

“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

**January 13, 2026** [[meeting agenda and materials](#); [webcast recording](#)]

The Board voted to appoint Dave Hunter to the **Blue River Water District Board of Directors**. Commissioner Buch reported that a second resignation has occurred but that the board could function and fill the final vacancy with the newly appointed director.

The Board unanimously approved a contract for conceptual design of the **Lane Stabilization Center**.

Lorren Blythe, Director of Operations and Cathy Soutar, Capital Planning Supervisor outlined recent progress on the Lane Stabilization Center, including the purchase of a 17-acre parcel in Springfield, 5.88 acres of which will be sold to Peace Health for a 96 bed psychiatric hospital and the annexation of the property to Springfield since it is currently outside the city limits. The contract with TVA Architects includes conceptual design of the stabilization center, cost estimations for site development and construction, community engagement, schematic design, bidding and permitting, and oversight of the design during construction. There will be an estimated timeline once a general contractor has been identified that will include a full presentation to the Board in early February and quarterly updates. Commissioner Trieger emphasized the important role of Lane County in supporting economic development, including job creation with family-supporting wages in the community for this major construction project.

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

**Public Comments** addressed criticism of Commissioner Loveall, MLK Day, and the vacancy on the Blue River Water District Board. One commenter stated Commissioner Loveall ignored the separation of church and state expected of public entities in his recent State of the County report. He requested that the Board of Commissioners conduct a formal review of Loveall's conduct. Another commenter spoke about the close relationship between UO president Arthur Flemming, 1961-68, and Martin Luther King, Jr. A third speaker asked that the vacancy of the Blue River Water District Board be filled so that a quorum would exist, allowing the board to function, pay bills and perform the actions of the board.

 Reported by: Nancy Mills

## Lane Community College Board of Education

January 7, 2025 [[meeting agenda and materials](#); [webcast recording](#)]

Overall the meeting was more civil, professional, and productive than previous meetings. The board approved two major action items.

### Decisions on Action Items:

Approval of a 3-Year Mitigation Plan to **restore LCC's ending fund balance (EFB)** to 10% of the General Fund over a three-year period, which is required by the Board's own policy (BP 6230).

Currently the EFB is projected to be 7.45% at the end of this year. It should be noted that LCC has not met the 10% requirement in BP 6230 in over a decade. A majority of the Board (6-1) voted for the motion to adopt the plan based on the recommendation of the ad hoc committee created at a special work session on December 17 to evaluate the budget projections for revenues and expenditures on which the plan is based. Committee members Mulholland, Rust, and Folsnag met with the President and LCC's financial team to clarify and ultimately accept the plan's budget assumptions. The key component of the 3-year plan is an **\$8 million spending reduction over the next three years**. It is important to note that the plan is a framework and not a proposal for specific cuts. Moreover, it is meant to be flexible should revenue and expenditure projections change either positively or negatively. Specific proposals for cuts each year will be developed by the administration with the LCC budget committee and brought to the Board for discussion and approval.

Approval of "**budget parameters**" which will guide the development of the 2026-27 Annual Budget.

Agreeing on these parameters will get the Board and the administration on the same page, establishing the roles of the Board, budget committee, President and administration in developing the Annual Budget as well outlining which variables

impacting revenue and expenditures are controllable by the college (tuition, for example) and those which are not (state funding cuts, for example). These parameters are intended to act as a road map and schedule for the development of the budget and hopefully will inform the difficult process of making cuts.

During **Public Comments**, 20 speakers spoke on three topics:

- Disproportionately negative budget impacts on historically marginalized students by members of the Native American Student Association (NASA) due to decision to not fill vacant positions.
- Negative budget impacts on the Dance Program due to the decision not to hire a new program director after the retirement of the former director.
- Lack of progress in ongoing LCCEA contract negotiations.

 **Reported by: Anne Delaney**

## **Eugene City Council**

**January 13, 2025** [[webcast recording](#)]

**State of the City address by Mayor Kaarin Knudson:** In an hourlong program at a packed Hult Center, Mayor Knudson honored several community members for public service, acknowledged the challenges of 2025, and looked forward to beginning new projects in the coming year.

The mayor described the previous year as “surreal, heartbreaking, unjust, unfair, and inexplicably unmoored” in reference to actions by the federal government. “Closer to home,” she said, “I would describe this year as resourceful, courageous, and deeply caring ... a community that is determined and resolute. In the face of chaos, we have been steady, in the face of dehumanization, we celebrate our diversity with joy. In the face of disorientation we hold focus and in darkness we stand together to give light and find the way. We choose hope and we choose to share it.”

Knudson looked to the future: re-imagining the Highway 99 corridor as “a safer greener multimodal boulevard, not a place where people are dying when they cross the street. ... our expectations for it will change the moment we stop calling it a highway, and start treating it as a public realm designed to safely connect community.”

**January 13, 2025** [[webcast recording](#)]

In a **Special Meeting**, the City Council **interviewed the three finalists for the city manager position:** Martha Bennett, City Manager of Lake Oswego; Jenny Haruyama, City Manager of Beaverton, Oregon; Matt Rodrigues, City Manager Pro Tem of Eugene, Oregon. The Councilors each asked previously assigned questions to each of the applicants and also had some less rehearsed exchanges. Among the questions the applicants faced: Their positions/opinions on the use of license plate recognition systems

like the Flock cameras, and how they manage the growing use and availability of AI among city staff. Councilors have since chosen to hire Jenny Haruyama.

**January 14, 2025** [[meeting agenda and materials](#)]

In a Work session on **the library levy that will be on the May ballot**, Councilors voted to support a slight increase in the levy that would add one FTE position and maintain current services. They liked a proposal that would add vending kiosks in underserved areas, but cost more. A recent poll showed less community support for the most expensive option. Library staff will estimate costs for a single pilot kiosk in the Churchill area for further consideration.

**January 20, 2025** [[webcast recording](#)]

Two **Public hearings** concerned the **University of Oregon's new housing plans for the Fairmont neighborhood** and the **city's proposal to prevent donations from vehicles in active lanes to people on the street**.

UO's housing plan would add 900 dorm beds and 100 family housing units in six years. About a dozen members of the Fairmont Neighborhood Association raised a raft of objections including the failure to deal with appropriate setbacks between multistory buildings and single family homes, pushing traffic mitigation studies to an unclear future date, and altering zoning designations that have long been in place. Neighborhood Association Members reminded the Council, which will vote on the planning commission's recommendation in mid-February, that the Association has successfully altered University expansion in the past via appeals to the State Land Use Board and won't shy away from the expense of doing it again. They requested convening a mediated group involving the City, the University, and neighborhood members to improve the proposed developments. The Council voted to keep the record open for additional comments for three weeks before making a decision on the proposal in March.

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

**Springfield City Council**

**January 7, 2025**

The Council listened to three presentations during the **Work Session**. No decisions were made by the Council on these issues.

1. An overview of the 2025 city audit which found that goals were met, money was spent correctly, and records were well kept.
2. A presentation about changing the Municipal Court to a Court of Record. The difference between these is the length of time the court maintains records. As a

Court of Record, documents and proceedings are kept, making them easier to use in an appeal.

3. A lengthy presentation about Regional Wastewater issues and how it will include Cresswell, Goshen, Eugene, and possibly Junction City.

During the Regular Session, the Council heard from a community member reminding them about the library funding tax issue and the Council's lack of supportive response to all of the community members that reported ICE abuse around Springfield before the holidays. The Mayor asked the City Manager to draft a proper response to be released to the community.

### January 20, 2025

The Springfield City Council Business Meeting focused on a follow-up report by the committee developing plans for a **combined Eugene-Springfield fire and safety department**. Some elements are still to be determined such as governance and financial issues.

During the Open Meeting, three issues were presented to the Council:

1. The local Fire Department Union leader stated that **the Union supported the new plans for a combined Eugene-Springfield Fire and Safety department**.
2. Two citizens questioned the lengthy timeline on filling the currently vacant Ward Four Council Seat. It appeared that the Council would try to shorten the process, if possible.
3. The City Housing Department stated that the property on Main and 16th would be developed by the Cornerstone Community Housing Organization as a forty unit housing development very much like the one they developed on 16th and Q St. The Board said they were pleased to work with Cornerstone to once again provide more housing for low income families.

 Reported by: Jennifer Allison-Keim

### Springfield Public Schools Board of Education

### January 12, 2025

The Board passed (3-2) a **resolution regarding reduction in force (RIF) of Springfield teachers** to cut teaching staff mid-year. Voting in favor of the resolution were Board members Heather Quaas-Ansa, Ken Kohl, and Nicole DeGraff. Voting against the cuts were Board members Jonathan Light and Amber Langworthy. Langworthy expressed concern (voiced also during Public Comments) about the lack of transparency in the process leading up to the vote. She stated, moreover, that the Board had only received the proposed RIF resolution four days earlier.

The vote followed a presentation of the dates of communications regarding staff reductions by Chief Operations Officer Brett Yancey. The information included dates of General Board Meetings, Executive Sessions, and other forms of communication regarding staff reductions. Also mentioned were a 0% Cost of Living (COLA) and a 3.75% increase in pay built into the adopted general budget for 2025-2026. In Summer 2025 the Oregon School Employees Association reached tentative agreements for a 4.15% COLA but accompanied by reductions of teaching staff through attrition prior to the start of the school year. Springfield Administrators and Confidential Council agreed to a 2.7% COLA also accompanied by staffing reductions through attrition. There has been no agreement with the Springfield Education Association (SEA).

### Summary of Public Comments

- A request for a more collaborative approach to decision making to include involvement with teachers; there is toxicity at the administrative level.
- Several requests to implement other less disruptive cost-cutting measures besides eliminating teaching positions which directly impact students and their learning.
- The budget process has not been transparent and has the appearance of retaliation against teachers and their union.
- Questioning why the cuts are being made mid-year.
- Losing teachers leads to overcrowded classrooms, which leads to behavior problems, which leads to bullying, which leads to declining enrollment, which leads to budget shortfalls.

[Observer Note: It is unclear what information the Board used to make its decision to focus specifically on teacher reductions. For example, what consideration was given to eliminate positions at other levels of the school system among administrative, classified, and certified personnel? What other cost-saving moves were considered? Why are teachers being eliminated in the middle of the year? Some media outlets and knowledgeable outsiders suggest the RIF and its timing are a manufactured crisis and a threat during negotiations with the SEA.]

👤 Reported by: Kim Weston and Patty Sandoz

### Eugene 4J Schools Board of Education

January 7, 2025 [[agenda and meeting materials](#); [webcast recording](#)]

Superintendent Mickelson reviewed the \$2.3 Million Phase I reductions already made in the **2026-27 Budget**, then presented the \$18 Million Phase II planned reductions. These include staff reductions of **25 FTE from MAPS** (Non-instructional Managers, Administrators, Professionals and Supervisors) personnel and **cuts to the following programs**:

- Credit Retrieval & Online Programs: End the middle school Eugene Online Academy (EOA) and scale back Extended Day and EOA at high schools.

- Academic Supports/Extracurricular: Scale back the AVID (college and career readiness) program to serve only high school students. No longer supplement the state-funded BEST (afterschool) program. Scale back summer school programs and eliminate enrichment programs, but retain services for children who need additional academic support.
- OSAA Athletics reclassification eliminates regular long-distance travel.
- Decentralize the Center for Applied Learning and Community Impact, housing the 4J's career technical education programs at individual high schools.
- Nutrition Services & Catering: Reduce the General Fund transfer by \$2.4 Million to \$1.5 Million (similar to other districts), with part of the savings to come from pausing the production kitchen and catering services.
- Administrative Consolidation: Leverage retirements at lower enrollment sites to align staffing to enrollment levels.
- Staff Support: Pause centrally managed mentorship and educator pathways programs, reduce instructional coaching programs, and conclude the district-level conflict resolution functions.

Dr. Mickelson will present a resolution for the Board to approve Phase II changes by January 14.

Phase III building-based reduction levels and proposed changes to Family School will be presented January 21 for approval February 4. These reductions will include programmatic changes to Family School, middle school bell-schedule changes, and a preview of building and classroom-based staffing reductions aligned to the projected reduction in student enrollment.

Oregon School Employees Association (**OSEA**) **alleged violations of HB2016** (the Public Employee Protection Act). Lisa Jenkins-Easton, president of the local OSEA said that 4J is not in compliance with HB2016 because they are not reimbursing OSEA for her time working with employees. HB2016 mandates various protections including that public employers provide paid time for union representatives to meet with new employees. The union has made a settlement offer and asked that the Board step in to help resolve it.

Board member Maya Rabasa asked that the Board be provided with information regarding the temporary agreement, specifically, (1) whether 4J is in compliance with HB2016 and, if not, will the proposed contract bring it into compliance; and (2) what the cost of the contract will be over the next three years. Board member Jenny Jonak also asked for information on what is, and is not, permitted under HB2016.

Review of Legislative Committee Activities: The Committee will focus on protecting funding through action related to the following issues:

- Advocating for no unfunded mandates.
- The Accountability Bill, in particular the financial component and the proposed requirements. They will advocate slowing down the process and will try to get information about how the bill will be implemented.
- Oregon Public Employees Retirement System.

 Reported by: Lenice Shaw

## Lane Transit District Board of Directors

January 15, 2025

**Strategic Planning Committee Meeting.** The committee includes two LTD Board members plus two community members (including representatives from business groups and schools) plus the Eugene mayor and a Springfield city councilor.

With input from the Area Commission on Transportation, LTD will submit **priorities for its Capital Investment Plan** to ODOT by the end of May 2026.

LTD continues a major program to inventory and **assess bus stops in terms of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**. Over 1,000 bus stops in Lane County need evaluating. A consultant report is due in March 2026. Construction of new, ADA-compliant stops may begin in 2027.

The Exploring Transportation Network **pilot program subsidizes companies like Uber or Lyft** to transport customers in areas where LTD has cut eliminated routes, such as in Laurel Valley. “Transportation disadvantaged” clients would pay lower rates for this service.

Through the “Audible Announcement Pilot” program, LTD is now compliant with the ADA minimum audibility requirement to announce major stops. LTD wants to try a pilot program to announce all stops. LTD will roll out this pilot program gradually over LTD routes.

 Reported by: Alice Davenport

## Oakridge City Council

January 15, 2025 [[agenda and meeting materials](#); [webcast recording](#)]

**Public comments** on the Sasquatch Summer Festival lasted an hour, with support offered by local residents and visitors from Colorado and Washington. Concerns arose regarding perceived partiality at the Rural Tourism Marketing Program Committee meeting, which recommended no funding. Council members discussed funding for both the Bus Fair and

the Sasquatch Festival, noting possible bias in decision-making. Both events were awarded a portion of the grant money requested.

City Administrator James Cleavenger announced that the **City Planner resigned** on January 7, 2026. Jude Anderson will serve as Interim City Planner. Three candidates have already applied for the vacant position.

The Continued Public Hearing on 25-ZC-001 Part 2, Request #4 for rezoning certain Oakridge properties to R-2 and R-3 and amending the Zoning Map has been rescheduled for the February 5 Council Meeting due to the resignation of the previous Planner, which prevented further work on this project.

 **Reported by: Leslie Heaton**

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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.