

MINUTES
Eugene City Council
Work Session
Eugene, Oregon 97401

October 22, 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 October 22, 2025, Eugene City Council Work Session in a virtual format.

1. WORK SESSION: Eugene Springfield Fire Governance Update

City Manager, Sarah Medary, introduced the topic and provided background on the Eugene-Springfield Fire governance structure.

Councilor Discussion:

- Councilor Groves – stated the presentation clarified many complex issues; asked whether the projected revenue for a new fire district included the current general fund contribution; indicated Eugene Springfield Fire services have done commendable work, but resources have not kept pace with population growth; emphasized the need for a plan to address and right-size the department; asked about public support for a new district; suggested community polling may be needed.
- Councilor Clark – stated support for a single administrative structure to manage fire services; noted the fire department has not grown in proportion to other city services; emphasized the importance of prioritizing public safety; stated the fire department needs more resources and a structure that supports its mission.
- Councilor Kashinsky – asked for clarification on whether both governance models would eliminate the current dual administrative structure; asked how member fees would be calculated under an intergovernmental entity (IGE) and requested a future discussion on potential barriers to each option.
- Councilor Keating – asked how often Eugene-Springfield Fire responds to calls in the Willakenzie Fire District and how potential state-level tax reforms might impact the feasibility of a new district; expressed appreciation for the work of first responders and leadership.
- Councilor Zelenka – stated the topic is complex and appreciated the effort to simplify it; asked whether the additional revenue from a new district would result in increased service; noted a new district would have its own elected board and that City Council would no longer control fire service decisions; stated a new district

could increase taxes without necessarily increasing service and could result in revenue loss due to compression.

- Mayor Knudson – asked whether either governance model would affect the community’s wildfire protection; asked how differences in past investments between Eugene and Springfield would be addressed in the process; indicated the importance of understanding the financial and operational implications of each model.
- Councilor Yeh – asked if a fire district would result in unequal tax burdens due to the structure of the property tax system; stated that this is a longstanding issue.
- Councilor Groves – noted the current system allows for full interoperability between Eugene and Springfield fire crews; stated the desire for autonomy is a key reason some support a fire district; emphasized that the fire department has not grown in over four decades and suggested a dedicated revenue source for the fire department could be implemented before a new governance model is finalized.
- Councilor Zelenka – asked how revenue increases would be handled under each model; stated a fire district would require voter approval for any new levies, while an IGE could raise fees with city approval; asked about the value of fire department assets and how differences in employee benefits between cities would be addressed; stated the decision ultimately depends on the willingness of voters to support increased funding.
- Councilor Evans – asked about the bonding capacity of an IGE and how operational levies would work; noted the importance of addressing immediate needs; stated a standardized fire fee may be more sustainable than a time-limited levy.
- Mayor Knudson – asked whether a new fire district would face the same long-term funding limitations as the city; noted property tax growth has been below four percent and that this would limit the district’s ability to expand services over time.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:18 p.m.



Katie LaSala
City Recorder

(Recorded by Rosa Roach)

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