



Vol. I (14), Nov. 21, 2025

“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

November 4, 2025: Commissioner Loveall read a statement on behalf of the entire Commission condemning the **rash of burglaries that targeted the homes and businesses of Asian Americans**. It read, in part, “We stand in solidarity with our Asian American neighbors and business owners who have been targeted by recent organized burglaries.” And went on: “We denounce bias, intimidation, and exploitation in all forms, and we reaffirm our commitment to building a community rooted in respect, trust, and belonging.” And finally: “There is no place for hate in Lane County.”

During Public Comment, several people spoke against the operation of **Flock cameras** in the county.

The Board unanimously approved the 2025 Transportation Safety Action Plan (TSAP) listing three risks for fatal and serious injuries and strategies to address them:

1. Road departure crashes: Engineering Countermeasures administered by Public Works.
2. Drug and/or alcohol involved crashes: Education through Public Health drug and alcohol prevention programs
3. Speed-involved crashes: Enforcement through Sheriff’s Office

🌞 Reported by: Judy Leahy

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

November 18, 2025: The **public comment** session was well-attended with the vast majority of comments from citizens who were angry about the **ICE interaction in Cottage Grove** in early November. The majority of the commenters thanked Commissioners Buch, Farr, and Trieger for their comments in support of immigrants. Some of the comments also urged Commissioners Loveall and Ceniga to join the other commissioners in expressing condemnation of the actions of ICE. There was appreciation for the immediate release of funding from the Lane County emergency funds to assist families affected by recent immigration enforcement activity with basic household needs. Commenters asked for strong statements against unconstitutional ICE actions as well as investigations into the behavior of ICE agents. There was interest in having counties in Oregon act together in their opposition to ICE.

Several commenters spoke in opposition to **Flock cameras** used in more rural Lane County and felt that Sheriff Wilkerson, by supporting the use of Flock camera data, was failing to support sanctuary laws, which affect both immigrants and trans citizens.

After a thorough presentation of details of the contract, the board voted unanimously to approve a new contract between Lane County and the **Lane County Peace Officers Association**. The current contract expired July 1, 2025.

The contract with Marathon Health for management of the **Livewell Center**, which provides county employees health care services, was approved. Under-utilization of behavioral health services resulted in the recommendation to reallocate the money for those services to allow increased staff, particularly nurse practitioners and medical assistants, and to add virtual specialist access by nurse practitioners.

County Administrator Steve Mokrohisky gave the monthly **update from the public safety workgroup**. Briefly, the county budget for public safety is woefully underfunded because when the budget was set up, the county, which consists of 55% of federal lands, was able to depend on timber revenues for the bulk of support for public safety. With the decrease in logging, the only other source of regular revenue was via property taxes which are capped by law. The problem for Lane County is unique among Oregon counties because of the combination of a large amount of federal land with two large cities. Of interest to readers is the **next step in the work of the task force: to gain input from citizens**. Initially there will be a poll designed to be representative of the demographics of the county, followed by a period for public comment to allow the county to determine the potential solutions with greatest public support and effectiveness.

 **Reported by: Nancy Mills**

Lane Community College Board of Education

November 5, 2025: At just under five hours, the meeting was long and emotionally charged with over two hours of public comment by students, LCCEA union members, LCC Foundation members and community members. Underlying much of the public comments was the tension and distrust resulting from the prolonged and difficult **contract**

negotiations between the LCCEA and the college administration as well as the ongoing **internal power struggle** between some of the board members and President Stephanie Bulger. LCCEA has leveled several accusations against President Bulger, one of the most significant being an effort on her part to undermine and limit the role of the democratically elected Board of Education. LCCEA has released a “Community Petition Regarding Democracy on the Lane Community College Board of Education” seeking to build awareness and support for protecting the decision-making power of the board.

The board itself remains divided on their interpretation of the roles and responsibilities of the board versus those of President Bulger. Four board members appear aligned in their belief that the board should have a greater role in operations, including program and curriculum changes, while three appear united in their belief that the board’s role is to focus on policy, not day to day operations. Selena Grace, President of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, the accreditation organization for LCC, gave one of the two presentations up for board discussion on the agenda, “Accreditation and Governance.” Though the presentation could not address the specifics of LCC board policies, it provided guidance on the typical roles and responsibilities of the Boards of Education and Administrations of Community Colleges. Grace attempted to more clearly draw a line between the policy making role of the board and operational execution of those policies by the administration. The Board asked questions about a report on third quarter financials. Refer to the board packet. Together these two presentations, along with LCCEA accusations, brought into focus the **upcoming challenges** facing the college. Difficult budget decisions lay ahead as expenses continue to outpace revenues and significant reductions in state funding are a real possibility. It is an open question how a divided, dysfunctional board can work collaboratively with President Bulger and the college leadership team to successfully confront these budget challenges.

Additional resources on LCCEA’s Concerns:

<https://lookouteugene-springfield.com/story/education/2025/11/07/union-continues-attacks-on-lcc-president-at-marathon-board-meeting/>

<https://bit.ly/LCCDemocracy>

☀️ **Reported by: Anne Delaney and Morgan Vierheller**

Eugene School District 4J Board of Education

November 5, 2025: Superintendent Dr. Miriam Mickelson explained that she started the **26/27 Budget** process earlier than usual because of the need to reduce spending by \$30 million. It is Mickelson's responsibility to lead the development and presentation of a balanced budget for the district. She brought a budget resolution that was unanimously approved in order to formalize the budget reduction process that she has already shared publicly.

Four of the Assistant Superintendent positions have been terminated, which the Superintendent was able to do without Board approval. She laid out a three-stage schedule for the Budget process, including input from over 1400 students, teachers, parents and community members. Dr. Michelson will summarize these exchanges at the November Board Work Session.

Student Representatives to the Board raised several issues, including challenges with 90-minute classes, schedule issues at the International High School, and concerns and objections to the upcoming **cell-phone restrictions** that will start in January. North Eugene High School has received reports from students and parents of **racial- and ableist-charged speech** at the school. Students are planning a Unity campaign to work on this issue.

Three speakers in the Public comments period represented **Live Grow Share**, a mental health agency that provides **on-site trauma-informed therapy and skills-building** for students in need. They are not paid by the district. They bill the Oregon Health Plan directly for those services. They acknowledge that one of their employees made an error in judgment while attempting to deescalate a dysregulated student. It was immediately addressed, and corrective action was taken. However, **a district employee terminated all Live Grow Share services district-wide**. Live Grow Share staff argue that every relevant professional code of ethics forbids this type of therapeutic abandonment. Despite multiple attempts to contact the district, no explanation has been received, and no transition plan was provided until two weeks after the termination. Live Grow Share argues that the decisions about continued treatment were made by an employee not licensed to do so. This puts both the district and their organization at risk of litigation. They asked the district to investigate the issue and respond to their requests for information.

Board members heard a presentation on **The Family Elementary School**, open since 1988. A collaborative partnership between teachers and parents, the school is known for its focus on student connection and care. About a third of the students have disabilities and the school is tied for 3rd-highest needs index in the school district. 30% of students come from out-of-district, bringing with them state funds. If the Family School is closed, at least 25-30% of the families would seek charter or do home schooling for their kids (taking with them that state funding). The school has volunteered to be co-located to another elementary school, because, if separated from the Crest site where they are now, the schools' costs are low. A number of community members spoke movingly during the public comment period about how important the school has been to the success of their children.

 **Reported by: Lenice Shaw**

Springfield Public Schools (SPS) Board of Education

November 10, 2025: Although New Chair Heather Quaas-Annsa and Board members approached the meeting with conciliatory statements, **public comments** captured the prevailing issues at the heart of strife in the district.

1. Sarah Bosch, former Springfield teacher and parent of a Springfield student, reiterated concerns about missing science, social studies, health, art and social and emotional learning at the elementary level. These concerns and questions remain unanswered from district leadership.
2. Sara Burgin, teacher at Two Rivers-Dos Rios Elementary School, protested that **teachers are stretched to the breaking point** over class size, prep time, requirements, lack of curriculum materials, overloaded nervous systems, unpaid overtime, etc. She invited Board members to visit classrooms to see for themselves.
3. Ingrid Nordstrom, teacher at LCC and parent of a Springfield student, acknowledged the effort made to provide some science curriculum but said the **District response to other issues is inadequate and incomplete**. Moreover the district exhibited an **abuse of power** in the complaints filed against two Board members and in removal of Jonathan Light and Ken Kohl from their leadership positions.
4. Linda Burke, lifelong Springfield resident, asked SPS administration to listen to the community speaking to them and to seek understanding with integrity, kindness and compassion. She suggested they model “compassionate straight talk” instead of wasting \$35,000 of taxpayer money to file complaints against Board members who were only trying to do their jobs.
5. Roscoe Caron, retired middle school teacher, instructor at U of O College of Education, and member of CAPE (Citizens Alliance for Public Education), reminded all that **both the Board and the Superintendent** run the district. Board members should not be punished for doing their jobs when they have been unable to get answers from the administration.
6. Concerned citizen Chris Wig left the following comment on the District website:

From my perspective, Directors Light and Kohl acted in the best interest of constituents like me by asking fair questions and seeking more information about a complaint that had already drawn community attention. This process appears to have been misused by administrators who turned the complaint procedure into a tool to punish Board members for doing their jobs. That is an abuse of whistleblower protections, which are meant to safeguard truth-telling, not to suppress oversight or silence elected representatives who hold systems accountable.

The District's Chief Operations Officer, Brett Yancey requested approval of a resolution for structural engineering services to analyze trusses and beams in some of the district's schools with a cost of at least \$100,000. Although some Board members were reluctant to approve a resolution with no cap, the resolution did squeak by with a majority "yes" vote.

Dr. Nicole Nakayama presented a comprehensive view of **SPS's mental health services**. Near the conclusion of her presentation a Board member shared, with permission, a personal story of a youth wanting to commit suicide. This story of pain, the relief of a more positive outcome, and the gratitude for SPS's services underscored the importance of these programs.

☀️ **Reported by: Patty Sandoz and Kim Weston**

Eugene City Council

November 10, 2025: Councilors heard an update at their work session regarding **Eugene airport's extensive expansion**. Passengers using the airport have increased 41 percent in the last six years. Eugene Airport Director Catherine Stevens told councilors that the expansion now underway will cost just over \$200 million with a mix of federal, state and bond funds already identified to cover costs. To meet expected growth, the airport will need to add a third concourse and expand the ticket counter and baggage claim areas. Funding for those projects hasn't been identified and there's great uncertainty over future federal money availability. The estimated cost is \$240 million. Stevens said the airport will seek "nontraditional" funding, and will roll out a presentation to various community groups in the coming months about the airport's economic impact.

Some data:

Current annual impact: 10,383 local jobs, \$442 million in personal income, \$1.2 billion in business revenue, \$43 million in state and local taxes

Potential impact following full expansion: 23,561 jobs, \$957 million in personal income, \$2.5 billion in business revenue, \$99 million in state and local taxes

No city general funds go to support the airport.

The Council meeting opened with the **pledge of allegiance** (which council does at sessions close to patriotic holidays.) This time, however, a Eugene Police honor guard also presented the colors, which was unusual enough that afterward City Manager Sarah Medary thanked the police. In 20 years of attending city council meetings she had never seen it done and said it felt really special.

Public comment: More than 40 speakers signed up to comment on the following topics:

- Ongoing desire that the city cancel its contract with Flock Security for license plate reading cameras.
- Concern about and opposition to the possibility of an Amazon warehouse being built in the city.
- Urging the city to create a middle-income revolving loan fund to help developers by providing matching funds that help them get state and federal funding for a class of housing a tier above low-income.
- Rejecting the proposed ban on handing money from cars to panhandlers

November 12, 2025: At a work session, councilors considered new strategies to **increase the housing supply and reduce regulatory barriers** for housing and jobs development. The city has a severe housing shortage, planning staff said. During the last decade, the city had an average of 965 new housing units constructed each year with about 100 units subsidized affordable housing. To meet anticipated growth needs for the coming decade, the city will need 26,000 new units: 1,600 units per year, with 700 of them designated affordable.

The council considered and expressed support for **micro village housing** (tiny houses with in-unit bathrooms and a multi-use common building often with cooking facilities). These units would be faster and cheaper to develop than traditional multi-unit housing. Also considered: **new incentives**. The city currently supports low-income and downtown housing but new programs could incentivize moderate-income housing and denser housing near public transit routes through 10-year property tax exemption programs.

Recordings of meetings and meeting materials are available at <https://www.eugene-or.gov/3360/Webcasts-and-Meeting-Materials>

☀️ **Reported by: Susan Palmer**

Springfield City Council

November 10, 2025: It was a quiet week for the Springfield City Council. The main topic was the ongoing issue of how to provide **fire and life safety** for Eugene, Springfield, and outlying service areas. Currently both towns are responsible for raising money separately to pay for these important services, but a task force is exploring other options. One of these is that fire and ambulance service would become an independent operation run jointly by a board composed of both Eugene and Springfield representatives.

Springfield is planning to offer a new Sunday Market every week from June to October, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. starting in 2026. There will be a three-year trial run to see whether locals enjoy the market.

☀️ **Reported by: Jen Allison-Keim**

Oakridge City Council

November 6, 2025: Mayor Cutchen and City Administrator Clevenger attended a regional resilience conference organized by LCOG in Lane County to address potential federal funding reductions expected in 2026. The city is actively evaluating risks and considering ways to mitigate the impact of decreased funding. One major issue is **the effect on Medicaid coverage for citizens**, as well as the increasing use of **ambulance services** by uninsured individuals, which could lead to serious budgetary problems for the Oakridge Ambulance Service.

The City Council unanimously approved a \$500 funding request for LED lights on the water tower with remaining funds to replace lights at city hall and on the Holiday tree. It also approved the Oakridge Fire & EMS Ambulance Service Waiver/Exemption Request with the Oregon Health Authority.

 **Reported by: Leslie Heaton**

Lane Transit District

November 12, 2025: This budget committee meeting focused on **long-term planning** based on a certain set of investment and financial assumptions. Overall, federal dollars are still uncertain and there are delays on other funding. It is not yet clear if or how Oregon's new transportation bill will help LTD.

Revenues are down somewhat. However, LTD likely has enough reserves to weather a rough patch. There was concern about relying too much on reserves and the importance of putting reserve funds to work in order to benefit the public. Committee members discussed the role of reserve funds in the financial planning process for public agencies.

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.