

## MINUTES

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

October 14, 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 October 14, 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: Mental Health and Substance Abuses Services/Programs in Oregon**  
City Manager, Sarah Medary, introduced Kristie Hammitt, Assistant City Manager, Ethan Nelson, Intergovernmental Relations Manager, and Eve Gray, Director of Health and Human Services with Lane County.

#### Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Zelenka – stated he had put the work session poll for this topic forward to educate Council and the citizens about what is being done at the city, county, and state levels around mental health and substance abuse services and to raise awareness about those issues; stated homelessness is a symptom of the combined issues of substance abuse, mental illness, and lack of affordable housing; stated hope about finding solutions.
- Councilor Groves – stated support for increased services for youth; asked how many repeat callers contact Central Lane Communications (CLCC); stated taking the top 20 system users out of the system makes a noticeable difference; noted appreciation for the work with Lane County and PeaceHealth; stated interest in including Judge Gill, presiding judge of the Eugene Municipal Court, in the solutions discussion; stated support for proactively helping at-risk youth.
- Councilor Leech – stated behavioral health and workforce development are her top priorities; noted appreciation for police and fire’s co-responder programs; noted the current medical and mental health system is complex and lacks a unified strategy; noted two significant problems in the non-profit behavioral health field are staff turnover and inability to hire; asked how the Lane County stabilization center will be staffed; spoke in favor of workforce development to bridge the gap in needed providers and available providers.
- Councilor Keating – noted appreciation for local first responders; asked if there is a mechanism to compel an individual to accept services if they represent a danger to themselves or others; asked how the City can partner with the county or non-profits to advocate for appropriate tools to assist those in crisis who may not be able to make decisions on their own; asked about the Park Watch tool; noted the phone numbers 988 and 211 for Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and Essential Community Services respectively; asked if there is a need for a three-digit number for mental health support in the

community; asked how the City of Eugene ranks as an employer for providing mental health services to staff.

- Councilor Yeh – noted Oregon ranks 49<sup>th</sup> in the country for number of adults with any mental illness despite an increase in resources; asked if the statistic includes treated and untreated mental illness.
- Councilor Evans – asked about the budget for deflection programs for Lane County; asked about the standards used to determine the success of deflection programs; asked about the difference between deflection and diversion; asked how the qualifications for providers of deflection programs are determined; asked how the \$1.9 million for the Lane County deflection program will be sourced; noted his hope that it will be a successful program, providing an alternative to criminal incarceration.
- Mayor Vinis – noted her appreciation for the presentation and the larger context it provided.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Katie LaSala  
City Recorder

*(Recorded by Cherish Bradshaw)*

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