



Vol. I (31), July 24, 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

July 14, 2026 [\[meeting agenda; am webcast recording; pm webcast recording\]](#)

Commissioners voted unanimously to take the next steps toward a full-service dental clinic in Cottage Grove and the Lane Stabilization Center project and to contract for a feasibility analysis for an indoor sports facility on the Lane County Fairgrounds.

Eve Gray, Director of Health & Human Services, reported to the Board about the proposed buildout of the dental clinic at the South Lane Clinic. The Board voted to accept a \$769,000 grant from the Oregon Health Authority for the project and to increase appropriations in the health and human services fund by \$311,981 to cover the costs of recruiting dental personnel.

The Board also approved a \$168,000 contract with Sports Facilities Advisory LLC to conduct the feasibility study for the proposed multi-use sports facility. The costs of the study will be shared evenly with Share Lane County. Lane County Community & Economic Development Manager Jason Harris presented the proposal and responded generally to questions from Commissioner Trieger about how public and community benefits are evaluated, and how many facilities across the country are operated or managed by Sports Facilities Advisory after having been the feasibility consultant for those projects.

Shawn Hubbell, Lane County Procurement Manager, and David Ward, Lane County Capital Planning & Facilities Manager, presented the results of their request for proposal process to choose a construction manager/general contractor for the Lane Stabilization

¹ LWV Observing Your Government in Action

Center (LSC) project and recommended that Pence Contractors LLC be awarded the contract. The LSC will offer treatment for people in behavioral health crises and connect them to longer-term solutions.

Commissioners had previously approved the use of the construction manager/general contractor method to manage the LSC design and construction. Vice Chair Buch and Commissioner Loveall raised questions about the perceived advantages of this method over the conventional design/bid/build method of awarding contracts, and they advocated for hiring local contractors to keep as much revenue as possible in Lane County. Hubbell and Ward assured the commissioners that the Board would have a say in Pence's outreach to and choices of local subcontractors. The Board approved the contract with Pence in an amount not to exceed \$100,000.

☀️ **Reported by: Tom Rigell**

Springfield School Board

July 13, 2026 [[webcast recording](#)]

This special session was convened to declare a vacancy on the Board as a result of Director Nicole DeGraff's resignation. DeGraff announced her intention to resign, effective June 30, during a May 26 executive session. She rescinded her resignation on May 29, within the three-day grace period allowed by board policy, via email to acting Superintendent Jody O'Mara only; the full Board did not receive this email. On June 22, DeGraff emailed her resignation to the newly hired Interim Superintendent Dr. Shawn Stover; the full board was forwarded this email. DeGraff did not respond to emails from Stover and Board Chair Light or submit her resignation in writing, as per policy. After consultation with the District's attorney, the Board determined that the standard to declare a vacancy had been met and voted 4-0 to do so.

The open board seat has been advertised via social media, District website, and all other appropriate avenues. Applications will be accepted through July 24. The Board will review all applications over the following weekend, and a special meeting is set for July 27 to interview candidates and select and swear in the new board member. This schedule will allow the new board member to attend the board retreat scheduled for August 5.

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

Oakridge City Council

July 16, 2026 [[meeting agenda](#); [webcast recording](#)]

During the Public Comment period, the Council heard a complaint about the City's emergency operations from Elizabeth Duncan, who identified herself as a California resident, a former Centers for Disease Control health scientist, founder and CEO of

Abbey's Place, and human trafficking survivor. Duncan said that, while trying to help a friend, she attempted to work with local emergency operations officials but was met with hostility, abuse, neglect, and discrimination instead of professional treatment. She said she has documented what she believes were threats of force, discrimination, and economic coercion, and has submitted the information to federal and state law enforcement. She urged the Council to address gaps in mental and behavioral health support within local emergency management systems and proposed a pilot project using the Friendship Bench model, which relies on community-trained peer support to help close the mental health gap.

In Council action, Bob Withrow was appointed to Seat 2 on the Budget Committee. Councilor Brewer said she appreciated his application, previous involvement with the city, and attendance at Budget Committee meetings.

☀️ 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, 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.