

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

March 13, 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 March 13, 2024, work session of the Eugene City Council in a virtual format.

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

Mayor Vinis provided information regarding previous Council direction on the Lane County Multi-Use Stadium and opened the floor for conversation.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Semple – noted Council saved this work session to review if the County agreed to support the project and get answers to some of Council’s questions; noted concern with the City being blamed if the project fails; noted the County has not provided the information Council requested, and the board has indicated it doesn’t want to make a decision right now; asked about impacts to the project if Council postpones or revisits the bond for the November ballot; noted other events held at the stadium will impact the surrounding neighborhood; indicated she does not think the Lane County Fairgrounds is the best location; noted she thinks baseball is good and public-private partnerships can be great, but this project is for private profit; noted she would like to be on the team that writes the voters’ pamphlet and that she would like it to be presented as neutrally as possible.
- Councilor Groves – encouraged Council to remain informed as they go forward because there are nuances to this topic; asked staff to confirm that the City would not collect the bond money until there is confirmation the stadium project is moving forward, if the bond passes; noted he prefers to let the public weigh in; indicated the proponents seem to be willing to accept the results of a public vote, while the opponents prefer to keep the bond off the ballot; noted he is in favor approaching this issue as neutrally as possible.
- Councilor Yeh – noted she continues to want more information about the project; stated Council’s voters’ pamphlet statement cannot be neutral as it is not a neutral process.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted the Eugene Emeralds are a valuable asset to the community, but stated concerns with a publicly funded stadium; noted he has seen similar projects fail in other communities; thinks it is unfortunate that Lane County Board did not take a stronger stance on the project; noted he is concerned with the

project remaining incomplete, especially with the current finances and lack of commitments from the County; does not like putting the bond before the community for a project that might not happen; noted concern for the impact on potential revenue asks; stated he was an early supporter of putting the project on the ballot if the requested information had been received; noted he will consider placing the bond measure on the ballot with the understanding the City will only give the money if the public votes for it.

- Councilor Keating – noted the potential for more matching funds from the State for a total of \$15 million, which Eugene voters would be asked to approve with a general obligation bond; read to Council the current draft of the proponent committee’s voters’ pamphlet statement; believes Eugene voters should have the opportunity to vote on this issue.
- Councilor Evans – noted he thinks voters should be able to make the decision on the bond; asked if this is the last ask for City to support the facility, based on the conversations the County Commissioners had.
- Councilor Clark – asked if Council will vote on the statement; asked the proponent committee to consider using the word “consider” instead of “support”; noted he would like to be neutral in this process; indicated his preference to see the funds go to other priorities, but is interested in knowing what the community wants to build; requested the statement ask voters to consider the bond rather than asking them to support it.
- Councilor Leech – noted she is torn on the topic; indicated the easiest path is to let the voters decide while the harder choice is to have Council decide; noted concern with having State support but not the County’s; noted Council already agreed to let the voters decide, so she is leaning towards following through on that decision.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked who was on the proponent committee for the voters’ pamphlet statement; asked when the statement deadline is; asked if the committee would send the statement to Council for review before finalization; noted the word “support” stood out to him.
- Councilor Groves – noted Council does not have any meetings or work sessions before the statement is due; indicated the statement should be as neutral as possible and that he supports letting the public decide; noted Council cannot meet together without forming quorum and that circulating a document would not go well.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked staff if it would be considered deliberating towards a decision, if the statement was sent out by email and Councilors provided comment.
- Councilor Evans – asked if the statement can be shared on the screen and if “support” can be replaced with “consider”; thinks the statement needs to be dealt with now and not postponed.
- Councilor Zelenka – indicated the statement should say “We ask for your consideration of the issuance” and “matter of financially assisting the development”.
- Councilor Keating – questioned the need for the proposed edits as the point of a general obligation bond is financial assistance.

- Councilor Zelenak – noted the edits were critical for clarity purposes regarding the City’s contributions to the project; noted the final cost is still unknown and therefore cannot say if the City’s potential contribution amounts to 15 percent.
- Councilor Keating – discussed striking the section regarding the estimated percentage of contribution.
- Mayor Vinis – noted the County has not agreed to the final price because it includes \$10 million for livestock.
- Councilor Clark – recommended changing the word “development” to “construction” in the first sentence of the second paragraph.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted that matching funds are usually a one-for-one and recommended additional language around matching funds.
- Councilor Keating – asked if Council is limited to only having three Councilors listed on the statement or if there can be more.
- Councilor Semple – noted it is important for the people to know that the State and City are providing equal numbers.
- Councilor Yeh – asked if the bond were to fail from the public vote if the County could pay the matching funds to the project; noted the statement’s wording appears to be inaccurate.
- Mayor Vinis – asked if a specific phrase was being struck.
- Councilor Keating – indicated he was making a note to adjust the language based on the resolution in order to capture the language from the State exactly; noted he thinks it is important to include the State’s contribution.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted the statement suggests there is only \$30 million in potential funding when there is actually more; noted it would be useful to layout the financial plan instead of just State dollars.
- Councilor Semple – stated the public should know that the State is willing to put money toward the project regardless of the matching potential with the City.
- Councilor Keating – stated the public should know of the State’s support to help them make an informed decision.
- Councilor Yeh – noted the use of a percentage is not good as the total project cost is not confirmed; noted the statement does not provide a scope of the project financially.
- Councilor Evans – noted there is not a full plan; noted Council is trying to be supportive of the project but believes the statement should not provide percentages of project cost when the County does not have that information.
- Councilor Clark – noted he thinks there will be information available to the public on the project; indicated he supports the statement and wants Council to focus on the ask.
- Councilor Groves – asked if a specific location on the Lane County Fairgrounds should be included; asked if it would make the money unavailable if the project was moved to a different part of the Lane County Fairgrounds.

MOTION: Councilor Keating, seconded by Councilor Groves, moved to add Councilor Evans to the Voter's Pamphlet Proponents Committee for the GO Bond measure to help fund the Lane County Multi-Use Stadium.

VOTE: 8:0 PASSED

2. WORK SESSION: City Manager Updates

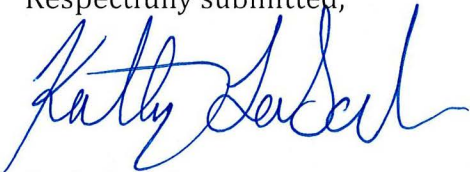
City Manager, Sarah Medary, provided the Council with updates regarding the City Hall move and ongoing revenue discussions.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Semple – noted Councilors will have cubicles not offices at the new City Hall.

Mayor Vinis adjourned the meeting at 12:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Katie LaSala
City Recorder

(Recorded by Natalie Venhuda)

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