

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

January 24, 2024
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 January 24, 2024, work session of the Eugene City Council in a virtual format.

1. WORK SESSION: Eugene Springfield Fire Update

City Manager, Sarah Medary, introduced Fire Chief, Michael Caven, who provided information on the University District Emergency Room closure, Mobile Crisis Response service planning, and Eugene Springfield Fire Governance Review Panel process and status. Chief Caven was joined by Assistant City Manager, Matt Rodrigues.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Keating – asked if it was historically the case that the City would engage Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets (CAHOOTS) for services without a new contract signed; asked about the community engagement process and utilizing the Community Safety Initiative (CSI) dollars to hire a fuels mitigation manager; asked which communities and best practices in Oregon City staff are looking to for fuel reduction work; asked if there is an opportunity to utilize statewide or federal dollars for a program for homes to participate in fuel reduction work.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked if the University District Emergency Room closure has impacted health outcomes; noted the City was already transferring patients to the Riverbend location prior to closure; noted an increase in time in the transferring process; clarified that CAHOOTS lost its licensed supervisor on its medical side and asked about the impacts; asked if CAHOOTS typically underperforms on its contract in the month of December and new plans will address the underperformance; noted that CAHOOTS is a valuable asset to the City; noted the wildfire plan mitigation work is critical in light of the previous summer’s wildfires in the Urban Growth Boundary; noted the City can increase resiliency by dedicating more resources to wildfire mitigation and education for home owners.
- Councilor Semple – clarified that there are over one hundred emergency service calls per months for overdoses, with thirty five of those resulting in death; clarified that everyday somebody dies from an overdose; asked if overdose deaths occur while emergency medical staff are present; asked if CAHOOTS responds to overdose calls; asked if the CAHOOTS responses are included in the count of over one

hundred calls per month for overdoses; asked what happens when somebody calls 9-8-8; clarified that it is not 9-1-1 dispatchers who answer 9-8-8 calls.

- Councilor Leech – asked about the response times to warming fire calls and what the protocols are when there is not staff available to respond; asked if there are keywords that people should use to receive a higher level of response.

2. WORK SESSION: City Manager Update: Storm Response

City Manager, Sarah Medary, introduced Fire Chief, Michael Caven, who provided information on the City's ice storm response. Chief Caven was joined by Assistant City Manager, Matt Rodrigues.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Clark – noted that the Eugene Water and Electric Board (EWEB) typically notifies customers with an email, which may not be helpful during power and internet outages; noted that he hopes EWEB considers refining its public information process.
- Councilor Keating – noted that he called Public Works twice during the ice storm and appreciated the staff's responsiveness and compassion; noted that many schools, libraries, and other public buildings remained closed; asked if the City has adequate public shelter site for inclement weather related emergencies; noted appreciation for the Big City Gamin', Egan Warming Center volunteers, KLCC radio station, and EWEB.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted appreciation for Public Works staff, utility employees, and various other City employees for their work during the ice storm.
- Councilor Leech – asked if the City is preparing for another similar storm or to meet the next challenge that might occur; noted that there is room for improvement on the individual and intergovernmental level emergency preparedness, partially with alert systems and communications.
- Councilor Yeh – asked how the City and its partners did with food insecurity and if staff can inform the Council in the future of what gaps might exist.
- Mayor Vinis – noted that there have been organizational shifts in the Eugene Springfield Fire; noted that individuals across Oregon did not know how to respond to emergency situations, such as fallen powerlines on cars; noted interest in having information regarding community safety knowledge and impulses in emergency situations; noted how schools fit into emergency planning is critical; expressed gratitude to all City employees who worked during the ice storm.

Mayor Vinis adjourned the meeting at 1:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Katie LaSala
City Recorder

(Recorded by Natalie Venhuda)

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