

MINUTES

Eugene City Council Work Session Eugene, Oregon 97401

July 8, 2024
5:30 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 July 8, 2024, work session of the Eugene City Council in hybrid in-person and virtual format at 500 E. 4th Avenue, Eugene, OR 97401, North Building.

1. **WORK SESSION: Eugene Springfield Fire Governance Review Update**

City Manager, Sarah Medary, introduced Mike Caven, Fire Chief of Eugene Springfield Fire and Dan Petersen, Project Manager at AP Triton.

Councilor Discussion:

- Mayor Vinis – noted her appreciation for the clear report.
- Councilor Keating – asked about the option to create a fire district; asked how current Eugene Springfield Fire staff feel about the reorganization options; noted his interest in the intergovernmental entity (IGE) option; stated interest in Council serving as the board of directors for the entity; stated the importance of community representation.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted the merger did not result in a large financial savings; noted the value is in the service, not the savings; asked about the persistent administrative challenges under the current system; asked how an intergovernmental entity differs from the structure of the Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission; stated while the intergovernmental entity model has one set of policies and one budget, Council still has oversight and approves the budget.
- Councilor Clark – noted his appreciation for the presentation; stated he is not in favor of a fire district model; stated the citizens expect Council to have some authority over the fire department; noted the City would have to give taxing authority to a fire district; stated support for the intergovernmental entity model; asked about the timeline for the action plan; noted it may be time-consuming to come to an agreement with Springfield about the new model; asked AP Triton for recommendations on coming to an agreement on a governance model with the city of Springfield.
- Councilor Groves – noted his appreciation for the work of staff and the consulting group; thanked City of Springfield and the public for their support and willingness to try new things; noted the current system is a large improvement from the previous system which had mutual aid and hard boundaries; noted improvements in service was the initial priority over savings; stated support for an intergovernmental entity.
- Councilor Evans – thanked AP Triton for the report; noted merging Eugene and Springfield’s fire and emergency services has been a divisive issue since before he joined Council; noted the problems are structural and cultural; asked how to solve the cultural differences between the two cities; asked how we can resolve the structural issues with

payroll, insurance, and governance; asked about the difference between an intergovernmental entity and a special district; noted there would still be friction around revenue between the two cities with the IGE model.

- Councilor Yeh – noted appreciation for AP Triton’s presentation; stated appreciation for the people who took the risk to begin the initial merger; noted she serves on the Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission (MWMC) intergovernmental entity, and it works well; suggested the addition of civilian members to the IGE board.
- Mayor Vinis – stated the value of working with Springfield as a larger metropolitan district.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked how better service is determined; noted the current savings are not proportional to the two cities; asked how to create a proportional budget within the structure of an intergovernmental agreement (IGA); stated the member fee structure would allow new services without impacting the other city; asked how one city building and staffing a new fire station would affect the other city; stated the intergovernmental entity model seems like the best fit if the cities can come to an agreement; asked about the unintended consequences of converting to an IGA model; asked who hires the chief under the IGE model; asked how the disparity in size between the cities affects the model.
- Councilor Groves – noted cost savings includes both hard dollar expenditures and cost avoidance; stated some of the disparity in costs between cities is linked to differences in call volume; asked about the workload of the suppression companies and first tier of medical response; asked about the distribution of resources and surge capacity; spoke about past critical incidents and sentinel events; noted he is proud of the integrated crews.
- Mayor Vinis – thanked AP Triton for their report; thanked Chief Caven for his thoughtful responses and community updates.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Katie LaSala
City Recorder

(Recorded by Cherish Bradshaw)

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