



Vol. I (16), Dec. 19, 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.<sup>1</sup>

The ☀️ Sunshine Report from the LWVLC Observer Corps:

### Lane County Board of Commissioners

December 9, 2025

The Board hosted a public work session to learn about **the current status of emergency shelters** in the county to date. There are 1,178 emergency beds in the LC shelter network, a total of 48 shelter sites and 18 shelter providers, 10 of which currently receive funding through the Lane County Human Services Division. A panel of leaders from four local shelters, Keeley Crowson (Equitable Social Solutions), Gabe Piechowicz (Everyone Village), Dana Petersen-Crabb, Sr. (Shelter Care) and Bethany Cartledge (St. Vincent DePaul), provided overviews of their models of operation and answered questions posed by the Commissioners. The Commissioners’ comments were positive. The Board agreed there was more work to be done exploring funding efficiencies and that another discussion will be scheduled.

Eugene Airport Director Cathryn Stephens presented on **the status of the EUG renovation and expansion project** (EUG TREX). Since 2019 the number of passengers at Eugene Airport increased 41%, bringing passenger traffic over-capacity. Current improvement projects costing a total of \$26.2 million dollars (of mostly Federal funds) include Concourse A upgrades and expansion and improvements to the existing airport infrastructure. Stephens shared a [brief PowerPoint presentation](#) titled “Lift Off EUG” which provided scope, timelines, and methods of funding, and included exploration of “non-traditional funding” to shorten the likely 30-year planning, funding, and construction cycle. Bottom line: The expansion project “enabling costs” for which funding has been identified is \$208 million. The expected additional buildout cost is \$240 million.

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<sup>1</sup> [LWV Observing Your Government in Action](#)

At the meeting, Commissioners honored Clint Riley, former Lane County Sheriff's Office Jail Commander, for his outstanding work as the Program Coordinator spearheading the development of the **Lane County Jail Deflection program**. Deflection programs are a new strategy in Oregon, designed to help people with substance abuse disorders avoid jail time. For additional information, see this [KLCC article](#) about Lane County's program.

[Note: Clint Riley and then-Sheriff Clifton Harrold spoke to League of Women Voters of Lane County members about early successes in this program in March 2024.]

☀️ **Reported by: Tom Rigell**

**December 16, 2025**

Commissioners voted 3:2 to postpone amending the Lane Code. At issue was whether to adopt clear and objective **standards for housing in residential areas** to include unincorporated communities designated in the county's comprehensive plan, non-resource lands, and areas zoned for rural residential use. The latter include coastal, riparian, and greenway zones. Commissioner Farr asked to postpone the debate until the March 17 meeting to give Commissioners extra time to study the complicated zoning information (covered in 874 of the 1100 pages of the meeting agenda packet). Despite a deadline of July 1, 2024, to adopt these standards and the desire of Commissioners Buch and Trieger to do so, the motion to postpone succeeded.

Commissioners unanimously approved a contract between Lane County, Emerald People's Utility District, and Waga Energy that would fund an update of technology at Short Mountain Landfill.

Commissioners unanimously approved a motion for NorthWest Natural to install a larger gas pipeline to the Short Mountain Landfill. State legislation requiring counties to provide a materials recovery goal to include waste reduction, recycling, and diversion of waste from landfills initiated a process in 2023 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The original plan to create a waste processing facility (called CleanLane) at a site near Goshen has been complicated by land use approval delays. Attention moved back to the Short Mountain site and the option of contracting with NW Natural, which would pay for creating the trench for a 2" gas line. Expanding the trench for a 4" line would also enable the draining of leachate, a liquid containing harmful substances, that is currently being removed from Lane County waste material sites using large trucks at a cost of ~\$500,000 per year. The advantage of working with NW Natural is that as a utility company, their permitting process is simpler and less expensive because they have eminent domain. The County would pay the difference between a 2" line and a 4" line, which should take about 10 years to pay off using the savings from not trucking the waste.

Commissioners voted 3:2 to amend the contract with the CleanLane facility to allow for the possibility that it be sited at the Short Mountain Landfill. Initial estimates of the amount of waste to be processed at CleanLane indicated that the effort would meet the waste reduction goal. The County pays for processing of a minimum amount of waste; if

the waste available is less than the estimate, the County is still responsible for the minimum amount. County Administrator Mokrohisky emphasized that some of the waste generated in Lane County is being trucked by Sanipac to Jackson County, reducing what CleanLane processes. If that waste remained in Lane County, CleanLane would be better able to exceed the required processing minimum.

☀️ **Reported by: Nancy Mills**

## **Lane Community College Board of Education**

**December 3, 2025**

A five-hour marathon Board meeting began with 2 full hours of intense **public testimony by 40 people**, including students. Of primary concern were the negotiations between the administration and the faculty union (LCCEA), and attendant matters, including class size, reduction in full-time faculty, workload increase for part-time faculty, and 100 midterm course cancellations without notice or collaboration.

Board members unanimously approved increasing an existing contract value by \$280,000 for remediation design and engineering of Building 15. The existing contract of \$650,000 will not exceed \$930,000.

**The Board voted to postpone a vote on the three-year financial plan**, after LCC Director of Budget, Jonathan Campbell, presented for discussion an FY 2027-FY 2029 baseline forecast taking into consideration enrollment, tuition increases, salary costs, benefit costs, supplies, and debt maintenance. State funding reductions were, as yet, unknown, so could not be considered. See the LCC General Fund Balance 3-Year Mitigation Plan [here](#).

A decision by the Board to approve President Bulger's plan to achieve a projected 10.4% reduction in the General Fund balance by FY 2029 was postponed until January 7, 2026, due to questions regarding aspects of shared governance and attendant decision-making and readiness to vote. A strong objection to the postponement was brought by Board member, Julie Weissmann.

Nancy Hungerford brought forward a recommendation regarding time management of the Public Comment Period and that of other guests. This was especially supported by Student Government Association president Amelia Hampton.

Campus Public Safety Chief, Lisa Rupp, offered a safety report and a recommendation to hold all Board meetings in the present room in the Building 3 Boardroom 216 in consideration of threat assessment, public safety, and crowd control. It was well received and fully supported.

The Board received a **Bias, Discrimination and Harassment Training** including a recommended timeline at the October 15, 2025 work session. Board Culture and Inclusion Assessments were distributed to board members via email on Thursday,

November 6, 2025. A summary of the responses that were received and comments were solicited at the meeting from the Board members. A further 'deep dive' was planned for the March meeting.

Brett Rowlett, LCC Executive Director of External Affairs, presented the first reading of a Board Policy Review. The packet included current versions of each policy as well as redlined versions where revisions are suggested by staff. Each suggested change is accompanied by a rationale to provide context and support for the Board's consideration, which will be revisited at the January 7th, 2026, meeting.

Flore Starchild-Wolf from the Lane Community College Employee Federation, brought forward a list of grievances regarding compensation and benefits for non-faculty staff members.

Adrienne Mitchell, President of the Lane Community College Education Association (LCCEA), made a presentation at the end of the meeting to the four remaining Board members. [Her report](#) detailed salary conversations with the LCC President, compliance with Oregon Local Budget Law, counterproposals from LCCEA bargaining meetings, and the legality of adverse working conditions and intimidation of employees.

At 11:30 p.m., other discussion items and information reports were deferred until the next regular board meeting on January 7th, 2026.

☀️ **Reported by: Morgan Vierheller**

## Eugene City Council

### **December 5, 2025** ([meeting agenda and materials](#))

At a special meeting, the Council **finalized the interview process for City Manager applicants** to replace outgoing Manager, Sarah Medery. The multi-day process (set for early January) includes interviews and meetings with city staff and community stakeholders. The only public interview process will occur on January 13th when the Council meets in a public session.

### **December 8, 2025** (Work session [agenda and materials](#)) (Council meeting [agenda and materials](#))

At a work session, the Council **reviewed a preliminary report from the budget technical advisory Group that consists of area business leaders interested in helping the city with long-term budget shortfall issues**. These 12 people, including the CAO of PeaceHealth, UO VP of budget, and several business and real estate owners, took a deep dive into the City's operations, economic development, and revenue. The group spent several months learning about the City's revenues and expenses, and while they came up with no new

strategies for the City, they better understand the various pinch points that lead to continual cuts.

The group identified **State laws that constrain the City's ability to grow property tax revenue and diversify its revenue base**. With ongoing budget shortfalls, the City will be unable to provide necessary services to maintain livability and build competitive advantages that will allow it to grow. The group listed broad options in a 10-year proposal to find ways to lower operating costs and encourage new economic development that included a focus on minimizing regulations. **They also warned against having any one segment of the community bear more of a tax burden than others**. A lengthier report will be presented in the next few months.

Councilors unanimously voted to set aside \$50,000 (pulled from city reserves) to support nonprofits that help immigrant communities who are impacted by ICE enforcement, particularly in the area of losing household earners to deportation.

The Council reviewed and unanimously passed a supplemental budget that takes into account actual revenue and expenses from June through December.

**Public comment:** More than 40 people signed up to speak. Concerns focused on the impact of ICE on community members, anger about the Amazon distribution warehouse slated for construction near the airport next year, and critique of City-Manager government (following the Flock Security contract and cancellation).

**December 10, 2025** ([agenda meeting and materials](#))

At a work session, the **City Council unanimously approved restructuring the fire department — currently run jointly with Springfield, but operationally managed by separate city budgets — into an intergovernmental agency with a separate board and one budget**.

The details remain to be worked out, but the City Manager recommended representatives on the Board from both Eugene and Springfield and encouraged elected citizen representatives. The Fire Chief would report to the Board. Funding would come from “member fees” from both cities, to be determined by population and call volume. The agency would not have taxing authority. For comparison, Eugene and Springfield operate a Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission that is also an intergovernmental entity. Next steps include negotiating core terms of the agreement with Springfield. An update on the process will occur in three months.

 **Reported by: Rhonda Livesay and Susan Palmer**

**Springfield City Council**

**December 8, 2025** ([meeting video](#))

The Council unanimously passed a motion directing staff to develop a **payroll tax** for future Council deliberation.

The head of the Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission gave a report on the progress they were making on every aspect of metropolitan wastewater service. The information was well received by the Council and the Commission was encouraged to continue their efforts towards modernization.

Following the business meeting, the Council listened to **public testimony** concerning a \$500,000 budget cut from the City Library. There were approximately 100 residents who showed up to speak on behalf of sparing the library from the cut that looms in the future. Sixteen of them testified. The Mayor stated that nothing had been decided yet, but they would take into consideration the large response they have received.

☀️ **Reported by: Jen Allison-Keim**

## **Oakridge City Council**

**December 4, 2025** ([meeting video](#))

City Administrator, James Cleavenger, stated that ordinance 951 is required to approve zoning changes and will be ready for the January meeting. After consulting with relevant officials, he confirmed the City Council can override Planning Commission decisions and recommended continuing the rezoning discussion at the January 15 council meeting.

A motion was unanimously approved to apply for the Oregon State Marine Board's Boating Facility and Waterway Access Grant, aiming to build a small nonmotorized craft launch at Osprey Park. An archaeological survey is required prior to construction. Sean Holt of Holt Adventure volunteered to write the grant application.

The City Administrator was unanimously approved to accept Energy Wise Services' bid for installing solar panels and batteries at the Willamette Activity Center.

☀️ **Reported by: Leslie Heaton**

## **Springfield Public Schools Board of Education**

**December 8, 2025**

Although Board members initially met in Executive Session to review legal advice, they took no official action when they came out of the session.

The General Board meeting began with the oath of office administered to Board Members Jonathan Light and Ken Kohl. The remaining three Board members did not reaffirm their oaths of office.

Sarah Bosch, a community member, spoke during the **Public Comments** period about Division 22 Assurances and missing elementary subjects, a comment was similar to the one she presented November 10, 2025. The Board Chair cut her off, and confused discussion ensued. Ms. Bosch asked, “What is the purpose of public comment when nothing comes of it? ... I just want to know what’s going on? It feels icky when we don’t deal with the hard stuff.” The Board Chair eventually called for a five-minute recess that stretched to ten minutes. During the recess Ms. Bosch read her comment to the audience. A teacher with first name Ryan spoke about his concern that the administration does not seek feedback from its employees.

[Observer note: During the Public Comments period, in this and previous meetings observed, the Board and administration consistently offer no response, comment, explanation, background information, or acknowledgement. The administration and Board are hit and miss about including the Public Comments in the Board packet or on the Board’s webpage. These omissions give the impression of a desire to ignore the public and its concerns.]

In response to an invitation to Board members made by 15 elementary teachers at the November 10th meeting, Board Vice Chair, Amber Langworthy, expressed the intention to schedule a visit by the end of February. Teachers had expressed their desire that Board members visit their classrooms to observe and talk about “invisible labor that causes overwhelm!”

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

## **Eugene 4J School District Budget Committee Meeting**

**December 3, 2025** ([meeting agenda and materials](#))

The Budget meeting was a training session to prepare the Budget Committee for the challenge of **reducing costs for the 2026-27 school year by \$30 Million.**

Leaders from the Coalition of Oregon School Administrators (COSA) made a presentation focused on a review of the Budget Committee’s role. The overall process is as follows:

- The District staff proposes a budget.
- If acceptable, it is approved by a simple majority of the Budget Committee. (After approval of the budget, the Committee has no further oversight authority.)
- The Board adopts the approved budget by 6/30/26.

The Committee’s role is limited to higher-level budget information (rather than detailed information). However, COSA recommended that the Committee should look closely at the underlying assumptions driving the proposed budget.

By Oregon law, the Budget Committee may not approve a budget deficit. They may approve a budget with recommendations for what to do if actual funding is higher or



lower than projected. The Budget Committee approves appropriation of spending at a functional level (which includes instruction, support services, and the amount of the ending fund balance), but not at a program level. Throughout the process, COSA advised, the Committee should use 4J's Core Values and Budget priorities to guide decision making.

Ninety percent of the 4J budget is for personnel, so staffing reductions will be unavoidable. In developing a Budget proposal, to the extent possible, the District's goal is to protect direct student services. For this reason, they will work on reductions in 3 phases.

- Phase 1: Reductions in MAPS staff (non-instructional managers, administrators, professionals, and supervisors) and non-personnel services.
- Phase 2: Programmatic reductions and/or school closures.
- Phase 3: Classroom reductions.

[Observer comment. COSA representatives were so impressed by 4J's Core Values, Budget priorities and the budget approach developed by Superintendent Mickelson that they have been sharing it with other districts facing budget challenges.]

COSA representatives offered background on the various sources of school funding in Oregon, including the State General Fund, Federal funds, and school bonds. There is some risk that the State funding may drop below current expectations. If that happens, the State may be able to make up the shortfall out of the Oregon Education Reserve fund (from lottery funds) and/or the Oregon Rainy Day fund. After the COSA presentation, the finance staff presented details about the state's Equalization formula used to distribute General Fund money between the school districts in the state, local option revenue, and special revenue funds.

## Eugene 4J School District Board Meeting

**December 10, 2025**

The Board meeting focused almost entirely on the projected \$30M reductions to General Fund spending for the 2026-27 budget. Superintendent Mickelson reported on the \$2.3 M total Phase I reductions. The Board approved Mickelson's request to cut up to 32 MAPS employees. In January and February, she will present proposed Phase 2 and 3 reductions for Board approval.

During **Employee Comments**, Lisa Jenkins-Easton, President of Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA), handed out materials to the Board and said since 2021, 4J has projected large general fund deficits. She said, "Yet every year without exception, the District has ended with millions of dollars still on the table. For example, in 2024 4J projected a \$42M deficit. Instead, it finished the year with an \$8M surplus. They were off by \$50M." She went on to question whether to trust that things are as bad as the District says. Jenkins-Easton stated that the district holds far more in reserves than the minimum



required and should not fail to use available funds. In addition, she noted OSEA has experienced delays and disrespect and that “trust has been fractured.”

Maya Rabasa asked staff to speak to this pattern. Matt Brown, the Finance Director, said that since 2022 4J has been much closer to projections. He noted that the beginning fund balance for 2025-26 was \$700K off from plan, but he is not sure where OSEA’s numbers for 2024 came from and will need to review them.

Separately, the Board resolved to reduce reserve requirements from 8% (\$20.3M) to 5% (\$12.7M). This should free up \$7.6M, but the Board gave Mickelson guidance to work toward a \$30M reduction this year anyway.

In **Public Comments**, many spoke to emphasize the value of Family School. Joey Carlson argued that cutting Family School would not make financial sense. Currently, he said, the Family School’s annual costs exceed the revenues it generates by \$500,000. If the District would allow Family School to co-locate with another school, it would save \$221,000 per year. With a more centrally located building they could add more students, and with just 15 more students they would break even. Furthermore, the District would lose \$1.2M if it closed the School because many students have indicated they would leave the District, far outweighing the \$500K gap.

A Student Board member emphasized the importance of the Eugene Online Academy and the need to support it through the budget process.

Several students and parents were unhappy because the Sheldon Color Guard’s winter season is unfunded. The Sheldon Student Board representative noted that the team is the defending champion of their division, and while they aren’t an OSAA sport, they are just as hard-working and disciplined.

 **Reported by: Lenice Shaw**

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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](mailto:action@lwvlc.com)) or Beatrice McKenzie ([beatricem@lwvlc.org](mailto: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.