



**COUNCIL RESOLUTION NO. 5473**

**A RESOLUTION CALLING A CITY ELECTION ON MAY 19, 2026, FOR THE PURPOSE OF REFERRING TO THE LEGAL ELECTORS OF THE CITY OF EUGENE A MEASURE AUTHORIZING A FIVE-YEAR LOCAL OPTION LEVY FOR THE FUNDING OF LIBRARY OPERATIONS.**

**PASSED: 8:0**

**REJECTED:**

**OPPOSED:**

**ABSENT:**

**CONSIDERED: February 9, 2026**



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#### **The City Council of the City of Eugene finds that:**

**A.** The Eugene Public Library's mission is to provide equitable resources and opportunities for everyone to create a connected, caring, and inspired community. The library continues to serve as a leader in community building, public computer access, early literacy, and free, enriching programs for all ages, ensuring inclusive and equitable access to information for all residents.

**B.** The City of Eugene has a history of supporting its library. In 1906, the first Eugene Public Library, named the Carnegie Library, opened at 11th and Willamette. Over time, the Carnegie Library no longer met the needs of the growing community. In 1959, the library moved into a new building at Olive and 13th. By the 1990s, Eugene had grown significantly, and the community desired a larger library to meet its new needs. The Mayor and City Council, supported by the voters, decided to open two branch libraries as well as build a new downtown library. Since its completion in 2002, the Downtown Library has been an anchor to downtown redevelopment. In 2000, the Bethel and Sheldon Branch Libraries opened in leased facilities with levy funding. These neighborhood locations are vital to accessible service delivery for community members in all parts of the city, especially for kids after school. After two years with reduced hours, voter-approved levy funding doubled open hours at both branches beginning July 2016.

**C.** In Fiscal Year 2024, the Eugene Public Library continued to serve as a vital resource for the community. Library patrons borrowed over 2.6 million items from a collection of more than 610,000 materials, reflecting strong engagement with diverse resources. Over 800,000 community members visited the three library locations. The library hosted more than 1,250 free programs, drawing over 31,000 attendees of all ages. These programs, along with robust digital access and technology services, demonstrate the library's ongoing impact in fostering learning, connection, and opportunity for all residents.

**D.** The City's library services are funded by the General Fund, donated funds, and the five-year operating levy approved by voters. The Fiscal Year 2026 General fund budget of approximately \$12.9 million pays for the following services:

1. Downtown, Bethel, and Sheldon library locations - 113 hours across seven days a week.
2. Account access, phone services, and reference services meeting a variety of community needs.
3. Publicly available technology and computer access are provided at all locations.
4. Online and digital services are available 24/7.
5. Free public programs are offered for all ages, supporting learning and engagement throughout the community.
6. Outreach services extend library resources and programs into neighborhoods and community spaces, increasing access for those unable to visit library facilities.

7. Neighborhood return bins were added at the Amazon Pool and 24/7 returns are available at the Bethel and Sheldon branches.
8. Publicly available access to Cultural Passes now includes the Hult Center, enabling patrons to check out free tickets to arts performances.
9. Maintain space for reading, study, and community use.

**E.** In November 2020, Eugene voters approved a five-year local option levy to maintain and enhance library services, continuing many of the services funded by the 2015 voter-approved levy and reaffirming the community's strong tradition of support. The 2020 measure passed with 76.72% of the vote during the election held on November 3, 2020. Implementation began on July 1, 2021, following expiration of the previous 2015 levy (Measure 20-235), which concluded on June 30, 2021. The current levy is set to expire on June 30, 2026.

**F.** Levy investments have supported the expansion of key library service offerings, including:

1. Library of Things: an expanded collection of lendable items, including cameras, musical instruments, robotics kits, board games, sewing machines, and other hands-on learning tools that encourage creativity, learning and social connection.
2. Seed Library: a free seed collection at all branches, offering heritage and culinary seeds that support local food security and community gardening.
3. Digital equity supports: expanded mobile hotspot lending, free Wi-Fi, and mobile printing available both inside and outside library branches.
4. Learning and language supports: live tutoring services and multilingual "Talk Time" conversation groups that provide educational support, including English-language practice and homework help.
5. Youth collections and access: new children's book bins and expanded youth collections with more diverse, age-appropriate materials.
6. Public programming: author talks and literary events that connect readers with writers and strengthen Eugene's literary culture.
7. Outreach: expanded library tours, site visits, and pop-up services at community events.

Through these service expansions and levy investments, the Eugene Public Library has become an innovative hub supporting education, creativity, sustainability, and engagement for all ages and remains a cornerstone of community resilience.

**G.** The Eugene community continues to rely on the services funded through the 2020 library levy. Approval of this proposed levy will advance the priorities of access, equity, and safety.

**H.** This proposed levy will:

1. Maintain funding for 47 weekly service hours across all three library locations.
2. Preserve and expand diverse collections, reflecting the voices and experiences of Eugene's community.
3. Advance digital equity, collections, hotspot lending, and technology help for all ages.

4. Enhance safety and accessibility at library facilities, creating welcoming and secure spaces.
5. Fund a Library Systems Plan, assessing long-term space, technology, and service needs, including planning for the next generation of Bethel and Sheldon branches.
6. Expand early literacy initiatives, including:
  - Hiring an Early Literacy Librarian to coordinate programs and measure outcomes.
  - Reinstating Storytime to Go, bringing trained volunteers into preschools and childcare settings.
  - Increasing the number and variety of storytimes and early learning programs.
  - Strengthening the youth collection for ages 0–5.
  - Deepening partnerships with schools, early learning providers, and family-serving organizations.
  - Implementing a training-of-trainers model to equip educators and caregivers with shared tools for nurturing early literacy.
7. Fund two 24-hour library pickup stations, one in the Churchill neighborhood and one location to be determined.

**I.** Recent community engagement, including the 2023 survey and feedback from the Library Advisory Board and partners, confirms that Eugene residents prioritize open hours, access to technology, safety, early literacy, and neighborhood convenience. The proposed levy responds directly to these priorities by maintaining core services, expanding programs that support lifelong learning, and equity.

**J.** In order to continue the services currently funded by the 2020 levy and implement the enhancements outlined in paragraph H, the City Council has developed a proposal for library levy funding. The levy proposal would pay for the service expansions identified in paragraph H, above. All other library services will continue to be funded by the City’s General Fund and donated funds.

**K.** The City Council proposes a five-year Local Option Levy to support library services at an average annual level of \$4.3 million. This levy will have an estimated tax rate of \$0.19 per \$1,000 of assessed value, which would cost the average home approximately \$54 per year. The levy will fund the service expansions identified in paragraph H and maintain the library as a trusted resource for the community.

**L.** To ensure accountability and transparency in the use of levy funds, the following measures will be implemented:

1. Levy funds will be budgeted and accounted for in separate, publicly identifiable funds in accordance with state law.
2. Staff will prepare an annual report detailing levy spending and performance measures, including a clear breakdown of General Fund and levy-funded services.
3. The Library Advisory Board will review the annual report and provide feedback to ensure compliance with the intent of the ballot measure.
4. The City Manager will provide an annual memorandum to the City Council summarizing levy spending, key performance measures, and community impact.

**NOW, THEREFORE,**

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EUGENE, a  
Municipal Corporation of the State of Oregon, as follows:**

**Section 1.** A city election is called for the purpose of referring to the legal electors of the City of Eugene a measure authorizing a five-year Library Local Option Levy in the amount of approximately \$4.3 million per year, beginning July 1, 2026, to maintain and enhance library services as described above.

**Section 2.** The City Council orders this city election to be held in the City of Eugene, Oregon, concurrently with the election on May 19, 2026, in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 254 of the Oregon Revised Statutes, and the ballots shall be counted and tabulated and the results certified as provided by law.

**Section 3.** The City Recorder is directed to give not less than ten days' notice of the city election by publication of one notice in the Register-Guard, a newspaper published in the City and of general circulation within the City.

**Section 4.** This Resolution is effective immediately upon its passage by the City Council.

**The foregoing Resolution adopted the 9<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2026.**

  
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City Recorder