



Vol. I (28), June 12, 2026

“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

June 2, 2026 [[meeting agenda](#); [webcast recording](#)]

Public Comment: Four of five public commenters made critical remarks about the negative effects of the presence of the Navigation Center in Santa Clara. The remarks painted the “low barrier” shelter as a magnet for petty crime, drug dealing, and homelessness. The fifth commenter made an appeal for funding for a summer youth program.

Eve Gray, Director Health & Human Services, updated the Board on the **continuing challenges facing the EMS Funding Task Force.**

- South Lincoln is vacating Ambulance Service Area (ASA) #2.
- Two local fire districts holding ASAs recently had their funding measures fail in the May election.
- All local ASA holders continue to struggle financially, and leaders worry about their ability to sustain their operations due to inadequate reimbursement; lack of primary care providers, which leads people to call 911 for non-emergencies; and hospital bed unavailability, which results in longer wait times for EMS crews.
- Current regulations only pay EMS for transporting patients to emergency departments, failing to compensate them for on-site care or care navigation. ASAs routinely serve areas broader than their tax base, meaning that not everyone receiving services pays taxes to support them.

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

In short, the current ASA structure no longer fits the needs of the community. The EMS Funding Task Force will continue to search for ways to lower systemic costs and maximize existing state funding.

Kate Budd, Human Services Division Manager, and James Ewell, Homelessness and Community Action Manager, presented a report on the **FY2026-27 operations contract with River Avenue Navigation Center**. Ewell shared a PowerPoint presentation that covered the Navigation Center's purpose, history, programming, and outcomes. Budd reviewed the three options related to Navigation Center operations available to the Board: (1) approve a contract extension of one year through June 30, 2027, with Equitable Social Solutions (ESS) for the Navigation Center operations; (2) approve delegated authority for up to a six-month extension while a new competitive process is conducted to secure services for a new Navigation Center operations provider; or (3) vote down the contract and seek to close or change the use of the Navigation Center within 90 days. (Option 3 would require \$1.5 million to be repaid to the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department with local funds.)

The Board voted 3-2 (Ceniga and Loveall against) to **extend the contract with Equitable Social Solutions for Navigation Center operations** through June 30, 2027, while also requesting a new, robust Request for Proposals (RFP) for next year to address some of the negative effects of placing a shelter within a community. Discussion prior to the vote included consideration of the metrics used in providing shelter services and the different models of care available in Lane County. Commissioner Buch asked, "Are we using the right metrics for providing these services?" Commissioner Loveall expressed disappointment that a more robust RFP was not included with this renewal of the contract period, despite his appeal for greater funding efficiency during an Executive Session on December 9, 2025. Commissioner Trieger reminded everyone that "we are not trying to solve the 'homeless problem'...we're trying to keep people alive by providing shelter and care to those who need it."

June 9, 2026 [[meeting agenda and webcast recording](#)]

The Work Session on FY2026-27 budget adoption elicited comments primarily focused on the **proposed use of 50% of the transient lodging tax (TLT) to fund public safety needs**. The TLT is a tax on short-term stays at hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, and vacation rentals like Airbnb and VRBO created to provide revenue to promote and support tourism. Recent changes to Oregon law permit a percentage of this revenue to be used by local governments for essential services.

Public safety funding challenges in Lane County arose when property tax revenue decreased due to the substantial decline in timber revenue and, because of limitations on the rate of assessed property valuation, failed to keep up with increasing costs. This resulted in cuts to County expenses, including public safety. A motion to consider alternatives to the use of the TLT will be considered at the June 23 meeting.

During **Public Comment**, several citizens spoke about issues related to local access roads, such as those in the River Road area, which contain a mixture of unincorporated and city properties. Roads in unincorporated areas are not maintained by the City or County but are the responsibility of property owners, many of whom were not aware of these costs when they purchased the property. The roads were not built to county standards and are in need of repair. Comments focused on the need to work with the County to identify the least expensive ways to fix the roads and to share or transfer the burden. Annexation by the City would also provide a mechanism for road repairs, but some property owners are reluctant about annexation and cited possible problems with maintenance of roads considered to be unimproved.

A satellite treatment center for opioid use disorder is being developed in Florence because of a lack of treatment options in western Lane County and challenges for people required to go to Eugene for treatment. Initial work involved educating the Florence community about the treatment center and responding to their concerns. A building has been purchased, renovation plans are proceeding, and the treatment center should be occupied by spring/summer 2027.

Ally Knapp was recognized for creating a user-friendly, informative dashboard for [Lane County's deflection program](#), which channels individuals involved in misdemeanor drug possession or low-level crimes to behavioral health interventions that, if successful, make them eligible to avoid jail time.

County Administrator Steve Mokrohisky announced the publication of an emergency [preparedness and insurance readiness guide for businesses](#).

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

Lane Community College Board of Education

June 2, 2026 [[webcast recording](#)]

The Board unanimously approved the \$281.4 million budget for FY2027. Key aspects of the budget include the following:

- A \$113.1 million general fund that pays for most of the college's daily operations, reflecting a 1.6% increase from the current fiscal year.
- Cuts of \$4.2 million as part of the 3-year mitigation to restore LCC's ending fund balance plan approved by the Board earlier this year; achieved by cutting the Health Information Management and Criminal Justice programs and eliminating 23 FTE positions (mostly classified staff rather than faculty).
- A 1.2% student tuition increase (the smallest tuition increase in several years and a source of concern at the last budget committee meeting).

The Board approved a **new program certificate in AI programming**. The introduction of this program is budget-neutral with existing faculty creating four new courses that will focus on how AI can assist in the development of new computer programming code. The program will continue to focus on traditional methods of programming and writing computer code, but will allow students to better prepare for jobs in the AI field.

The Board received a brief staff report on the results of the annual survey by Gallup measuring employee engagement and climate on campus. The results indicate an overall drop in satisfaction among staff, not a surprise given the difficult contract negotiations with faculty and classified staff over the past year. The administration plans to develop and implement strategies to improve engagement and restore trust in the coming academic year.

The Board received an upbeat update on the seven-year, \$30 million capital campaign spearheaded by the LCC Foundation. The foundation has already raised \$19 million toward that goal and will begin the public phase of the campaign, “A Lasting, Local Lane,” this fall. The funds will be allocated in three main areas: student support, \$15 million; equipment for the I-tech building, \$5 million; and development of student work experiences and program excellence, \$10 million.

During **Public Comment**, 13 students, staff, and faculty members spoke. Most advocated for various programs, but one student spoke of the personal hardship and impact of the cancellation of the Health Information Management program as part of the FY2027 budget cuts.

 Reported by: Anne DeLaney

Eugene City Council

May 27, 2026 [[meeting agenda and webcast recording](#)]

In a Work Session, councilors conducted an **informal review of Eugene Police Auditor Craig Renetzky**, who was hired in August 2025 at a salary of \$174,387. His contract calls for a formal review every other year. Since his salary is at the top of scale, he is only eligible to receive cost-of-living raises at the rate offered to other city employees. Councilors praised Renetzky for engaging with community members proactively and responding quickly to their information requests. Asked his opinion of the Eugene Police Department overall, Renetzky said many of the complaints he receives originate from within the department itself. “That means to me that they are holding themselves to a standard. When they see something that needs to be reported, they’re comfortable reporting it,” he said.

The Council voted 7-1 to grant Renetzky’s request for permission to teach at the University of Oregon during off-hours. Councilor Keating voted against the request, because so much turnover has occurred at the auditor’s office that focus on the work and the staff should take priority. Other councilors welcomed building a connection with the

University through Renetzky and noted the work would be done during the auditor's personal time, not his work time.

2026 legislative summary. State funding from the 2026 session includes roughly \$5 million in additional state funds for the Clear Lake industrial area and \$1 million toward the Eugene Airport Concourse A expansion.

June 8, 2026 [[meeting agenda and webcast recording](#)]

In a Work Session, the Council continued preparing for a budget-focused retreat at the end of June, when they will begin mapping strategies for the FY2027-29 budget. In December, staff projected a \$2.2 million annual budget gap in the next biennium. Under current assumptions, that gap has grown to \$5.1 million per year, with revenue down and costs increasing.

- A once-anticipated \$2 million in one-time land-sale revenue is unlikely.
- State shared revenue forecasts are revised down, driven partly by declining alcohol revenue; a new Oregon Liquor and Cannabis Commission liquor and cannabis warehouse, funded out of that same revenue pool, is shrinking what flows to cities; and consumption appears to be leveling off.
- EWEB's contribution in lieu of taxes is down \$6.6 million over the full forecast, because EWEB sold its McKenzie Valley cooperative to Lane Electric and is assuming a lower rate trajectory; warm winters also depress this revenue.
- Inflation is running ahead of budget assumptions.
- A 2024 state law creating a new PERS hazardous-duty classification will eventually raise contribution rates by an amount staff cannot yet estimate.

On the expense side, there was some good news: Lower-than-expected PERS rates reduce costs by \$8.2 million over the forecast, and the city's 2002 pension bonds will be fully retired in FY28, lowering debt service.

The city has set a **targeted underspending goal of \$3 million** across general fund service areas and implemented a hiring pause across almost all departments. Sworn officers, firefighters, paramedics, 911 dispatchers, and seasonal summer staff are exempt. Because of previous spending cuts, coupled with reserves, the City maintains a high Moody's bond rating.

Despite the grim financials, councilors voted 7-1 (Matt Keating dissenting) to hire an economic development director, on the recommendation from a community advisory group on long-term strategies for growing the City's revenue base.

June 8, 2026 [[meeting agenda and webcast recording](#)]

Councilors voted 7-1 to **require new businesses to attest that they know if they need federal permits (from the EPA, the DEQ, and LRAPA) in their building permit**

applications. This change in permitting is in response to the significant pollution of the Trainsong neighborhood by J.H. Baxter's wood treatment plant, which leaked toxic chemicals like dioxins, creosote, and PFAS for decades. The shuttered plant is now a Superfund site.

The **Public Comment** period drew 24 speakers, with several dominant threads:

- **Police accountability:** Many speakers demanded Chief Skinner resign or be fired following body-cam footage revealing racist comments by an officer who resigned the day the recording came to light. Flock surveillance cameras allegedly sharing data with ICE and treatment of protesters continue to be issues.
- **Community response/CAHOOTS:** Multiple speakers, including a 21-year CAHOOTS veteran, pressed the Council to fund a CAHOOTS-style alternative response program, with a specific \$2.5 million demand. A UO data science student presented research suggesting a service gap in welfare-check calls since the closure.
- **Eugene Clean Energy Fund:** Councilor Keating spoke in support of a November ballot measure proposing a 2% surcharge on large retailers' gross profits (estimated to raise \$15 million per year for efficiency and renewable programs). The measure is modeled on Portland's fund.

 **Reported by: Susan Palmer**

Springfield City Council

June 1, 2026 [[meeting agenda and materials](#); [webcast](#)]

Councilors voted 6-0 to adopt the **Payroll Tax Ordinance, a bill that implements a tax of 0.1% on employers and employees beginning in 2027.** The measure is an outcome of inflation and the longstanding property tax limitations (Measure 5, passed in 1990) that caused a structural imbalance and budget deficit. Real property tax makes up most of the General Fund tax revenue. In 2024, Mayor VanGordon appointed a Fiscal Stability Tax Force, which recommended the payroll tax, among other measures. To allay public concerns, this new revenue source will be accounted for in a fund separate from the General Fund. The tax will remain unchanged for three years, after which it will be reviewed by the City Council.

Much of the rest of the meeting was devoted to a continued quasi-judicial hearing about **annexation of the 18-acre property near the Gateway I-5 exchange.** Property owners PeaceHealth and Lane County intend to build a crisis stabilization center and 96-bed behavioral health hospital for children and adults. Although fewer members of the public testified, the lawyer for PeaceHealth and the owner and lawyer for Richardson Sports brought additional points about their positions regarding the decision. PeaceHealth maintains that the legislature has already determined what will happen by passing the super-siting legislation. Lesser points about traffic and services to the property need to be worked out. The parties opposing the annexation are adamant that there is no compelling

reason for Springfield to change the property's zoning. The Council decided to keep the record open until June 22, when discussions will continue.

 **Reported by: Beatrice McKenzie**

Springfield School Board

June 8, 2026 [[webcast recording](#)]

The Board adopted a \$262.16 million district budget for FY2026-27 in a 3-2 vote (Langworthy and Light dissenting). Director Langworthy said she could not vote for the budget because she feels the public is not being heard, there is not enough warning to the people who are affected by the budget cuts, and the district goals on which it is based are ten years old. The current year forecast projects an ending fund balance of \$15.3 million, down significantly from \$20.85 million. The district is drawing on reserves due to lower-than-expected enrollment.

During **Public Comment**, many students, parents, current and former teachers, and a radio host of KEQB, Lane County's only Spanish language radio station, protested the administration's decision to cut the Dual Immersion Spanish/English program for middle and high school students. They cited the many benefits of a bilingual education, especially in a district where 25% of students are Hispanic or Latino. Several speakers noted that the dual immersion program, which was established in 2014, provides crucial support to improve the academic performance of students who speak English as a second language. Some noted that declining enrollment might be related to course offering, scheduling, staffing, and other decisions regarding English language development programs.

Two board members said they learned about the cut of the dual immersion program at the same time as the public and wanted more time to study the budget in light of this decision.

Several other community members spoke out against board and administration actions, especially in light of a recent finding by the Oregon Department of Education that Springfield Public Schools were out of compliance regarding allocation of teaching time for subjects other than math and reading. One speaker asked the Board to consider raising the tax levy instead of continuing to cut programs.

David Willis of the Springfield Utility Board (SUB) highlighted a SUB/school collaboration program involving high school students providing free residential water testing and other services. He said, "Students are not just learning science. They are doing science."

Ryan Herlans, incoming president of Springfield Education Association, thanked the Board for considering a proposal to create time at each Board meeting to hear from district teachers. He said many teachers would welcome classroom visits by school board members, noting, "You can't make decisions unless you're informed."

Board action on the proposal to set aside meeting time for teacher input as well as other matters—including the district’s anti-bullying policy, a plan to have legal counsel available at board meetings, and a proposed survey of families leaving the district—was moved to the June 22 meeting.

Structural Repairs: A motion failed for lack of a second to approve a contract to repair engineered wood trusses at ten school buildings. Directors Kohl and Brew said they needed more information about the proposed contract with Essex General Construction for \$3.4 million, plus a 30% “open-ended” contingency (\$1 million). The repairs are required to restore property insurance coverage previously excluded for Centennial ES, Guy Lee ES, Mohawk ES, Page ES, Walterville ES, Two River-Dos Rios ES, Briggs MS, Thurston MS, Brattain Campus, and Thurston HS. Chief Operations Officer Brett Yancey said the work schedule is still being determined but will likely stretch over two years. Some funds for the project are already in the budget, and Yancey said he plans to gather information about financing the rest of the cost.

Board Vacancy: Director Nicole De Graff announced her resignation effective June 30, 2026, creating an open seat on the Board.

Interim Superintendent Search: Finalist interviews were scheduled for June 9. Acting Superintendent Jodi O'Mara is currently leading the district. A special board meeting is scheduled for 5:30 pm June 22.

Executive Session: The Board met in closed session to discuss an undisclosed complaint or disciplinary action. During the public meeting, the Board voted 4-1 to take no further action and delegate authority to the Chair to draft a response to the complaint. Director DeGraff declared a conflict of interest and voted no.

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

Eugene 4J School Board

May 27, 2026 [[meeting agenda and materials](#); [webcast recording](#)]

The Board formally adopted the FY2026-27 budget. The budget includes \$27.7 million in general fund cuts and leaves an additional \$16.4 million general fund shortfall to be covered out of reserves and capital fund transfers.

Outside of the budget and the resulting reduction in force process, district officials responded to complaints made at several meetings about moving elementary school specialists away from their current “home” schools. They used proposals from staff and principals to reassign staff so that 80% of media specialists and more than 90% of PE and music specialists will remain connected to their home schools.

Likewise, there had been complaints about the middle school change to a six-period schedule because it reduces elective time, especially for children with special education

needs. The District worked with the State to get exemptions from some of the PE requirements so that, with approval of their families, these students could opt out of PE and continue to access electives such as music and art.

Noteworthy community and union comments included Shelby Clancy speaking about Foster Care Awareness Month. She said the **93 foster children currently enrolled at 4J** need a dedicated district liaison to connect them to social workers, welfare agencies, caregivers, and schools. This liaison would advocate for their best interests like a court-appointed special advocate does in the courtroom. In the United States, foster children drop out at a rate of 51%, but with greater support, more could graduate. She pointed out that state school funding adds an extra weight of 0.25 for foster children. She'd like to see that money go specifically for the needs of foster children to help them succeed.

Eugene Education Association President Jamie Myers called for **collective action “to advocate for increased and more stable school funding at the state level.** This effort cannot rest solely on educators. It requires the voices and partnership of our broader community.”

Separately, in response to prior complaints from union representatives, the Board unanimously agreed to **create an ad hoc committee to review negotiation practices** over the last few years and consider options for negotiating with employee groups going forward.

June 3, 2026 [[meeting agenda and materials](#); [webcast recording](#)]

The meeting focused largely on year-end appreciation and recognition of accomplishments within the District. Among them were the following:

- Board Director Jenny Jonack received a Turtle Award for “sticking her neck out” to defeat the U.S. Department of Education’s unlawful directives against diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Isa Vielma was recognized as the first student in 4J to earn the state’s Seal of Biliteracy in an indigenous language (Miluk).
- Student Board representatives were thanked for their service.

Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) Chapter 1 President Lisa Jenkins-Easton and Eugene Education Association President Jamie Myers both encouraged the Board and the public to attend an Emergency Town Hall on June 10 at Roosevelt Middle School to address the education funding crisis in Oregon.

Three of four business items were unanimously approved. The exception was a Memorandum of Understanding between the District and OSEA Chapter 1. One of the directors who voted against it said she did not think it was appropriate for an employer to pay the salary of a union president, especially in light of the financial challenges the District is facing.

The Board will hold a morning meeting on June 22 to review their working processes and assess whether to revise them to be more effective.

☀️ **Reported by: Lenice Shaw**

Eugene Water & Electric Board

June 2, 2026 [[meeting agenda](#)]

EWEB's new General Manager John Hairston introduced himself and his philosophy and priorities: focus on employee safety; coalition building through community outreach over the next six months; financial discipline; electric utility decisions involving the communities of Carmen and Leaburg; investments for water supply resiliency; infrastructure investments; and strategic plan development.

During **Public Comment**, two citizens voiced opposition to fees for smart meter reading, citing concerns about the costs to low-income customers and exposure to radiofrequency radiation emissions. Another person voiced support for EWEB's climate change program report that was on the Board agenda in May and asked the Board and new GM to continue this work and provide rebates and incentives for energy efficiency to low-income households, not just large businesses.

Commissioner Carlson responded that the \$11.50 monthly fee for smart meter reading is well within the cost for comparable programs in the state, which range from \$10 to \$75. Commissioner Morris responded that the Customer Cares Program, which provides bill-payment assistance to low-income residents, covers the cost of smart meter reading.

☀️ **Reported by: Jenny Lippert**

Oakridge City Council

June 4, 2026 [[meeting agenda](#); [webcast recording](#)]

The Council **adopted a \$13.1 million FY2026-27 Budget and Schedule of Fees** over the objections of Councilors Scott and Brewer, who cited the impact of current economic conditions on residents. The two councilors also opposed an ordinance increasing the current monthly \$11 ambulance fee by \$6.

The City plans to place a **property tax levy** to support the EMS budget on the November ballot. If the levy passes, the ambulance fee would be removed from water utility bills once property tax income to support emergency services is generated.

Councilor Brewer moved to remove water, sewer, and stormwater fee increases from the budget for one year, but that motion failed 6-1.

The Council unanimously approved the following motions and resolutions:

- A five-year memorandum of understanding that Diamond View Freeriders, a 501(c)(3) organization, will maintain the Diamond View Bike Park at no cost in exchange for the City waiving rental fees for events the group sponsors.
- An alcohol permit for the Oregon Trail Gravel Race, known as the “Gravel Grinder,” to be held July 9-11 at Greenwaters Park.
- A \$700 fee waiver for a site plan review for Brink’s Land Improvement, involving the first phase of a three-phase project planned to establish a Wood Resource Innovation Hub at the Industrial Park. Earlier this year, Brink’s purchased Brocks Wood Lot and secured a second lot for expansion. The new owner plans to continue Brocks’ service of providing free mulch to Oakridge residents.
- A three-year Police and General Union Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- A motion to spend up to \$500 for a new Welcome to Oakridge sign, following continued discussion about the wording and background image.
- A resolution to certify city services to receive State funding for FY26-27. City Administrator James Cleavenger said the City exceeds the requirement to certify that four services are provided.
- A resolution to receive State revenue sharing for FY2026-27.
- A 10-year renewal of the Oakridge/Westfir Enterprise Zone, which allows the two communities to offer tax incentives to attract new businesses. Qualifying businesses must add at least one employee or increase staffing by 10 percent during the exemption period and pay a 15% fee directly to the Oakridge School District in lieu of taxes.
- A resolution authorizing a Local Government Grant Program application for the Salmon Creek Truss Bridge. Cleavenger said the City must provide a 20% match (more than \$108,000) which may include in-kind support, donations, and volunteer hours. The grant program requires that the Bridge must retain its recreational use for 25 years.

The Council received a report about a June 3 sewage leak into the Willamette River, which was repaired the same day. Located between Orchid Health Clinic and Subway, the blockage caused overflow into an unmapped backup sewer pipe. E. coli test results were expected soon, and the river in that area remains closed until E. coli levels return to normal.

During **Public Comment**, several people supported the Salmon Creek Bridge connection project. One person questioned Mayor Cutchen’s apparent lack of support for ambulance service and objected to the ambulance fee on the water bill, and another thanked the city for its long-term employees.

 **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.