

MINUTES

**Eugene City Council
Harris Hall, 125 East 8th Avenue
Eugene, Oregon 97401**

**January 28, 2019
5:30 p.m.**

Councilors Present: Emily Semple, Betty Taylor, Alan Zelenka, Jennifer Yeh, Mike Clark, Claire Syrett, Chris Pryor, Greg Evans

Mayor Vinis opened the January 28, 2019, Work Session of the Eugene City Council.

1. Committee Reports and Items of Interest

- Councilor Evans – reported on the National League of Cities Housing Task Force meeting. The focus of the meeting was on homelessness, housing supply, land supply, and the discrepancy between cost of housing and income, with the goal of identifying several strategies to affect federal policy. Also, the League of Oregon Cities recently held its “City Day” and is ready to work on housing, property tax reform, and local pre-emption issues.
- Councilor Yeh – reported from the Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission that the wood harvested from their local poplar farm was milled and used as lighting grills in the Springfield Public Library meeting room; noted that the MWMC would be releasing its community survey soon; announced the next meeting of the Envision Eugene Technical Advisory Committee and the change of date for the Police Commission meeting.
- Councilor Taylor - reported that she continues to hear from many people about the proliferation of 5G technology; the need for undergrounding the utilities along South Willamette; and concerns about lost parking along East Amazon due to improvements to that street.

Police Auditor Mark Gissiner provided information to the council about next steps in the process of reviewing an officer involved shooting.

Council Discussion

- Councilor Yeh – asked about the criteria for determining whether an incident rises to the level of community impact case.
- Councilor Clark – asked whether the Cascade Middle School shooting warranted classification as a community impact case and whether the use of body cams will result in more or fewer cases. He noted that community impact cases are opportunities to analyze the details of an incident to help explain to the public exactly what happened,
- Councilor Zelenka – acknowledged community concerns about the speed with which information was being made public and asked whether this case deviated from what is normal; noted that many people were jumping to inaccurate conclusions, which may have been averted with the earlier release of the body cam footage.

2. WORK SESSION: Municipal Court Presiding Judge

Human Resources Director Keri Beraldo introduced the item and walked council through the options for moving forward on appointing a new Presiding Judge.

Council Discussion

- Councilor Clark – asked about the difference in costs between recruiting a new Presiding Judge and the direct appointment of Judge Gill; supported Judge Gill and noted the savings of time and money using a direct appoint approach.
- Councilor Syrett – supported interviewing Judge Gill with the goal of direct appoint; Judge Gill has the experience, initiative, and local reputation to be immediately successful; supported transition the position to City Council employee status with more frequent updates to the council.
- Councilor Pryor – said he trusted Judge Allen’s recommendation to promote Judge Gill; impressed with his ideas, commitment and understanding of local system; supported moving to a council employee model and more robust role in recognition of how the city has grown and changed.
- Councilor Zelenka – supported the council employee model; leaning toward an open recruitment as a matter of good public policy; asked about the estimated size of the applicant pool.
- Councilor Semple – expressed support for Judge Gill who loves the work and has great experience; supported direct-appoint process.
- Councilor Taylor – clarified that Judge Allen was automatically reappointed every time his contract was renewed; council may discontinue the judge’s employment at any time; supported interviewing Judge Gill prior to appointment.
- Councilor Evans – noted that Municipal Court had significant issue before the arrival of Judge Allen; supported the direct-appoint of Judge Gill and transitioning to the council employee model.
- Mayor Vinis – clarified that the two decisions before council were whether they want to pursue a code amendment that would change the status of Presiding Judge to a council employee position and whether they wished to directly appoint Judge Gill.

MOTION: Councilor Clark, seconded by Councilor Syrett, moved to direct the City Manager to 1) bring back the proposed code language in the AIS, Attachment A to a public hearing to make the City Judge a council employee and 2) to schedule as soon as practicable an interview with Judge Gill to consider the possibility of direct appointment of him.

- Councilor Zelenka – asked about the sequencing of the two directions given by council
- Councilor Syrett – said an interview of Judge Gill is important and supported scheduling it during a regular council work session; councilors can solicit questions from their constituents; expressed support for direct appoint option in recognition of Judge Gill’s demonstrated experience and commitment to community.
- Councilor Clark – agreed with Councilor Syrett and noted that the council has the ability to go a different direction after the interview, if the results of the interview warrant that.
- Councilor Taylor – supported a process that gives others an opportunity to apply for the position.

VOTE: PASSED 7:1, Councilor Taylor opposed.

3. WORK SESSION: Parking Update

Parking and Technology Manager Jeff Petry outlined planned changes to the parking program fee schedule, and provided information about the input received to the proposed rate increase.

Council Discussion

- Councilor Taylor –supported free, on-street parking, expressed concern about the proposed rate increase, noting that the decision to raise rates is often made before input is received; said many people affected by the rate increase are not able to absorb the added expense and have no option other than to drive to work; said downtown belongs to everyone, not just the merchants; parking fee should not support general services.
- Councilor Clark – acknowledged that parking is not free, but is a service provided by the City; it is a value that supports a City goal and the cost should not be passed on to those who come downtown to work and patronize businesses; noted that many people who work downtown have no choice but to drive to work and use their vehicles for work; the costs of the parking program should not be borne disproportionately by them; asked what mechanism the council can use to suspend or alter the parking program fees.
- Councilor Syrett – asked for information about the bulk permit program and whether it is being eliminated; said she was mindful of the impacts of the proposed fee increase but doesn't feel that an onerous burden is being placed on able-bodied people who can use alternative modes; supported efforts to address the specific situation faced by employees of Senior and Disabled Services.
- Councilor Yeh – asked whether any adjustments to the proposed fees were being considered as a result of the comments received; requested clarification about the amount of funds allocated to deferred maintenance and other sponsored programs; noted that while other communities don't charge for parking, Eugene has better access to parking spots.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked for data or analysis on the impact of parking fees on Eugene's downtown businesses, noting that it was the downtown merchants who requested an end to the free parking program; said parking fees are consistent with Climate Recovery Ordinance goals; requested more information about options for the campus parking district and the location of permit zones.
- Councilor Pryor – said Senior and Disabled Services employees need easy access to their vehicles; supported working out an exception/accommodation for them; asked about the amount of money transferred from the Parking Fund into the General Fund; supported looking at ways to lower or eliminate that transfer as work to shape the community safety funding plan continues; asked about the general availability of metered parking spaces for consumers and employees; more spaces are needed downtown.

MOTION AND VOTE: Councilor Clark, seconded by Councilor Semple, moved to extend the meeting by 10 minutes. **PASSED 8:0**

- Councilor Semple – agreed that there is not enough parking downtown and no opportunities to provide more which points to the need to raise the rates even more and encourage people to consider alternative modes; explore the possibility of free bus service, downtown trolley; expressed concern about the disparity between parking permit rates.
- Councilor Evans – asked for information about the cost to develop new, structured parking spaces, what it costs the City annually to maintain a parking space, whether the new spaces at the Obie development will contribute to the downtown inventory, and the balance between the long-term need for additional parking and the City's CRO goals.
- Councilor Clark - noted there is significant council support for looking at ways to alter the program to address the reasonable need for some downtown employees to have cars parked nearby; suggested having another work session to discuss the economic impacts of this issue.
- Councilor Taylor – noted that successful retail areas in downtown have access to free parking, many people don't have access to alternative modes or ride-sharing opportunities.

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Beth Forrest
City Recorder

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