

MINUTES

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

**May 13, 2019
5:30 p.m.**

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

Commissioners Present: Pete Sorenson, Jay Bozievich, Pat Farr, Joe Berney, Heather Buch

Lane County Board of Commissioners Chair Pete Sorenson opened the May 13, 2019, Joint Work Session of the Lane County Board of Commissioners.

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

1. JOINT WORK SESSION: Presentation of Implementation Plan for Homeless and Supportive Housing System Report Recommendations

Commission Chair Pete Sorenson welcomed everyone and provided an overview of what the meeting would include: a staff presentation, comments from the City Manager, and a discussion period for Commissioners and Councilors.

County Administrator Steve Mokrohisky introduced the topic and provided historical context on the past few years of work on homelessness. City of Eugene Housing Policy Manager Peter Chavannes presented a review of the components of the current homelessness system as well as a list of recommendations for future changes. Human Services Division Manager Steve Manela provided greater detail on each recommendation. City Manager Jon Ruiz thanked all involved in the effort and encouraged continued joint efforts to meet the challenge of homelessness in the community.

Discussion

- Councilor Clark – asked for the plan to deal with the number of people who will be displaced due to a new state law that disallows camping near the river; felt the recommendations presented were out of balance in that they focused entirely on incentives without any enforcement strategies.
- Councilor Semple – asked to hear more about the cost of the strategies, particularly in the light of it being budget season.
- Commissioner Buch – declared a potential conflict of interest in that her father works for St. Vincent de Paul; said the current system is confusing and there must be a fundamental change in how the system is operating; advocated for centralizing and coordinating services.
- Councilor Pryor – said he was committed to the process and expected that the bodies would be prudent about the cost; felt that consequences for people behaving in an antisocial manner would be included in public safety revenue discussion that was already underway; asked for cost details as soon as possible; felt commitment was required.
- Councilor Syrett – asked her colleagues whether they were willing to support the Steering Committee's ideas as a concept.

- Commissioner Farr – noted the City and County’s long history of actions that had resulted in the current conditions; said some of the recommendations will cost little to no money and others will cost an enormous amount.
- Councilor Evans – asked about the City of Springfield’s role in navigating the challenges of homelessness.
- Commissioner Berney – shared that he spoke with several Springfield city councilors prior to the meeting and noted that body held a meeting at the same time; expected to see more participation from Springfield in the future.
- Councilor Zelenka – agreed with Commissioner Buch that the plan presented was a radically different approach to what has been done in the past; hoped to get the plan and setup correct in order to move faster later; expressed disappointment that Springfield was not present at the meeting.
- Commissioner Bozievich – expressed enthusiasm about a strategic plan for moving forward; expressed concerns about plan costs; agreed with Councilor Clark about there not being enough consequences for poor behavior; wanted to increase buildable lands inventory.
- Councilor Taylor – appreciated the cooperation and coordination and would like to see more support from the State and federal government.
- Councilor Yeh – felt that the cost for implementation could be intimidating but was necessary; said the plan was well thought out.
- Commissioner Sorenson – said he was a strong supporter of the approach and concept; wanted to see comment from the general public as well as community partners; wanted more details on implementation.
- Mayor Vinis –noted that many of the recommendations pertained to streamlining services, which would produce cost savings; emphasized that accountability is built into the system; urged both groups to focus upon providing services that make the experience of homelessness brief and brings people into services efficiently—the larger, interlocking issues of addiction, economics, equity, etc. are another conversation.
- Commissioner Berney – felt all the interrelated issues were important and needed to be part of the conversation; would prefer continuous improvements over time in a three- or five-year plan; expressed disappointment that the report did not account for homeless kids in the schools; would like the conversation to be more human-centered.
- Councilor Syrett – advocated piloting strategies, assessing their effectiveness, implementation of those that are successful, and then continuously reassessing and making adjustments as needed; highlighted the Community Court’s work to encourage defendants to make different choices; pointed out Appendix E of the report outlined costs.
- Councilor Clark – referred to initial remarks and emphasized that they were focused on the overall strategy being out of balance; wanted to see specific, measurable goals as well as a timeline; said he looked forward to seeing the budget; voiced concern that Eugene was taking actions that kept Springfield away from the table, particularly the public safety payroll tax discussion.
- Commissioner Farr – gave some historical context for the current issues with homelessness and housing and expressed hopefulness for actions that could be taken now; highlighted the work of mobile outreach teams and encouraged maximizing their—and other programs’—use.
- Councilor Zelenka – noted the resistance from the City of Springfield to participate financially in efforts to provide social services is not recent, but long-standing; shared that proposals and plans need someone who is in charge of them or the work does not get done.

MOTION AND VOTE: Councilor Zelenka, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved that the City Council support the homeless services system plan improvement plan framework, that the City Manager move forward on immediate actions over the next year, and that we direct the City Manager to bring back for council approval a work,

budget, financial plan, and performance measures to identify success as soon as practicable. **PASSED 8:0.**

- Commissioner Sorenson – noted that the Board of Commissioners had more time should they like to continue to discuss; hoped to get support from many other government entities, but urged immediate action as opposed to delaying for some additional assistance.
- Commissioner Berney – requested the bodies not demean or dismiss Springfield, especially because they were not invited to the meeting.
- Councilor Pryor – reminded everyone that the goal is self-sufficiency and housing and employment—particularly good-paying employment—are fundamental to that goal.
- Commissioner Bozievich – asked about the first year of costs and whether those costs have been incorporated into the draft budget.
- Councilor Taylor – asked whether the plan included strategies to support people living on the edge of homelessness—efforts to keep them in their homes when unexpected high expenses arise.

The meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Beth Forrest
City Recorder

(Recorded by Cas Casados)

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