

## MINUTES

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

**April 8, 2019  
5:30 p.m.**

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

Mayor Vinis opened the March 8, 2019, work session of the Eugene City Council.

### **1. Committee Reports and Items of Interest**

- Councilor Taylor – Reported on League of Cities work with Councilor Evans; expressed concern about EWEB policies regarding missed payments; suggested working towards Federal subsidies for Amtrak.
- Councilor Semple – Expressed concern regarding oil cars in Eugene; spoke about online resources for tree inspections; expressed continued interest in downtown day center; expressed concern for changes in Saturday Market operations and communications.
- Mayor Vinis – Mentioned work being done at Hunsaker and Beaver Lane to make area safer; shared about future attendance to Walkability Conference regarding Vision Zero; discussed work on TAC report recommendation implementation; discussed attendance to Prepare Out Loud; gave kudos to various City staff working on projects.

### **2. Community Safety Initiative**

Assistant City Manager Kristie Hammit, Fire Chief Joe Zaludek, Police Chief Chris Skinner, and Senior Financial Analyst Maurizio Bottalico provided information about a possible payroll tax structure to fund the Community Safety service system gaps.

*(Councilor Zelenka arrived at 6:10 p.m.; Councilor Syrett called in at 6:15 p.m.)*

#### Council Discussion:

- Councilor Clark – inquired about the amounts of the library levy and parks levy and bond; expressed concern about the order of needs funded and the mechanism for funding community safety but would like community safety needs prioritized.
- Councilor Evans – expressed support for the proposed mechanism; cited personal anecdote about need for services; suggested there is not another mechanism available to meet the need for community safety; asked about the net affect of investment on emergency calls.
- Councilor Taylor – expressed desire for public shelter downtown; expressed disagreement with Councilor Clark stating that libraries and parks are a matter of community safety; expressed concerns about equity of payroll tax; suggested use of transient tax instead of a payroll tax and supported lobbying the state to repurpose state transient tax dollars.
- Councilor Pryor- stated the need to do something quickly and create responsiveness within the City; cited work to view options for funding mechanism and expressed belief that a payroll tax works; voiced a desire to focus on what can be done rather than what can't be done.

- Councilor Zelenka – cited support for community safety needs and package of services but expressed concern about a payroll tax; suggested a payroll tax is not progressive and suggested methods for making a payroll tax more progressive; mentioned desire for more community engagement and possibly a public vote.
- Councilor Clark – agreed with other councilors about the need; cited previous suggestion for an alternative funding mechanism; supported deciding the issue as a council rather than sending it to a public vote.
- Councilor Semple – asked for clarification about Councilor Clark’s alternative funding mechanism.
- Councilor Clark – cited annexations of River Road/Santa Clara properties as a mechanism for incremental, additional revenue.
- Councilor Semple – asked staff about balance of budget estimates; expressed support for the payroll tax and referenced a future report about where tax revenue would go within community safety; expressed hope for community support.
- Councilor Zelenka – inquired if there is an updated analysis of how many people work in Eugene versus live in Eugene; expressed appreciation that cost of community safety under payroll tax would be split with non-residents.
- Councilor Clark – inquired if revenue from annexations of River Road and Santa Clara properties was discussed as a part of the funding mechanism analysis; made additional comments about who bears the burden of a payroll tax.
- Councilor Semple – reminded council that nonprofits and lower wage earners were included in payroll tax as a measure of fairness.
- Mayor Vinis – suggested that a payroll tax is meant to be broad and shallow with minimal impact; expressed desire for more time to show impact of bridge funding and reminded council of the promise to establish long-term funding; referenced TAC Report and interconnected nature of community safety and homelessness/housing efforts.
- Councilor Pryor –expressed interest in analyzing alternative tax structures to address concerns about lower wage workers.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked staff to produce a variable rate analysis and expressed that progressivity is more important than simplicity.

The work session adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Beth Forrest*

Beth Forrest  
City Recorder

*(Recorded by Samantha Roberts)*

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