

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

December 13, 2023
12:00 p.m.

Councilors Present: Emily Semple, Matt Keating, Alan Zelenka, Jennifer Yeh, Mike Clark, Greg Evans, Lyndsie Leech, and Randy Groves

Mayor Vinis opened the December 13, 2023, work session of the Eugene City Council in a virtual format.

1. **WORK SESSION: Lane County Multi-Use Stadium Bond Discussion**

City Manager, Sarah Medary, introduced Planning and Development Executive Director, Denny Braud, who provided information on a potential capital bond to support a multi-use stadium at the Lane County Fairgrounds.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Groves – asked staff to confirm that Council is not obligated to exercise the bond if the project came to a halt after voters passed it; asked staff to confirm that funding could not be used for anything other than the purpose stated in the bond; noted the majority of public comments received have been in favor of the bond; noted that he does not support the use of general fund dollars for this project, but does support presenting the bond to the voters; stated the communications Council has received regarding the Eugene Emeralds stadium have been full of personal experiences; believes that voters should weigh in on money measures.
- Councilor Yeh – noted her preference for option three, to wait to see if the project is feasible; noted the County has not yet committed funds to the project and Council has not been provided necessary information such as operating agreements; clarified that option four consists of drafting a resolution without taking action; indicated that while option four is not her preference, she could support it; noted concerns with option four as it would dedicate staff time to work that Council may not move forward with.
- Councilor Semple – noted her initial preference for option three; noted concern for the time needed to draft a resolution; asked City Attorney how much time is needed to draft a resolution; asked staff which option would work best for their workload; noted her support of option four.
- Councilor Keating – noted his support for options four or two; noted option four does not lock the City into the bond but still signals support for the Eugene Emeralds, mirroring state and federal legislative priorities that Council passed unanimously; indicated he does not support using general fund dollars for this

project; stated that in recognition of the Eugene Emeralds support of non-profits in the region, he is in favor of drafting a resolution for the May 2024 ballot.

- Councilor Zelenka – believes the Eugene Emeralds are a valuable asset to the community and is in favor of a City contribution to the project; noted his support of bringing a bond to the voters; stated he is unwilling to cut essential City services to fund the project; discussed a potential friendly amendment requiring a specific funding plan and an operations and maintenance plan in addition to funding commitments from the County; indicated that he favors option four; noted that he does not want the City to be responsible for operating costs; highlighted the \$10 million contribution from the Eugene Emeralds is actually a front-loaded rent payment.
- Councilor Leech – noted more information is needed before the City can support the bond; noted the Revenue Committee is meeting in the following week through January, which may result in the option for voters to address the structural gap in funding; indicated she does not want the vote addressing the structural gap in funding to compete with the stadium bond on the ballot; noted her preference to wait until after the Revenue Committee meets to make a decision, but does support drafting a resolution.
- Councilor Evans – noted his support of option four; stated that the City needs a clear operations and maintenance plan; noted the voters may choose to contribute to the facility through a bond; indicated he would like to see more of an investment from the team’s owners into the project; noted there is value in keeping the Eugene Emeralds in the community.

MOTION (*with friendly amendment*): Councilor Groves, seconded by Councilor Keating, moved to direct the City Manager to draft a capital bond referral resolution for Council to consider as soon as possible after the City receives notification from Lane County that they have committed funds for construction of the multiuse stadium project and have a definitive plan to fill the current funding gap and a guarantee or plan for the stadium operations and maintenance that does not rely on any City resources.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Zelenka – made a friendly amendment to add a definitive plan to fill the current funding gap and a guarantee or plan for the stadium operations and maintenance that does not rely on any City resources (*friendly accepted*).
- Councilor Yeh – asked if there must be specific conditions on the motion; clarified that it would not be put on the agenda if the conditions are not met.

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION (*with friendly amendment*): **PASSED 7:0**
(Councilor Clark was not present for the vote)

Councilor Clark entered the meeting after Item 1.

2. WORK SESSION: Arts & Economic Prosperity Update

City Manager, Sarah Medary, introduced Cultural Services Director, Isaac Marquez, who provided information regarding the Arts and Economics sector in Eugene. Isaac was joined by the Library, Recreation, and Cultural Services Executive Director, Joshua Bates.

Councilor Discussion:

- Mayor Vinis – noted her appreciation for the Arts and Business Alliance’s participation in the study; noted the economic impact of the arts can be easily overlooked; stated that the arts contribute to the community’s sense of place and belonging.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted he chooses to live in Eugene due to the size, self-sufficient economy, and community as well as the focus on arts and culture; indicated that he is not surprised by this sector’s contribution to creating jobs and the quality of life; asked if the numbers given did not include for-profit venues and if the economic benefit would be higher if they were added in; asked staff for an estimate of how much for-profit venues contribute; asked if the Cuthbert Amphitheater is for-profit; noted that he would expect the economic impact numbers to increase significantly if for-profit venues were included; asked staff to follow up with updated numbers.
- Councilor Keating – noted that he sees room for growth in the economic prosperity of Eugene’s arts and culture; asked what the relationship is with the next generation of artists and students in the community; asked if reduced rate tickets are available to economically disadvantaged community members.
- Councilor Groves – asked how Eugene can further market its events related to arts and culture.
- Councilor Yeh – noted the City has a great opportunity to highlight the arts and cultural opportunities that are not economically viable in other venues; noted the arts and culture opportunities in Eugene are enriching.
- Mayor Vinis – noted Council’s investment into the Farmer’s Market Pavilion and how that has created an affordable and accessible venue for the community; stated the City learned a lot about developing community gatherings that strengthen the community through World Athletic Championships (Oregon 22); expressed appreciation for the creativity that can be seen throughout Eugene in murals and paintings.

Mayor Vinis adjourned the meeting at 12:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Katie LaSala
City Recorder

(Recorded by Natalie Venhuda)

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

