

# MINUTES

**Eugene City Council  
Harris Hall, 125 East 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Eugene, Oregon 97401**

**February 13, 2019  
12:00 p.m.**

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

Mayor Vinis opened the February 13, 2019, Work Session of the Eugene City Council.

- Councilor Taylor – reported that she was receiving many questions from constituents about the legality of a billboard on the corner of 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Willamette Street; urged the council to take a stand on House Bill 2001, which would preempt local control over zoning issues.
- Councilor Zelenka – echoed concerns about the billboard at 18<sup>th</sup> and Willamette but noted that Eugene’s Sign Code, as written, does not prohibit it; suggested adding this issue to the upcoming work session on digital display technology.
- Councilor Semple – expressed appreciation to staff for sending council agenda materials earlier and for providing more detailed meeting minutes; urged action on creating a downtown center and identifying additional sites for car camps and rest stops.
- Mayor Vinis – informed the council about a request from the Eugene YMCA for support for their request for lottery funds and announced her intention to bring a resolution to council on this issue.

## **1. WORK SESSION: Community Safety Revenue Team Update**

Assistant City Manager Kristie Hammitt, Police Chief Chris Skinner, Fire Chief Joe Zaludek and Project Consultant Kevin Alltucker provided an update on the progress of the Community Safety Initiative and the Revenue Team.

*(Councilor Clark left the meeting at 12:54 p.m.)*

### Council Discussion

- Councilor Semple – expressed appreciation for the presentation and for the opportunity to serve on the Community Safety Revenue Team, noting it successfully reached consensus despite difference of opinion; said the proposal is the best possible and least regressive response to a critical community needs; it casts the widest net and will continue to adjust as needs grow; asked for more information about the variability of the three proposed tax percentages and which would achieve the overall goal.
- Councilor Yeh – appreciated the summary of the committee’s work; result is a proposal that will be easy to explain to constituents; encouraged the council to ask the committee members questions.
- Councilor Pryor – noted there was a real commitment on the part of the committee members to look at many options and take decisive action; acknowledged that there will be public pushback on any tax increase, but this proposal responds to an essential core value.
- Councilor Zelenka – encouraged council follow the same process used by the committee and do its own analysis of all scenarios, potential options, etc., noting the committee recommendation was just one factor to be considered.

- Councilor Syrett – asked for information about the proposed plan as it relates to cuts made to public safety services during the last recession, noting that revenues have risen since then but not enough to meet current needs; acknowledged that business owners served on the committee and were supportive of the proposal; favored a payroll tax over a property tax.
- Councilor Evans – complimented the report and supported the direction and proposed mechanism for revenue generation; asked about the effect on County partners, such as Health and Human Services, if growth in capacity also increases the need for social services; asked about intended visual and other real, tangible outcomes to change the perceptions of those who are now afraid to come downtown.
- Councilor Taylor – asked about and supported plans to increase public safety presence in neighborhoods that are not considered to be in crisis; supported the implementation of call prioritization; inquired about exempting lower-income earners from the proposed payroll tax.
- Councilor Syrett – agreed that there would be value in council discussing the other options; supported strategy that funds detectives dedicated to non-immediate crimes such as prostitution and drug dealing noting that the proposed plan calls out this need.
- Councilor Zelenka – encouraged council to follow a transparent process with defined metrics for success and a solid accountability mechanism; show benefits of the proposed tax, how it will be shared by the community and how the funds will be allocated.
- Councilor Yeh – noted that the committee did discuss the possibility of exemptions but agree that everyone should contribute at some level because everyone benefits from an effective public safety system.
- Councilor Semple – said the parks bond and levy is a good example of the value of a small committee doing the analysis and making a recommendation; the condition of Eugene’s public safety system is an ongoing crisis needing immediate attention and robust public input.
- Councilor Pryor – agreed that the work of the committee will help expedite the council decision-making process.
- Mayor Vinis – acknowledged the size and detail of the report, its holistic approach and its nexus with many other services and programs; the council will have the opportunity to discuss the issue further in its upcoming workshop; encouraged staying on track to meet the 18-month timeline for implementation.

The meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Beth Forrest*

Beth Forrest  
City Recorder

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