

MINUTES
Eugene City Council
Work Session
Eugene, Oregon 97401

September 24, 2025
12:00 p.m.

Councilors Present: Eliza Kashinsky, Matt Keating, Alan Zelenka, Jennifer Yeh, Mike Clark, Greg Evans, Lyndsie Leech, and Randy Groves

Mayor Knudson opened the September 24, 2025, Eugene City Council Work Session in a virtual format.

- 1. WORK SESSION: City of Eugene Charter Review Process: Council-requested Research**
City Manager, Sarah Medary, introduced Jason Dedrick, Program Manager for Policy Research, Strategic Planning & Performance, to discuss an update on the Charter amendment process and results of councilor-requested research.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Clark – stated interest in the residency requirement regarding the fire chief position; asked if Springfield has a residency requirement; indicated future applicants may have trouble applying due to the residency requirement; in support of discussing how to be open and fair regarding this topic.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated support for discussing the residency requirements regarding the fire chief position; supportive of a hybrid option regarding other department head positions; stated a willingness to discuss allowing the area radius to include individuals that live near but not in the city who are going to be promoted; indicated support for changing the length of time regarding elections and campaigns.
- Councilor Groves – indicated interest in the Eugene Springfield Chief position residency requirement and the potential of the service area changing; proposed having the residency requirement apply to the service area that the specific department serves; noted the benefits of requiring an applicant to live in the area the position is required to serve; indicated that the requirements currently do not offer flexibility.
- Councilor Kashinsky – stated support for removing the residency requirement; indicated interest in placing this requirement in an ordinance instead of the charter; believes it is more appropriate to regulate in an ordinance; proposed removing residency requirement from the charter; stated hesitancy to replace the residency requirement with other language that is different from the discussions taken place.
- Councilor Evans – stated interest in having the flexibility to update via ordinance versus the charter; mentioned the difficulty of making changes to the charter; stated the potential of including language surrounding housing and the flexibility of including language on this topic.

- Councilor Keating – stated interest in an independent, community-driven commission bringing suggestions regarding the compensation of councilor and mayor positions; believes the salary for council should be closer to a median income; stated support for a residency requirement for council and mayor positions, but not for city employees; indicated the potential barrier for future applicants if they must reside in the City of Eugene.
- Councilor Yeh – stated support for removing the residency requirement; indicated she does not feel applicants living in neighboring cities are unable to represent the City of Eugene, just because they live in a different city.
- Councilor Leech – stated interest in removing the residency requirement; indicated support for placing the change into an ordinance or removing it completely; indicated interest in having a Citizen Advisory Committee research the topic of council compensation; asked for confirmation of a future work session surrounding the topic of operating agreements for city council; noted she was personally impacted by the vacancy requirements, but does not think changes for vacancies should be pursued at this time.
- Councilor Zelenka – indicated support for imposing a residency requirement of 25 miles for applicants currently living out of the area; is not in favor of asking internal applicants to move for promotions.
- Councilor Clark – stated that the current fire chief moved from Cottage Grove to Eugene to become fire chief; asked if multiple changes to the charter would be reflected in one question or multiple questions on the ballot; indicated his support for adjusting the residency requirement to a radius area.
- Councilor Evans – mentioned a former hire who moved to Creswell at the time because they were unable to secure housing in Eugene or Springfield; noted that the hire later moved to Eugene; indicated support for having the residency requirement in an ordinance rather than the charter for increased flexibility.
- Councilor Groves – indicated his previous statements addressed the service area and did not address placement in charter or ordinance; supports moving this requirement out of the city charter; stated it would be better to place into an ordinance if Council wants to define an area as a requirement. Councilor Zelenka – asked for confirmation of the process of moving the residency requirement into ordinance from the charter; asked if a ballot measure needs to take place, followed by a public hearing to discuss the ordinance; indicated Council should consider a residency requirement radius if an applicant is moving from out of state; noted no preference for the placement of a radius requirement, either the charter or ordinance.

MOTION (with friendly amendment): Councilor Evans, seconded by Councilor Leech, moved to remove the residency requirement from the charter and consider putting it into ordinance at a future date.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Yeh – stated she is in favor of removing the residency requirement; asked if the motion would require creating an ordinance; offered a friendly amendment to change the wording to “consider” putting it into an ordinance.

- Councilor Clark – asked if the residency requirement is regarding the Eugene Springfield Fire chief position or for all executive positions.
- Councilor Keating – asked council president if there will be other motions regarding a language review and mayor and council compensation; stated he did not want to vote on one motion and not discuss the others.

VOTE: 8:0 PASSED

IN FAVOR: Kashinsky, Keating, Zelenka, Yeh, Clark, Evans, Leech, and Groves.

OPPOSED: None.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Kashinsky – stated support for adding a measure on the ballot related to amending the antiquated language; is not in favor of moving forward the items related to consistency, level of detail, and including core services; stated more discussion is needed on these other topics, including a citizen’s review.
- Councilor Leech – indicated support for amending the language, but not the other items at this time.
- Councilor Groves – stated support for a ballot measure related to amending language; noted general support for consistency, level of detail, and including core services, but stated the challenges they would face with no priority list.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked for clarification about removing antiquated language and what specific language would be targeted for removal; asked what would replace the language identified for removal.
- Councilor Clark – indicated his support of getting community input through a survey regarding the core services; less interested in adding core services language to the charter due to changes in community sentiment over time; stated he would support a motion to remove the antiquated language.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated support for adding multiple items to the ballot instead of just one so it is cost effective.

MOTION: Councilor Evans, seconded by Councilor Leech, moved to direct the City Manager to draft a resolution and schedule a work session on language review to address antiquated language.

VOTE: 8:0 PASSED

IN FAVOR: Kashinsky, Keating, Zelenka, Yeh, Clark, Evans, Leech, and Groves.

OPPOSED: None.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Kashinsky – stated she is not interested in pursuing charter amendments regarding the topic of mayor and council compensation at this time.
- Councilor Clark – indicated interest in discussing the topic of compensation but stated he believes it is the wrong time; asked Council to consider not putting this question to the voters as it may impact other items on the ballot.
- Councilor Groves – does not believe the time is right to have this conversation; is interested in having this discussion at a later date.

- Councilor Evans – stated he is ready to put forward a motion to not pursue a charter change for mayor and councilor compensation at this time.
- Councilor Keating – disagrees that the timing is wrong to bring this topic forward to the voters; indicated he wants to see more diversity in candidate pools for elected office; stated that fair and equitable compensation for elected officials is a conversation the public is interested in; encouraged Council to advance the conversation at minimum.
- Councilor Yeh – agreed there are many barriers for people applying for a council member position; believes a broader conversation, beyond compensation, is needed.
- Councilor Leech – noted the feedback she’s received from constituents regarding expectations for addressing the challenges in the community; stated it is difficult to do all the expected work on a small stipend; believes a citizen committee to present feedback on this topic would be beneficial; indicated support for continuing this conversation and requesting more staff research.
- Councilor Zelenka – is opposed to making a motion to move forward this charter change now; stated support for having staff conduct more research and Council having a further discussion at a later date.
- Councilor Kashinsky – indicated support for having a citizen advisory committee research salary comparable rates for elected officials; stated she is against placing this topic on the ballot at this time.
- Councilor Clark – stated he is not in favor of adding the topic of compensation to the ballot at this time; stated interest in having an informed committee present information along with community conversation; noted concern for this topic on the ballot given the current revenue discussions and challenges within the community.
- Councilor Evans – stated interest to have additional research performed by staff, specifically around comparable communities; indicated support to have a citizen committee in the future but will put forward a motion now for additional staff research.

MOTION: Councilor Evans, seconded by Councilor Leech, moved to direct staff to provide additional research.

VOTE: 7:1 PASSED

IN FAVOR: Kashinsky, Keating, Zelenka, Yeh, Clark, Evans, and Leech.

OPPOSED: Councilor Groves

Mayor Knudson – noted the conversation on charter revisions will pause so that staff can present on the second work session item on today’s agenda; stated at the end of the second work session item, Council can continue their conversation on this first topic.

2. Work Session: Eugene Springfield Fire Governance Update

City Manager, Sarah Medary, presented an update on the merging of the Eugene and Springfield Fire Departments.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Groves – noted he is looking forward to a conclusion on this topic; stated the process is taking longer than anticipated due to the research of other options and intent to form a subcommittee to discuss the topic of governance.
- Mayor Knudson – stated this is a topic of interest in community conversations, specifically concern around fire department access to address emergency matters and current challenges; indicated interest to learn more at the upcoming work session surrounding the topic of various costs and benefits toward a sustainable strategy for the emergency responders.

3. WORK SESSION: City of Eugene Charter Review Process: Council-requested Research (Continued)

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Kashinsky – noted that the mayor and council vacancy appointment process didn't work as intended; does not believe the intent was to have an appointed councilor run in three to four elections in a row to get elected; noted interest in improving this process in the future; is not interested in pursuing a charter amendment regarding mayor and council vacancy appointments at this time.
- Councilor Clark – stated he doesn't fully understand the problem this proposed change would solve; indicated an openness to discuss potential process improvements at a later time.
- Councilor Zelenka – indicated support to have further discussions around vacancy appointments; stated his support for having multiple items on the upcoming ballot instead of a stand-alone item; does not think it's in the public interest to have three elections in the same year, all for the same seat; clarified the deadline to put items on the May 2026 ballot; noted he is hopeful this discussion could be resolved by that time.
- Councilor Keating – indicated current election process presents a problem; noted a state-level change could fix this issue, requiring recall elections to take place on a regularly scheduled election date; stated support for additional research focused on streamlining a process regarding appointments and vacancy elections.
- Mayor Knudson – asked City Attorney if council would still have an option to decide what to put on ballot after the receipt of more information.
- Councilor Clark – noted concern about the impacts of a recall timing; reiterated support for additional research and information but is not interested in a charter amendment at this time.
- Councilor Evans – stated a similar experience of going through a previous appointment process and multiple elections in a short timeframe; supportive of requesting more feedback but is not interested in pursuing a charter amendment at this time.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked council president to clarify the parts to his intended motion about timing of the election and a future discussion; indicated support for a future discussion about this topic.

MOTION: Councilor Evans, seconded by Councilor Leech, moved to direct staff to provide additional research and not to pursue charter on this topic at this time.

VOTE: 8:0 PASSED

IN FAVOR: Kashinsky, Keating, Zelenka, Yeh, Clark, Evans, Leech and Groves.

OPPOSED: None.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Katie LaSala", written in a cursive style.

Katie LaSala
City Recorder

(Recorded by Rosa Roach)

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