented that there is no policy in place that compels the people to stop camping illegally; said he is in favor of creating safe sleep sites on a limited scale, and is against the idea of building more without an equal effort to end unsanctioned camping, noting that is the policy piece that is missing; asked how much will be spent on the one-time development of the five sites and any ongoing expenditures.
- Councilor Syrett - shared her enthusiasm for opening a new site with a full list of interested applicants; commented that these sites are not a solution to homelessness crisis but they are a strategy to create legal, safer places for people that connects them with case management and helps them move out of homelessness; asked that councilors start getting documentation on the business and residential outreach that is done in their ward as a site is considered or deciding to move forward with one; said she wants to feel confident that outreach is being done and reaching the right people; asked what the plan is to ensure that people who have not been approved do not set up camp near the site and gather outside of these sites; said the City cannot compel people to go the sites but can compel them to vacate City parks by posting a notice to vacate; said it has been made clear to staff that enforcement of campers at WJ will begin as soon as there are alternative, safe places they can go.
- Councilor Evans - asked if there is a plan to transition from the current strategy and when can this begin; asked how the City can support its homeless strategy beyond 2023; asked what relationships have been established with the 4j and Bethel school districts to address kids who are unhoused, which impacts their ability to do homework and access to resources; asked about the location of the 75-bed site.
- Councilor Groves - shared his gratitude to Ed Russo for outreach to the business community and to Pastor Gabe for his outreach and contact with the unhoused community; commented that sites cannot be opened fast enough and he will support the proposed motion; commented that he agrees the council needs to know what the hard bottom line will be; shared he believes some of the challenges with the inflow of campers is the perceived belief there are no rules; said the City needs to enforce rules and the illegal camping in rights-of-way and open space, noting it particularly impacts residences businesses, jobs, safety; supported a work session to discuss figure out a long-term solution and create a plan to address restoring order to the community; reported that the Churchill area neighbors regularly clean up garbage and needles along the bike paths.
- Councilor Zelenka - shared his appreciation for the short-term strategy and urged staff to keep moving these forward; said he supports these sites because he thought it was to help alleviate conditions at 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue and WJ Park.; shared that if a lot of people choose not to move from these locations to the new sites, it should be a high priority for the City to reclaim the parks and open space; asked for insight on the status of COVID and CDC recommendations once the shelter-in-place rule is lifted.
- Councilor Keating - asked for a vaccination requirement update for these sites and supported a full vaccination and masking requirement for staff and tenants; asked if there is an opportunity for a for-profit sponsorship to provide job opportunities for these sites; asked about adequate safety protocols and about funding for radio equipment for the park ambassadors and security personal at the current and proposed sites; asked for an update on potable water and electricity hook-ups at the current and proposed sites.

- Councilor Semple – expressed gratitude for the five new proposed sites and said this great work can be even better; asked where people will cook in the building and if there is ventilation; commented that outreach to the neighborhoods is critical; asked about the *Register-Guard* report that the existing sites are not filled; asked how the City will keep people in the sites from returning to the illegal encampments.
- Councilor Syrett - commented that school districts are required to have a homeless liaison; commented that the *Register-Guard* article cited statistics and included count numbers.
- Councilor Clark - commented that there are large numbers of people camping in parks despite the existence of underutilized space; said the Council policy is incomplete in approaching this issue; asked for a work session to address this policy gap and asked what the screening criteria is for getting into these new sites.
- Mayor Vinis - commented that the goal is to provide housing and shelter for people who want and need it; this is the direction that the council has decided to take; encouraged clarifying the public safety implications of the lack of housing.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** Councilor Yeh, seconded by Councilor Syrett, moved to approve 2243 Roosevelt Blvd. (SquareOne Villages) for use as a Safe Sleep site. **PASSED: 7-1**, Councilor Clark opposed.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** Councilor Yeh, seconded by Councilor Syrett, moved to approve Dani Street (EveryOne Village) as a Safe Sleep site. **PASSED: 7-1**, Councilor Clark opposed.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** Councilor Yeh, seconded by Councilor Syrett, moved to approve 410 Garfield for use as both a safe tent and safe parking site and based on the large size of the property authorize the co-location of multiple groups at this site **PASSED: 7-1**, Councilor Clark opposed.

Meeting adjourned at 1:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Brooke Freed  
City Recorder, AIC

*(Recorded by Niyah Ross)*

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