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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

March 17, 2026 [[meeting agenda and materials](#); [webcast](#)]

Public Comments included a complaint about lack of county road maintenance at a resident’s home address and a complaint about the Board's actions “censoring our godly commissioner.”

Commissioners put off until May a decision to pass an ordinance putting forth new standards for housing in residential areas near natural areas. Planning staff from Public Works presented a plan that would **allow for continued compact urban growth and also housing outside the Urban Growth Boundary** without causing harm to natural areas (shorelands, beaches, greenways, riparian areas, etc.). Staff had worked with LCOG and stakeholders to produce the plan. Commissioners Farr and Loveall were not ready to pass the ordinance at the current meeting. Farr proposed a timeline be established for further discussion among all parties, followed by a vote in May 2026. Commissioners Trieger and Buch thought plenty of time had already been allocated and that the plan should be voted on and passed at this meeting. The vote was 3-2 (Farr, Loveall, Ceniga in favor of a timeline and further discussion, Trieger and Buch opposed).

County Commissioners unanimously agreed to **allow Lane County to continue to be a Cooperating Agency with Bureau of Lane Management (BLM)**. But by a vote of 3-2, Commissioners voted to keep Commissioner Loveall as sole representative for Lane County in the Association of Oregon and California Counties’ discussions with BLM. BLM had posted a notice in February 2026 to revise management plans for 2.5 million acres of Oregon & California lands in 17 western Oregon counties. In so doing, the Trump

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

Administration hopes to **open up millions of acres of forestland** for timber production. The question before the County Commissioners was whether county policy staff should represent Lane County in the upcoming revision work with BLM. This would be in addition to Commissioner Dave Loveall, who sits on the AOCC Board. The vote allowed Commissioner Loveall to remain as the sole representative of Lane County in the planning process.

Commissioners brought up several news items in the business section of the meeting. Commissioner Farr congratulated Everyone's Village for great work being done there. Volunteers in Medicine are present there. Kalapuya High School has a housing unit that they built there, as well.

Commissioner Triege brought up three news items related to healthcare in Lane County. Trillium is having to absorb thousands of Oregon Health Plan (Medicaid) recipients due to Pacific Source's exit. PeaceHealth Emergency has contracted with a medical group from outside of Oregon after 35 years of using a local entity. The Behavioral Health Stabilization Center is more important now than it has ever been.

Commissioner Farr requested the County Administrator fill a position that has not been filled in more than eight years, the County Performance Auditor. County Administrator Mokrohisky explained that the County has hired out this work to consultants with expertise in whichever department is being audited. An internal position would have just general knowledge on how to audit various departments. Mokrohisky suggested he return to Commissioners with an explanation of the position and further discussion.

March 31, 2026 [[meeting agenda and materials](#); [webcast](#)]

The majority of the Public Comments concerned the **cancellation by the County of the contract with Riverview Center for Growth**, which handles youth crisis intervention. The service is scheduled to end on April 30.

Commissioners approved expansion of the Land Banking Program Development Task Force to 13 members to take advantage of the quality and extent of expertise among applicants to the task force. The task force will identify properties in the County that may have been abandoned to address housing affordability within the county.

The major discussion involved **the impacts of waste exportation on the public solid waste management system and options available to mitigate risk to public services**. Basically, the plan for waste management includes a System Benefit Fee (SBF) based on the weight of any municipal solid waste generated inside Lane County. When a load of waste is received at the Short Mountain landfill, the bill for the load includes the SBF. The SBF pays for public services associated with waste disposal, such as the 15 transfer stations around Lane County which accept hazardous waste, handle recycling, and assist in waste reduction. These transfer stations can be used by any Lane County resident and are of particular importance to rural areas that don't have regular waste collection services.

Sanipac, which handles waste disposal in Springfield, was acquired in 2009 by Waste Connections, Inc, a Texas based company which focuses on entering smaller municipalities with less competition. Recently, **Sanipac/Waste Connections in Springfield decided to transport the waste to the Dry Creek landfill near Medford**, bypassing the Short Mountain landfill and payment of the SBF. Consequently, the County has lost revenue because Springfield waste is no longer put in the Short Mountain Landfill; however, public services such as transfer stations throughout the County still need support. In addition to lost revenue, energy costs are increased by driving multiple tractor-trailer loads of Springfield waste for 3 hours through mountain passes to the Dry Lake landfill, a site which has much greater levels of methane emissions.

Because the unincorporated areas of Lane County are benefiting from the public services revenues from the SBF, Lane County wants to work with Waste Connections on returning the waste to the Short Mountain landfill. To identify a mutually beneficial solution, County officials asked for and received approval from the Commission to further investigate the issue, including options such as the following: (a) requesting an audit of those services; (b) exploring franchising waste hauling in the unincorporated areas where zones are created for haulers to collect commercial or residential waste, often with some kind of revenue sharing between the unincorporated areas and the hauler; and (c) examining control of the flow of waste.

☀️ **Reported by: Judy Leahy and Nancy Mills**

Eugene City Council

March 11, 2026 [[meeting agenda and webcast](#)]

In a Work Session, the Council reviewed a **comparative analysis of Eugene against five similar cities: Salem, Bend, Boise, Fort Collins, and Spokane**. The demographic and financial information is part of the Technical Advisory Group's deep dive into the City's ongoing budget problems and will help inform the Council and the new City Manager during the upcoming budget cycle. Ongoing work sessions on the topic will run through July.

On demographics:

Eugene has **fewer children and fewer working-age residents (25-44)** than the comparison cities. Younger households in Eugene earn less than their counterparts elsewhere, and 52 percent of Eugene residents rent rather than own – the highest share in the group. Eugene also has higher population density, higher homelessness rates (consistent with Oregon's statewide challenge), and more cost-burdened renters.

Eugene is the only city in the group where **population growth has outpaced regional job growth** since 1991. Job growth of 33 percent over that period trails

far behind Bend (143 percent), Boise (the highest), Fort Collins (96 percent), Salem (60 percent), and Spokane (50 percent).

On financials:

Eugene operates more departments than any other city in the group: police, fire, 911 dispatch, parks, libraries, an airport, municipal court, and streets. Despite that breadth of responsibility, Eugene spends less per capita than all the comparison cities.

Eugene ranked 32nd out of 148 cities in a WalletHub "best managed cities" study – in the **top fifth nationally**.

On constraints:

Oregon's property tax system is significantly more restrictive than those in the other states studied, combining rate limitations, growth caps, and the freeze of assessed values at 1997 levels. **Eugene is less reliant on property taxes than Salem or Bend thanks to its community safety payroll tax, but Oregon cities generally lack the sales tax and excise tax options available to cities in Washington, Colorado, and Idaho.**

Councilor Zelenka warned that the data shouldn't drive policy decisions on its own. Councilors Clark and Groves asked for more analysis of surrounding communities like Springfield, noting that young families may be moving to neighboring cities while still using Eugene's services. Councilor Keating raised questions about why Bend is booming and whether Eugene should explore consumption-based taxes. Councilor Yeh urged a regional rather than competitive mindset toward neighboring cities.

 **Reported by: Susan Palmer**

Oakridge City Council

March 19, 2026 [[meeting agenda and materials](#); [webcast](#)]

After an interview process with the Mayor and City Councilors, **Spencer Newell was appointed to the Oakridge City Council**. His term starts April 2, 2026, and ends later that year, when the seat will be up for election in November.

Melody Cornelius, the City's Financial Officer, announced the completion of the fiscal year 2023–2024 audit. Andrew Sherwood, CPA and Sorren's Senior Manager, summarized the online audit. He reported one deficiency: a weakness in internal controls for cash, capital assets, and long-term debt reporting.

The Diamond View Park Community Garden will not open as planned in Spring 2026. To meet gardening needs this year, the City Council will reopen the Salmon Creek

Community Garden. The Community Garden Handbook now includes higher plot fees to offset rising water and labor costs. Most current gardeners with an Oregon Health Plan or Oregon Trail Card qualify for a 50% fee reduction, according to City Administrator James Cleavenger.

After 9 years, WeRSharp closed its 501(c)(3) charity due to insufficient funding and a shortage of volunteers. (The charity distributed food, hot meals, clothing, and emergency supplies to residents of Oakridge, Hemlock, and Westfir.) With a couple of exceptions, most of the services previously offered by WeRSharp will no longer be available in Oakridge. The City acquired the supplies for the warming center and Mayor Cutchen asked the City Administrator if the center will be available in the winter of 2026. Mr. Jackson of SELAH expressed interest in helping with the warming center.

The Friday Food Box program now operates under Sending Everybody Love and Hope (SELAH). SELAH's Aaron Jackson asked the City Council to let them use Greenwaters Park for free through May 22, as WeRSharp did. When asked about funding, Mr. Jackson said they need gas money and are seeking donation options.

City Administrator Cleavenger is seeking clarification and more information from the Council regarding the formation and structure of the Transportation System Plan (TSP) working group. This group will collaborate with the Oregon Department of Transportation to recommend **upgrades along Highway 58**. The working group will present its findings and recommendations to the City Council for consideration as an amendment or update to the existing 2020 TSP. Mayor Cutchen says the City Administrator can approve the people on the committee.

 **Reported by: Leslie Heaton**

Lane Transit District Board of Directors

March 18, 2026

Highlights from a very productive Board meeting include the following:

1. March 18 is National Transit Employee Appreciation Day. A "Hero Award" was given to an employee who issued Narcan to a person at Eugene station and saved that person's life.
2. EmX ridership went down slightly but revenue increased. LTD's conclusion is that the program to encourage fare payment is working. More riders are now using the new touchpass system. The CEO also suggested that fewer fare evaders are trying to ride EmX.
3. Pulse Group, an LTD contractor, reported on plans to develop a leadership development program for LTD and its employees. There were two important takeaways: LTD employees say that "leadership seminars" are a waste of money. Also, per Pulse Group, LTD organization has good morale, and employees feel safe

sharing opinions and suggestions with chain of command. A clear path to leadership positions within LTD will help attract and retain employees.

4. Legislative Update: LTD has an energetic lobbying team in Salem that is closely following transit funding issues and pending bills.
5. Bus Advertising Policy: LTD is revisiting bus ads as a possible revenue stream. (LTD stopped bus advertising several years ago because “content neutral” advertising is difficult to enforce.) If the LTD goes forward with creating a new policy, future advertising partners will need clear guidance to avoid inappropriate ads. In addition to content neutrality, ads will need to take into account products with age restrictions. For example, regarding possible ads for firearms or alcohol, minors cannot purchase guns or alcohol. But what about promoting gun or hunting safety courses? Or promoting responsible alcohol sales and use?

The Board requested more information about the draft advertising policy.

The Board approved a resolution to enter into a contract with New Flyer of America to replace three 60-foot fixed route buses and seven 60-foot EmX buses.

The Board approved a resolution to enter into a contract with Oregon Dept. of Human Services to provide non-medical transport services.

 **Reported by: Alice Davenport**

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, Springfield City Council, Eugene 4J School District, Springfield School District, Eugene Water and Electricity Board, and Lane Transit District. To keep you informed, we will distribute their reports by email twice 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, President (president@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.