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“Sunshine” or openness in government refers to access to public records and meetings. Regardless of what label an access law is given — “sunshine,” freedom of information, or transparency — the premise is that everyday people have the right to know what actions their government is taking.¹

The 🌻 Sunshine Report from the LWVLC Observer Corps:

Lane County Board of Commissioners

September 23, 2025: Two detailed financial reports by Lane County Health and Human Services and County Administration, Policy Division presented a dismal picture of current and future harmful **impacts on the citizens of Lane County of federal funding cuts** due to Executive Orders and legislative action. To review presentation information, see [Current Financials of the Community Health Centers of Lane County](#) (begin on p. 6) and [State and Federal Fiscal Update](#) (begin on page 4).

Travel Lane County gave a 30-minute update on their plans to “Warm up Winter” with new ideas to increase revenue during the winter months. Commissioners emphasized that they wanted more discussion with Travel Lane County at future work sessions and to know how Commissioners can help make the list of ideas come to fruition.

Commissioners offered enthusiastic accolades and formally recognized two employees from the Mobile Crisis Services. While on their way to a scheduled service, they saw a bicyclist on the street fall and not get up. They stopped and performed life-saving measures while waiting for an ambulance to arrive.

During the Public Comments period, one speaker expressed dissatisfaction with County Commissioners for being unpredictable and making frequent unsavory comments at meetings. Another singled out Commissioner Loveall regarding past comments about citizens and employees, saying that his wording was in “retaliation” to actions he did not agree with.

🌻 Reported by: Judy Leahy

¹ [LWV Observing Your Government in Action](#)

September 30, 2025: The morning session addressed two amendments to Lane County Code, amendments to the Diversity Policy for Lane County, and a request for a software update. The amendments to Lane County Code involved **language changes in the Oregon Recycling Modernization Plan and standards affecting the development of needed residential housing** in non-incorporated communities, non-resource zones, and in areas zoned for rural residential use. The amendments were “first readings” which is a way of alerting the public to changes in the Code so that they can provide public comment during the “second reading,” scheduled for October 14 at 1:30. Details of the proposed changes to the recycling code can be reviewed [here](#). Details of the proposed changes to the residential housing Code can be reviewed [here](#).

The Diversity Affirmative Action Policy was reviewed to (a) clarify that equity work that is currently done is in alignment with current law and (b) remove outdated and legally problematic language. The last revision was done in 2017. Review the policy with changes described [here](#).

Finally, there was a discussion of the need for an update in the software used for grants or contracts that would standardize processes for tracking financial commitments in grants, allowing more consistency in following grants, and facilitating a more global understanding of commitment of funds.

The afternoon session focused on the Community Health Assessment. The assessment has three priorities: ensuring access to inclusive and affordable housing, increasing community resilience and ability to meet basic needs, and mental health. Important take-home messages from the assessment included:

- Major gaps in healthcare exist in Lane County.
- Economic barriers (high cost of housing, child care, and transportation) affect the health of many Lane County residents.
- Discrimination and stigmatization are barriers to health.
- Access to health care has shown dramatic decreases since 2020, especially in rural areas.
- Access to health care is getting harder for everyone regardless of insurance type.

The presenters noted that health care systems work best when there is a higher contribution from commercially insured participants, and the State of Oregon can't afford the Medicaid system it built before federal reduction in funding.

 **Reported by: Nancy Mills**

Lane Community College Board of Education

September 30, 2025: Board President Folnagy issued a new **formal apology** from the Board to President Bulger “for the discriminatory behaviors based on her race and sex that occurred during the March 5 board meeting.” The previous apology which had not

been seen or reviewed by any other board members prior to its issuance had been deemed inadequate and insufficient by several board members.

The primary focus of the meeting was the **review and approval of President Bulger's goals**, which she had presented and reported to the full Board at the September 17 work session. The Board seemed generally pleased with the President's goals. Discussion focused on two items, the President's request to reduce the number of board work sessions between board meetings from eleven to five and the inclusion of a specific target of approximately \$3 million in cuts annually to restore the Ending Fund Balance (a reserve fund required to be maintained at 10% of the General Fund). Discussion ran long and was somewhat contentious.

In the end, **the Board approved, by a vote of 5 to 2, an amended version of President Bulger's goals, removing the specific annual reduction target of \$3 million.** The Board will revisit this issue in the near future as budget planning for FY 2027 is already beginning. Realizing those cuts will require hard choices and have a profound impact on LCC faculty, staff, students, and the community at large.

Public comments, heard earlier in the meeting, were made mostly by Lane Community College Education Association (LCCEA) members, reflecting **concerns about ongoing contract negotiations**. Key issues included difference in faculty pay for lab vs. lecture classes, increased class sizes, lack of pay parity for part-time faculty and the administration's ability to unilaterally cut programs without Board of Education and public input.

 **Reported by: Anne Delaney**

Eugene 4J School District Board of Education

October 8, 2025: The Board approved **2025-26 Board Goals**, a document stating its support for onboarding the new Superintendent; commitment to professional learning; intentional participation in school communities; and an annual self-assessment to evaluate its own governance effectiveness, communication, and alignment with district priorities.

Motions to approve the Superintendent evaluation process and the continuation of existing substitute teacher salary rate/compensation guidelines passed unanimously.

District administrators introduced the proposal for **an electronic hall pass system**. Board members expressed concern about oppressive monitoring of students' behavior, trips to restrooms, including whether they used a gender-neutral bathroom, and the keeping of records. Students have called the system "junior Flock cameras", referring to the automatic license plate reading cameras creating public outcry. Board member Rick Hamilton expressed a need for consequences for students who are repeat violators of

acceptable behavior in halls and restrooms and who abuse any hall pass system. No decision was made at this meeting.

The State of Oregon is requiring all school districts to submit by October 31 and implement by January 1, 2026, an **“off and away” policy for student use of personal electronic devices** (cell phones and smart watches) other than for academic purposes. Several board members expressed concern over access and equity issues. Ericka Thessen and Jenny Jonak stated that even with exceptions for students with 504 (disability accommodation) Plans and Individual Education Plans, many students with unrecognized learning disabilities use apps to assist their learning. Also cited were business employer tactics of requiring students to be reachable for last-minute workshift changes. The Board recognized that this is a State requirement and are in agreement that 4J will comply.

The 2025-26 Leaders of the Eugene Education Association (teachers’ union), OSEA (classified employees) and MAPS (managers, administrators, professionals and supervisors) introduced themselves. OSEA is in the midst of bargaining with the District and brought to the Board’s attention that two conflict points are inequitable: (1) proposed changes for bus drivers to a weekly FTE rather than the District standard of daily FTE; and (2) allowing a change of a position’s FTE any time during the year. Additional changes were viewed by OSEA as attempts at “dismantling our collective bargaining.”

Two members of the public commented about the loss of playground equipment at the Arts and Technology Academy. Another individual noted that nearby Cesar Chavez Elementary School now locks a public walk/bike access route through its grounds and stated that school property is public property and should be accessible to the community.

Due to the Board member comment period consuming increasing time at meetings, the Chair will summarize out-of meeting actions taken by Board members. A chronicle of this information will be made available to the public.

 **Reported by: Nancy Buffum**

Springfield Public Schools (SPS) Board of Education

September 22, 2025: The Board’s monthly work session focused on setting goals for the upcoming academic year. Each Board member presented their wish list of goals before engaging in a process to prioritize them:

1. Student performance
 - a. SPS has historically performed significantly below the Oregon state average in English and math ([see Springfield student performance charts here](#))
2. Student support systems
3. Staff well-being
 - a. for example, conduct exit interviews of teachers
4. Parent/family involvement
5. Community involvement
6. Board development

7. Facilities and maintenance
8. Policy review, updates, adoption

🌻 Reported by: Kim Weston & Patty Sandoz

Eugene City Council

September 22, 2025: After dozens of citizens spoke in **opposition to the installation of Flock cameras (automatic license plate readers) throughout Eugene, the Council scheduled a special work session (for October 8, see below).** According to Eugene Police, the cameras' main purpose is to aid in searching for suspects with active warrants. However, many speakers shared their concerns that the cameras (a) violated privacy through WiFi sharing, (b) diverted needed funds from other city projects, (c) are being used without the consent of the voters, and (d) may be used for other purposes in connection with immigration and women's reproductive issues.

Ward 3 Councillor Alan Zelenka, Liaison to the **Public Safety** Coordination Council, reported that the city's \$8 million budget shortfall could lead to a 35% cut in Parole & Probation staff, leaving the incarceration capacity in "dire straits," and a 65% cut to critical needs funding overall.

Mayor Knudsen reported on the August 21 grand opening of Bridges on Broadway. This 57-unit housing development, funded in part by Eugene's Affordable Housing Trust Fund, is for people experiencing chronic homelessness. She expressed gratitude and optimism about the project.

Many citizens, including social services professionals, spoke on behalf of the [Willamette Valley Crisis Care \(WVC\)](#) (still in its development stage), as a credible **replacement for the shuttered Cahoots**. Laurel Lisovskis, a licensed social worker and founder of WVC, requested funding for a pilot program, as did Robert Parrish, formerly with Cahoots and now Co-Chair of the WVC Board of Directors. He stressed how a program like WVC saves money for the city by responding to calls the EPD doesn't have the time or resources to address.

🌻 Reported by: Susan Fisher

September 24, 2025: Councillors discussed potential revisions to the city charter, which can be amended either by the Eugene City Council or by citizen initiative. Both require a vote by residents to change the language. **The Council voted to schedule work sessions to deal with the following city charter issues:**

1. By unanimous vote, to review and amend charter language to smooth out inconsistencies and update antiquated language (specifically around binary pronouns), to be placed on the May 2026 ballot.

2. By unanimous vote, to discuss removing from the charter the residency requirement for the city manager and department heads and consider moving it into city ordinance at a later date, to be placed on the May 2026 ballot.
3. By a 7-1 vote (Randy Groves opposing), to consider establishing a citizen committee to review compensation for the Mayor and City Council members (who currently receive stipends of \$32,000 and \$21,000 respectively)

Additionally, the Council discussed fine-tuning the vacancy appointment process for replacing councillors mid-term, but no action was taken.

October 8, 2025: In a work session focused exclusively on Flock cameras (automatic license plate recognition), after a presentation by the Police Chief and robust discussion, **Councillors voted unanimously to ask the City Manager to pause the use of the cameras, pending additional conversation on how to proceed.**

Police Chief Chris Skinner gave a presentation about the cameras — 56 in Eugene — that have generated not only local but national controversy. The cameras take still pictures, not videos. They are trained toward intersections and cannot tilt or pan. They are only triggered by car-sized objects, not pedestrians or bicycles.

Following intense negative reaction to the cameras, the city revised its contract with Flock Security, limiting the company's ability to share data outside of Oregon. Currently other law enforcement agencies in several Oregon cities can request information generated by Eugene-captured images. Skinner specifically said, "We don't recognize DHS (the Department of Homeland Security) as one those entities," whose administrative warrants would trigger release of Eugene data. No declaration of an emergency by a federal agency could trigger the release of Eugene data, according to the newly revised contract, Skinner said.

Since the cameras were installed in May, Eugene police have used them to successfully bring charges against individuals in 93 cases: 63 of them felonies, 25 misdemeanors, and 5 non-criminal. There have been 59 arrests, 31 recovered vehicles, 9 recovered weapons and 17 instances of stolen property recovered.

Councillors engaged in discussion with many additional questions to Skinner about problems with the cameras experienced in other cities around the country. While expressing great trust in Skinner and the Eugene police, they said they worried about abuse by others and, as Councillor Alan Zelenka put it, the nation's "march toward authoritarianism" makes it problematic to collect such information, not knowing how it might be used.

The process of terminating the contract is not clear. Also unclear is whether or not the State grant that funded the cameras would have to be returned.

Councillor Eliza Kashinsky offered a motion to direct the City Manager to turn off the cameras. The City Attorney pointed out that the Council has policy-making authority not operational authority. They can recommend actions, but it is the City Manager who executes contracts.

City Manager Sarah Medary said that directing or recommending the cameras be turned off provided no policy signal about what to do next. She noted that during the request for proposals, five companies applied to provide cameras. She wondered if Councillors would want other companies approached if Flock Security was the main objection. And she also noted that an underfunded city with insufficient police officers to serve the community, could be well-served by appropriate technology.

October 13, 2025: A 20-year tax exemption for a housing project, 158 low-income rental housing units at 170 South Garden Way, was unanimously approved.

The City Manager confirmed that she would pause — that is, turn off — the license-plate reading cameras “within the next 24 hours” until further conversation with the Council.

Public Comment included more than 30 people with the majority congratulating the Council and City Manager on the camera pause while also warning that they were still watching; having the cameras come back on would generate continued community anger.

 **Reported by: Susan Palmer**

Springfield City Council

Oct 2, 2025: The Springfield City Club hosted Eugene City Club to share information about the development of 47 acres in Glenwood near the two traffic circles. It will be developed as a mixed-use area (housing and commercial combinations). The overall emphasis will be a people-friendly environment with riverside green areas.

Oct 6, 2025: Springfield City Council heard **public reaction to the 22 Flock Safety cameras** that were installed on Springfield streets with a grant of \$77K. Approximately 50 concerned locals attended the meeting and several spoke against using the cameras. It was the general consensus that the camera usage wasn't presented to the public for their input and that abuse of the system was highly possible. **The Councillors stated that there would be a meeting on October 20 to revisit this issue.**

 **Reported by: Jen Allison-Keim**

Oakridge City Council

September 18, 2025: The Council unanimously approved four requests for obtaining grant funds:

1. Parks Committee request of \$50,000 for a five-piece exercise station at Banner Bank Park. Questions about ownership, liability insurance, maintenance,

- vandalism, and issues with the nearby parking lot were raised.
2. City Administrator request for a Business Oregon Rural Opportunity Initiative grant.
 3. Jude Anderson submission of a request to the Lane County Community and Economic Development program for capital improvement projects.
 4. Oregon Arts Commission Arts Build Communities Program grant for \$5000.

The Council discussed renaming Oakridge Industrial Park to John Milandin Industrial Park. Multiple options were considered. George Custer, who initiated the proposal, noted he had over one hundred supporting signatures from residents and felt the process had become unnecessarily complicated due to individual comments.

During the Public Comment period, a resident said the City has yet to respond to her property's drainage issue caused by construction on a neighboring lot.

October 2, 2025: The Council discussed and voted on two issues related to promoting Oakridge and Westfir.

- Travel Lane County submitted a grant request to the Council to support its 2026 "Eugene, Cascades and Coast Visitor Guide" for the section featuring Oakridge. Discussion reflected a preference for supporting the paper and electronic editions of Ridgeline Magazine over Travel Lane County. Of note, Travel Lane County offers a much larger circulation compared to Ridgeline Magazine. The Council voted 6 to 1 to defer further action to a special meeting scheduled for October 30.
- A motion was made to grant funds to purchase the marketing services of Vanessa Tharp to promote Oakridge and Westfir with the stipulation that a monthly services contract be executed. The motion passed by a vote of 5 to 2. Councillors Brewer and Coker voted against the motion.

The Council unanimously approved a motion to provide Ridgeline Magazine with \$2500. Chad Shelton, owner/publisher of Ridgeline Magazine, will use the funds for a print and electronic version of the magazine.

Jason Nehmer, President of the Oakridge Disc Golf Club, submitted a funding request to revitalize the Old Mill Disc Golf Course and to provide support for the Middle Fork Open Disc Golf Tournament. **The City Council unanimously approved allocating a total of \$13,000 exclusively for the revitalization of the Old Mill Disc Golf Course.**

 **Reported by: Leslie Heaton**

The Observer Corps is a group of LWVLC members who pledge to regularly attend government meetings and report back to the Lane County League. We have Observers at the County Commissioners meetings, Eugene City Council, Eugene 4J School District, Springfield School District, and Lane Transit District. To keep you informed, we will distribute their reports by email once a month. When topics arise that require action or

attendance by a larger number of us, LWVLC will send out an email "Call for Action".

If you are interested in joining the Observer Corps, please contact Terry Parker, Advocacy Chair (action@lwvlc.com) or Beatrice McKenzie (beatricem@lwvlc.org). We hope to recruit one or two members for each government group. You can attend a meeting first before you pledge to go regularly.