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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

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

Commissioners voted unanimously to ratify the **Regional Wastewater Program budget** for FY2026-27. Staff reported on the necessity of approving this higher budget. The Regional Wastewater Program serves over 270,000 people in the area to ensure that everyone’s water is always clean. Expenses have gone up by 7.3%, and the Capital Improvement Program needs \$39.4 million to maintain current levels of service while also looking to the future.

Also by a 5-0 vote, Commissioners approved **rezoning from farming to sand and gravel** 47.94 acres of property known as the “Thurston Pit,” owned by Wildish Land Co. Mr. Kloos, a representative of the company, confirmed that the land could be reclaimed for farming in future.

☀️ **Reported by: Judy Leahy**

Eugene City Council

May 13, 2026 [[meeting agenda, materials, and webcast](#)]

In a Work Session, the **Eugene Police Auditor’s Office and the Civilian Review Board** presented their annual reports for 2025, noting 412 complaints and 286 commendations. The complaints resulted in 33 allegations of misconduct in 19 cases. The most common category of service complaints that led to review by police supervisors related to lack of

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

patrol response or untimely response. Other top complaints concerned the use of Flock cameras to capture license plate numbers of cars at certain intersections and federal ICE agent activities.

May 18, 2026 [[meeting agenda, materials, and webcast](#)]

In a Work Session, the Council reviewed the City's growth planning strategy. According to the 2026 Oregon Housing Needs Analysis, **Eugene needs nearly 26,000 new homes** over the next 20 years. The Council will consider a series of housing, compact development and jobs actions through 2030 to work toward meeting this need. Over the last two years, several public meetings with specific groups – housing and development stakeholders, people from underserved communities, and the general public – have been held and more public sessions are planned over the summer. Amendments to the City plan under review include:

- Creating new development standards for micro village housing and single room occupancies (SROs) that would permit both housing types in all residential, commercial, and special area zones that allow housing.
- Updates to middle housing development and land division standards, including changes to (a) reduce the cost and complexity to develop middle housing, (b) improve clarity during plan review, (c) comply with recent changes to state law, and (d) align with the state's adopted model housing code for large cities.

May 20, 2026 [[meeting agenda, materials, and webcast](#)]

In a Work Session on long-range financial planning, Councilors **reviewed the City's key services and ongoing financial constraints** as they prepare for a June budgeting retreat. In July, the Council will begin to prepare a budget for FY2027-29. The input from a community advisory group will be incorporated into the planning process to help the City transition to longer-range thinking in an effort to create fiscal stability in a changing world. Broad goals include the following:

- Preserve the public safety system, which includes the police, fire and emergency services, Municipal Court, and the Intergovernmental Human Services program.
- Maintain and replace the City's fixed assets, which include equipment, infrastructure, and facilities so as to optimize their longevity.
- Maintain and enhance administrative support and community planning systems in order to provide efficient and effective business management service and orderly community growth.
- Provide affordable housing, specialized services for those who need them, land use permits, and cultural, educational, and recreational services.

 Reported by: Susan Palmer

Springfield City Council

May 18, 2026 [[meeting agenda and materials](#); [webcast](#)]

Springfield Councilors voted 4-2 (Webber, Moe, Cuadros, Stout in favor; Rodley and Buck opposed) to **raise wastewater and stormwater fees** for FY2026-27. Rate hikes were suggested for the next five years. This vote – 5% for stormwater, 5% for wastewater, and 5.5% for regional wastewater – pertains to year 1 rates only. Councilor Rodley said her "no" vote was due to her concern that the rate hike is too steep in the present economy. Councilor Stout said he was concerned too, but would vote in favor. There was no public comment about the rate hikes.

The remainder of the meeting addressed the request by PeaceHealth and Lane County to annex 18 acres of land in the North Gateway area to be dedicated to **a crisis stabilization center and a 96-bed behavioral health hospital** for children and adults. There are three competing political issues: a stabilization center is badly needed in Lane County; landowners Lane County and PeaceHealth are committed to placing it at the corner of Beltline Road and Gateway Street, near the exchange at I-5 and against zoning regulations; the City of Springfield and a number of neighbors do not want it there.

Fifteen doctors, parents, and adult patients testified at the public hearing about the **critical need for the center**. Parents spoke of seeing their hospitalized children sent to Portland or of children having to spend days, if not weeks, in a windowless room for lack of proper facilities in the Eugene-Springfield area. Former Sheriff Cliff Harald and a PeaceHealth administrator testified that the lack of psychiatric care is a public safety issue; according to a behavioral health expert, suicide is the second leading cause of death for Lane County youth. At present, people in psychiatric crisis, especially adolescents and youth, rely on the Emergency Departments at River Bend and McKenzie-Willamette hospitals for care. The Executive Director of Kids First, who was Deputy Attorney in Lane County for 9 years and prosecutor for 35, said that building the stabilization center "is our community's obligation to our children." A police officer from Tucson, Arizona, testified that the crisis stabilization center built near him was wholly successful.

Owners of the two parcels of land in question, Lane County and PeaceHealth, are committed to the site even though it is zoned industrial. In 2025, Lane County Commissioners quietly engineered a so-called "super-siting" law through the Oregon legislature that allowed building on the site against City of Springfield zoning regulations. The political move is deeply unpopular among Springfield City Councilors.

Two corporate neighbors oppose the project. Noting that it ignores zoning regulations and traffic makes it unwise, they asked why PeaceHealth does not use undeveloped land near RiverBend hospital.

Discussion will continue at the next City Council meeting on June 1.

 **Reported by: Beatrice McKenzie**

Eugene 4J School Board

May 13, 2026 [[meeting agenda and materials; webcast](#)]

During **reports by high school student board representatives**, Sheridan Schilling, from Churchill High School, thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve for the last three years. Notably, she also said, “Our standard of excellence is leaving students behind. If our expectations are low, many students will meet those and stop there. Oregon is ranked 41st in education. In a state that has risen to number five in infrastructure and number 17 in healthcare, that education statistic is abysmal and embarrassing. The change starts here, in this district, with this school board and in this building. Excellence at the highest level will translate to our students.... As FDR said, ‘Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education.’ Our best way to combat all the things we see wrong in the world is with education. Abusers of power, tyrants, and dictators hate when their citizens are educated and vocal. Let’s make those people across the world really upset right here from Eugene. Keeping books in libraries, bold teachers in classrooms, and an open mind curriculum in the hands of our students is vital for this to happen.”

Most of the many **public comments** focused on the 2026/2027 budget. Most reiterated pleas to keep librarians, music teachers, behavioral health staff, and PE teachers in their home schools and not scattered into part-time positions with other schools. Complaints were also made about the closure of the Integrated Outdoor Program.

In comments made by **employee groups**, Lisa Jenkins-Easton, president of Oregon School Employees Association, Eugene Chapter 1, expressed **concerns with the reduction-in-force (RIF) process**. She noted the following issues:

- RIF cannot be in conflict with the grievance process.
- Seniority for some people was reset because of changes in title, not responsibility.
- The District should review changes for encroachment on classified work before the RIF process is finalized.
- The District should study organization charts for every department because, in some administration departments, supervisor to staff ratios are as low as 1:6, compared to high schools where the ratios are up to 1:120.
- The District should try to restore meals to needy students.

Dave Wines, 4J Vice President of the Eugene Education Association, said that the nationally recognized target ratio for **elementary school counselors to students is 1:250; the new budget will result in a ratio of 1:800**. He stated that it is not too late to avoid the planned split FTE positions, which will make scheduling between schools incredibly complex, while saving only 1.25FTE.

The final 2026/2027 Budget was presented to be adopted at the 5/27 meeting. Jenny Jonak asked about the savings gained by cuts made to elementary specialists (librarians, music and PE staff) that were such a focus of earlier public comments. Staff stated that cutting 4.5 specialist FTE would save \$630,000 per year.

☀️ Reported by: Lenice Shaw

Oakridge City Council

May 21, 2026 [[meeting agenda and materials; webcast](#)]

Motions that passed unanimously included funding for the Triple Summit Challenge, Concerts in the Park, the 4th of July Festival, and Measure 56, application for 48506 Roaring Rapids Way to change the zoning to R1.

The Council also passed a motion to award a \$500 grant for the Bus Fair, which had been tabled at the previous meeting. The proposal was framed around safety concerns about moving people across Highway 58 to Greenwaters Park. Councilor Brewer noted that the committee had already contributed more than \$50,000 to the event over the past six years. The motion passed with one dissenting vote.

Upcoming Events

- May 30: Oakridge Rocks the Park, a free event at Greenwaters Park, will raise awareness about saving TV Butte.
- June 3: Bridge Lane will host a job fair at Oakridge High School from 12:00 to 3:00 p.m.
- June 5: The Oakridge-Westfir Wildfire Preparedness Expo will take place during the First Friday Uptown Art Walk.

☀️ 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, Oakridge City Council, Lane Community College Board, Eugene 4J School District, Springfield School District, and Eugene Water and Electricity Board. 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.