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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

[April 7, 2026 \[Full meeting agenda; webcast recording\]](#)

Public Comments: Two commenters made supportive statements regarding the Lane County Equity Program Advisory Board. One commenter voiced concern about a land use appeal that has been pending for a long time. The final commenter, **Ruben Garcia**, started out complaining to the Board about the recent increase in Clean Lane fees, but veered to criticizing **Commissioner Laurie Trieger** for rebuffing him at a recent social gathering: “...You just blew up at me! You just started screaming at me: ‘Don't you touch me! Don't you ever touch me!’ What did I do to deserve that, Laurie?” Commissioner Trieger, obviously taken aback, responded later in the meeting. (See below)

The Commissioners approved two replacement orders by a vote of 3 (Farr, Loveall, Ceniga) to 2 (Buch, Trieger). The orders were written by Counsel Rob Bovett at the request of Commissioner Pat Farr, who explained his reasons for requesting new public hearings before the Board of Commissioners: (1) The matters in the two “land use” cases have generated much public comment. (2) These two cases may well serve as “test cases” in the appellate process. The Board considered replacement ORDER NO: 26-04-07-02_ In the Matter of Electing Whether to Conduct an On-the-Record Hearing to Review the Hearings Official's Decision Affirming the Planning Director's Denial of Three Legal Lot Verifications for Three Properties and replacement ORDER NO: 26-04-07-03_ In the Matter of Electing Whether to Conduct an On-the-Record Hearing to Review the Hearing Official's Denial of a Non-Farm Dwelling Proposal in the Exclusive Farm Use Zone. A public hearing before the Board will be held May 5, 2026, for the first order and May 12, 2026, for the second.

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

Commissioner Laurie Trieger requested a few minutes to respond to Ruben Garcia's public comment. Commissioner Trieger stated: "Mr. Garcia, and forgive me in advance if I cannot contain my emotions, I have held in for 30 years the fact that you sexually harassed me when I worked for your company. People in this organization have heard me talk about cleaning office buildings at night, waiting tables, working in a number of different, low-wage jobs when my family was young and we struggled....You were one of those employers, Sir, and I have never stated in public that particular fact.... And when you came up to me, presuming it was okay to hug me, and I stood back and said, "You do not have permission to touch me!" and that offended you?" Trieger went on: "I am not responding today for myself, personally. I am responding today for every woman, in this organization and in this community, who has had to put up with the kind of behavior that I have had to put up with, not only 30 years ago as a low-wage employee, but as an elected official, who dared as an elected official woman to reject the presumption that I should be hugged by a man when I didn't want to be. For him to come and give public comment, that is a problem and I could not let that stand without comment. I have so much more to say, but I will leave it there." (Commissioner Trieger's complete statement starts at 46:11 and runs to 49:55 in the webcast.)

Shayna Higashi, Specialized Program Analyst, and Darci Standefer, Equity Program Advisory Board Member, presented a detailed report on the **Equity Program recommendations on fostering equity through civic participation** (per Board assignment, dated 5/11/25). Higashi explained the efforts of the Advisory Board to recruit, assign, and retain volunteer candidates who may otherwise have been unaware of opportunities to actively participate on advisory committees, boards, commissions, and task forces throughout Lane County. The report provides insight into challenges and recommends ways that Lane County government can foster meaningful community engagement, increase civic participation, and foster positive relationships with community organizations. (The full report starts on page 83 of the Full Agenda.) Commissioner Farr voiced support for the Board's recommendations. Commissioner Trieger stated: "I really appreciate how...the recommendations you have made can help Lane County be part of helping foster a more integrated ecosystem." Commissioner Buch said that the Advisory Board's work showed "how we can become more inclusive in our committees and how we can get more participation from different populations."

Eve Gray, **Director of Lane County Health and Human Services** informed the Board about progress in ongoing discussions between Lane County Health and Human Services and Riverview Hospital related to the ongoing needs of the **Youth Mobile Crisis services** and recent funding challenges related to the decreasing flexibility of the funding for certain programs due to statutory requirements. Director Gray explained that the recently approved County Financial Assistance Agreement with the Oregon Health Authority will fund services for forensic populations (individuals involved with the legal system) and other behavioral health safety net services and use Lane County staffing.

Following a brief recess, the Board reconvened for a **Work Session on the possibility of creating a local preference policy for the Lane County procurement process** (per Board

assignment, dated 07/22/2025). Shawn Hubbell, Lane County Procurement Manager, and Emily Vario, Assistant County Counsel, collaborated on a short presentation that expounded on the current procurement preferences allowed under the Oregon Contracting Code, what preferences in Lane County procurement policies already apply (or could potentially apply), current local vendor statistics (46% of current vendors are local; 55% of spending was local in 2025), the definition of “local” (that is, payments are sent to an address in Lane County), the process of creating and implementing a preference policy, and advantages and disadvantages of such a policy. Commissioner Buch expressed a readiness to move forward with the preference policy project, but the majority of the Board took a “pause and monitor” stance. Mr. Hubbell expressed gratitude for having been given the assignment and stated that he will continue to monitor the level of “local purchasing” by the Lane County government.

April 14, 2026 [[meeting agenda and materials](#); [webcast](#)]

Commissioners discussed and unanimously approved an amount not to exceed \$14M for an upgrade of mechanical equipment for the Lane County Public Service Building Central Plant. The building was constructed in 1977 and shares heating and cooling services with the Courthouse and Harris Hall. Piper Sandler and Company, an American multinational investment bank and financial services company, provided the analysis of the cost of selling bonds to fund the project. The County, because of careful financial management, has a AA1 bond rating, indicating excellent financial health. This makes the sale of bonds a smaller risk, resulting in reduced costs for the funding.

Of note in the discussion was the **appreciation of the financial management of the County**, particularly since the arrival of County Administrator Steve Mokrohisky in 2014.

Commissioners turned to the seventh reading of the adoption of **clear and objective standards for housing in residential areas**. In order to increase the production of desperately needed housing, passage of Senate Bill (SB) 1051 prohibited cities from denying applications for housing developments within Urban Growth Boundaries, provided those applications complied with “clear and objective standards, including but not limited to clear and objective design standards contained in the county comprehensive plan or land use regulations.” The situation is complicated because, while the mandate for clear and objective requirements applies to the rural non-resource lands and areas zoned for rural residential use in the County, some of this land may lie in **overlay zones**, such as the Coastal Overlay Zones and the Greenway and Riparian zones, which are governed by other regulations. Overlay zones establish additional regulations beyond the base zone to address specific community objectives, such as protection of environmentally sensitive areas. Coastal overlay zones are applied to specific, environmentally sensitive, or hazardous coastal areas in unincorporated Lane County. Greenway zones, primarily governed by the Willamette River Greenway Plan, consist of designated, protected lands along the river meant to protect natural, scenic, and recreational resources. Riparian zones, especially along the McKenzie and Willamette rivers, protect water quality and wildlife, requiring permits for vegetation removal or

development. Development within these areas requires special permits to ensure compatibility. Writing code language that defines clear and objective requirements is challenging when including language from the overlay zones that is itself not clear and objective. These issues have extended the amount of time required to attempt to resolve the issues and have delayed the creation of housing. There is also a very real cost in terms of staff time. There was reluctance on the part of some of the Commissioners to adopt language that may very well be subject to legal challenges.

The commission voted unanimously to approve the seventh reading and set an eighth reading for May 5, 2026, although there was reluctance to delay approval on the part of some of the commissioners. However, the view of staff was that the delay of several weeks would not cause greater harm to potential builders than the length of the process to date had already caused.

 **Reported by: Tom Rigell and Nancy Mills**

Lane Community College Board of Education

March 31, 2026

At the March 18, 2026, Board of Education Work Session, the Administration had proposed **\$4.2M in specific budget cuts for FY2027** to the Board for discussion. The proposed cuts impact all aspects of the College, but attempt to minimize the direct impact on students. Proposed cuts are spread across the College as follows: Operations (17.0 FTE), Support Services (3.5 FTE) and Academic Programs (1.0). The Work Session was the first opportunity for the Board and the public to hear the specific recommendations of the Administration, and per standard protocol, there was no opportunity for public comment. So, the March 31, 2026 Board meeting was the first opportunity for the Board to hear Public Comment on the Administration's proposals.

For over 75 minutes, the Board heard arguments against all of the proposed cuts, but predominantly over the **suspension of the Health Information Management (HIM) and Criminal Justice (CJ)** academic programs. Current students, alumni, and faculty spoke passionately of the value of the HIM and CJ programs. In addition, staff and union representatives spoke against the disproportionate cuts on operational staff and support services. The proposed closing of LCC's Printing and Graphics department, which provides low cost, in-house printing services for faculty and students, was described as short-sighted and ineffective, as it simply outsourced the vital services.

The specific action item before the Board was to approve **a motion supporting the overall 3-year mitigation plan** to restore the College's reserves by reducing the budget by \$9 million over the next three years, starting with these specific proposed reductions in the FY2027 Budget. After much Board discussion, the familiar division about whether the Board or the Administration has the authority to suspend and approve academic programs emerged. Trustee Mulholland put forth an amendment to the original motion calling for the Board to formally vote on the closing of the two academic programs after a

public presentation and opportunity for more public comment. The debate on Mulholland's amendment re-opened the question of the line between the Board's role in governance versus Administration's. The amendment passed 4-3 and then the amended motion was finally voted on and passed 5-2, with Trustee Mital reluctantly deciding to support the amended motion in order to move the process along.

It was unclear when the public presentation and formal Board vote on the fate of the HIM and CJ programs will be. If the Board votes to keep the programs open, more areas/programs to cut will need to be found quickly. The FY2027 budget development process is underway with final Board approval in June.

☀️ **Reported by: Anne Delaney**

Eugene City Council

April 13, 2026 [[meeting materials](#)]

In a Work Session, Councilors heard statements from **20 applicants for the following city boards and commissions:** Budget Committee, Civilian Review Board, Human Rights Commission, Planning Commission, Sustainability Board, and Toxics Board. **Selections will be announced on June 9, 2026.**

The City had advertised last year to invite community members to fill vacancies. City staff narrowed the field to 149 people. The Council reviewed the applications and selected their top choices. Any applicant who was selected by at least four of the eight councilors was invited to make a three-minute statement at Monday's Work Session.

Twenty applicants made statements. Included below are **brief excerpts from a few applicant statements** to provide a sample of the knowledge/experience of the citizens motivated to serve. [Note: the names are phonetic spellings, as there were no support documents available.]

Budget committee: four applicants

Aidan Bassett has degrees in economics and law and wants to see sensible conservative allocation of taxpayer dollars to top city priorities. As a renter, Aidan understands that residents face all sorts of housing pressures and wants the budget committee to be strategic and realistic about budget shortfalls.

Civilian review board: two applicants

Human rights commission: five applicants

Britney Bannah has lived in Eugene for 20 years, born in Amman Jordan. She is Palestinian and moved here with her family when she was 8 years old. She learned early to navigate systems that weren't designed with people from other countries

in mind. She currently serves as director of student life at the University of Oregon, is a state certified mediator, and supports neurodivergent students.

Sustainability commission: two applicants

Toxics board: three applicants

Planning Commission: four applicants

Chloe Chapman is a commercial lender with Summit Bank specializing in affordable housing and a Eugene resident for 10 years. She loves the city's livability and wildness with eagles and owls in her back yard, an unparalleled arts community, and the fact that the city is accessible and not congested. She wants to see more equitable prosperity across the city and believes city planning is the foundation to making it so.

 **Reported by: Susan Palmer**

Springfield Public Schools Board of Education

April 13, 2026

The Board meeting started off in a manner that let the audience know that there is still tension among its members. Nicole De Graff, from her online presence, interrupted the Board Chair to tell him it was unnecessary to move three items out of the consent agenda lineup. However, the revised agenda was approved 4-1, with De Graff voting no.

Public comments. Megan Knight, principal of Maple Elementary School, described the wonderful things going on at her school with the science curriculum currently in use (and up for adoption) of Mystery Science kits, Wonders, and how they are integrating these science lessons into reading and writing, and hands-on activities. Louis Woodford, a retired Springfield teacher, wondered why the recent staff cuts weren't kept as far from the students as possible. Instead, he noted, the cuts had the students at the core of the negative impact of loss of teachers. He asked why administration numbers were not cut? The student population of Springfield's schools was once at 11,000 but is now at 8,700.

Action Items. The Board approved the Consent Agenda with the exception of three items, the March 9th minutes, the financial statement, and the personnel report. Regarding the March 9th minutes, Director Kohl said the Board never received the requested information on the pesticides that were going to be used around the district. He would still like to receive that information, so that the Board is fully informed when they approve spraying activity around school grounds. The vote was 5-0 to approve the corrected minutes.

Regarding the financial statement, Director Kohl asked Chief Operations Officer Brett Yancy to clarify several budget items. He also asked for quarterly financial statements, rather than just an annual one. The financial statement was approved 5-0.

Regarding the personnel report, which noted 11 teacher resignations and 2 retirements, Director Langworthy wanted to know if exit interviews were given. The administration said that they were, but the Board learned that the interview is given in survey form. Personnel report approved 5-0.

[Observer Comment: The exit interview topic was one of the many Board and public comment topics from last fall. There have been concerns that exit interviews don't actually take place. Is a survey an effective, acceptable replacement for an exit interview?]

The Board unanimously approved the search firm, Grundmeyer Leader Services, to find a one-year interim superintendent. George Mendoza, La Grande School District's Superintendent, recently selected as the 2026 Oregon Superintendent of the Year, will be part of the search process.

Discussion Items

The Board discussed replacing a member of the budget committee who has become unwilling or unable to serve. The Board decided to wait to replace this person until the normal time for appointment which will take place this fall for the three seats that will become vacant December 31, 2026.

Acting Superintendent O'Mara summarized what she has been doing the last few weeks: visiting schools, community coffees, and a KLSR interview.

Whitney McKinley, K-12 Director of Teaching and Learning, and Jeff Fuller, Curriculum Coordinator, presented an update on instructional materials along with their adoption date that had at least one Board member and a couple audience members confused. The science curriculum will be based on the literature curriculum already adopted and supplemented with two other sources. This is considered an "independent adoption" as the materials do not necessarily come from the Oregon Department of Education's state-approved adoption list for science. One Board member expressed concern about the ongoing delay in science adoption since it would seem that it is foundational to middle school and high school science.

[Observer Note: The science adoption process/implementation outlined conflicts with previously shared information; there are still gaps in understanding the process, timelines, and methods.]

The social science curriculum is also up for adoption. The elementary social science program will be seeking a one-year postponement while the elementary teachers analyze the gaps between state-adopted standards and curriculum content in their existing curricular materials.

Presentation of the adoption process and timeline for middle school and high school was more straightforward. Three curricula were in the running for consideration, including the current curriculum. The current curriculum was ultimately rejected as the new version looks the same as the current version. A second curriculum was rejected because of the forced use of online materials. The third curriculum had unanimous buy-in by the middle school and high school teachers. Board chair Jonathan Light expressed concern about whether the considered materials will allow teachers to have flexibility to use their professional judgement about how to address student needs and interests.

The community and Board members will have opportunities to review both the science and the social science curricula. (For further information about the process of adoption and the scheduled timeline, refer to the [Oregon Instructional Material Adoption Schedule](#).) Board members must be careful to review at the same time with only one other Board member, because more than two Board members of a five-member Board constitutes a quorum and that would violate all kinds of rules and policies.

Board Comments

During the time period when each Board member gets to talk freely, Director Langworthy again requested that materials be shared with the Board members in a timely manner in the Board packet before each Board meeting so she can prepare properly. She desires to be an attentive listener to each person presenting to every Board member. Being given a paper copy of presentation materials while the presentation is being given is not helpful to her. Despite McKinley's earlier statement that curriculum adoption materials have been shared with Board members all along over the past two years, Langworthy has been on the Board for 9 months, during which time information about the science curriculum materials has not been shared. (The science curriculum has been an ongoing component of the controversies that have surrounded the Springfield School District.)

Director Langworthy also acknowledged the many parent and community concerns have still not been addressed. She would like to have the Board finally respond and appropriately deal with all the teacher, parent, and community comments, concerns, petitions, letters, and formal complaints regarding a balanced elementary education. She recommended that Superintendent O'Mara form a task force to bring all stakeholders together to address these issues. Director De Graff interjected a point of order during Langworthy's comment time to state that no one Board member could "direct" the superintendent to do anything. Director Light stepped in so that Director Langworthy could finish her comments and stated that the Board could take up this topic at a later time.

Oakridge City Council

[April 2, 2026 \[meeting agenda and materials; webcast\]](#)

Mayor Cutchen swore in new Councilor Spencer Newell.

Mayor Cutchen participated in a conference call with the Army Corps of Engineers regarding the risk assessment update of Hills Creek Dam should there be a catastrophic seismic event. The Corps determined they would drop the highest water level by 20 feet. This may affect access to some of the boat ramps. Because of the drought this year, the water level might not need to be intentionally lowered.

The Tree Planting Festival Parade and Race are requesting a street closure. May 3 is the 73rd annual tree planting festival. Volunteers and police will be on the route to assist with the parade and runners.

The Council agreed to the new 3% increase in both the Oakridge/Westfir Police Services and Fire Services IGA renewals. There were not any adjustments in the contract except for the price increase.

Since no pennies are being minted, the City of Oakridge will follow the State of Oregon's policy passed by State Law 4178 about rounding. Oakridge will follow that policy when they run out of pennies for people that come into the office and pay with cash. The policy is 3 and 4 cents round up to 5 cents and 1 and 2 cents round down to 0 cents.

 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, 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.