



Vol. I (35), October 2, 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

September 29, 2026 [[agenda and webcast recording](#)]

Commissioners voted unanimously to accept a \$1.3 million grant from the Oregon Health Authority and funded by the Opioid Settlement Fund to establish a Lane County Drug Addiction Treatment Center in a Florence building that formerly housed a medical clinic. Other board members thanked Ryan Ceniga for his interactions with Florence residents at public meetings to explain the project.

Following a heated discussion, Commissioners voted 3-2 to reverse the county’s denial of an order waiving flood plain requirements for a landowner. Commissioners Laurie Trieger and Heather Buch opposed the waiver, with Buch charging that campaign contributions might have been made in connection with the request, while Commissioners Pat Farr and David Loveall spoke in its favor.

After a discussion about the proposed increase in environmental health services fees to be effective January 1, the Board voted 4-1 in favor of the new fee schedule. The lone dissent came from Loveall, who said he is concerned about putting an additional burden on pool, hotel, restaurant, and other business owners by increasing these annual fees.

County Administrator Steve Mokrohisky offered an election update: Ballots are scheduled to be mailed to voters outside the state on October 5, while ballots to other Lane County voters will be mailed October 15. The County plans to install three or four

¹ LWV Observing Your Government in Action

additional ballot drop boxes in eastern and western Lane County to supplement the existing 25 locations.

Mokrohisky also reported that the Board's requested audit of Sanipac regarding waste diversion to Medford is ongoing, with Sanipac not cooperating to supply the requested information.

The Board approved a supplemental budget resolution, following a report that there would be 20 FTE staff reductions in the Health and Human Services Department, along with some FTE additions and several project changes.

During Public Comments, one resident reported that an unpermitted remodeling is occurring on a neighboring property, and another complained that a lane permitted under a 1939 law providing legal access to a friend's property was now locked by a gate. He wants a public easement granted to resolve the situation. The third comment was by an individual who alleged that Jake Pelroy, a candidate for East Lane County Commissioner, received extremely large donations to his campaign.

In their afternoon work session, the Board received an update on the Housing Land Banking Program from Eric Mongan, Housing Production Manager. The program's mission is to accelerate housing delivery and improve affordability by increasing availability and access to buildable land. Mongan said the program task force is seeking Board direction to refine the process in order to return to Commissioners with an adoption-ready package. Loveall offered many suggestions and examples of roadblocks that arise when purchasing land and building structures. Farr cited Eugene's Bascom Village as a successful example of Land Banking Program development. All Commissioners were in favor of continuing with the program and seemed positive about the developments so far.

☀️ Reported by: Judy Leahy

Lane Community College Board of Education

September 2, 2026 [\[webcast recording\]](#)

Trustees unanimously approved President Stephanie Bulger's four main goals for FY2027, which had been discussed in previous meetings along with the challenges to attain them:

1. Focus on fiscal sustainability, which will require tough decisions on \$2.5 million in budget cuts for the FY2028 Budget to meet the Board's goal of restoring the ending fund balance by 2029.
2. Enrollment growth and student success, which face external headwinds as fewer students graduate from local high schools, fewer international students are coming to the United States, and federal student financial aid is in flux.

3. Improvements in employee engagement, which has been marked by extremely low faculty and staff satisfaction and trust after last year's bruising contract negotiations.
4. Development of LCC's five-year strategic plan for FY2028-2033, which will be led by an independent consultant through a time-consuming and possibly contentious process involving students, faculty, staff, and community outreach.

The Board discussed the implications of a resolution by the Douglas County Board of Commissioners in July declaring that they are not a sanctuary county and that they intend to support the federal government's immigration policies. LCC is directly impacted by this resolution as its taxing district and service area extend into northern Douglas County, and nine citizens who spoke during the Public Comment period asked the Board and administration to take action to protect students who live in that part of the district.

Trustee Austin Felnagy, who represents this area, spoke passionately about the issue, noting that Douglas County's action directly impacts LCC's Latino and Native American students and staff who live, work, and even drive through Douglas County. With the full Board's support, he asked the administration to prepare a memo outlining how the college could respond to Douglas County, up to and including taking legal action in an effort to protect affected students and staff.

 **Reported by: Anne DeLaney**

Springfield City Council

September 21, 2026 [\[agenda and webcast recording\]](#)

After a closed executive session, the Council met briefly to vote to allow the Springfield Economic Development Agency (SEDA) to negotiate all parts of a development agreement (except tenancy) for a parcel of city-owned property in Glenwood. A public park and riverfront trail are planned for the 1.5-acre site along the Willamette River. SEDA is made up of the city councilors and County Commissioner David Loveall as an ex-officio member.

September 28, 2026 [\[agenda and webcast recording\]](#)

The Council took up two ongoing matters, the [City Hall Deferred Maintenance and Quad Redesign Project](#) and the annexation of an 18-acre plot on International Way in North Springfield.

After local contractors complained about the process when city staff in June chose an out-of-state contractor to repair City Hall, the Council voted not to proceed with that contract. Council asked staff to reach out to all participating contractors and incorporate what they learned into a new request for proposals (RFP). The 14 contractors who responded were interviewed, and language was added to the RFP to include information about local outreach and the planned use of local subcontractors in evaluation of

proposals. A revised RFP will be out by October, and responses will be due during the holiday recess.

The Council made progress on the annexation of the site in north Springfield where Lane County and PeaceHealth plan to build a stabilization center and psychiatric hospital. The holdup has been that the site is zoned for light industry. Councilors heard from city staff about plans for streets and stormwater. They expressed concern about impacts on neighbors' property, especially in street placement. Although no vote was taken, Mayor VanGordon said he believes councilors approved of the process so far.

 **Reported by: Beatrice McKenzie**

Eugene City Council

[Editor's note: To view Eugene City Council webcasts, click on the link, scroll down to the list of past meetings, and select the meeting date. The meeting begins at about the 7:25 minute mark, following a lengthy video intro.]

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

What: Work session in which the Council reviewed strategies for developing the next two-year budget that uses the guidance provided by a community advisory group. That group did a deep dive on city operations last year and suggested ways to streamline government processes and increase revenue. The Council wants to avoid the massive spending cuts that have marked previous budget cycles in the last decade and develop a forward-looking financial stability plan to implement over the next decade.

Details: Councilor Greg Evans emphasized the need to think ahead 30 to 50 years for infrastructure needs like additional fire stations and upgrades to existing facilities, while also recognizing the challenge to communicate effectively to residents who already feel that they can't afford tax increases. Councilor Eliza Kashinsky noted the lack of stability in state and federal funding sources for both the city and the nonprofits that provide services to struggling community members. She also called for a broader swath of community members to be involved in financial planning discussions. In response to a question from Councilor Mike Clark about innovative ways to create financial stability, City Manager Jenny Haruyama said: "We need to be asking our community what they're willing to live without and what they are willing to fund.... And that is the candid conversation that we are building to."

Next steps: Upcoming Budget Committee meetings on October 28, November 18, and December 2 and 14 will further refine the framework for budget decisions in 2027.

September 21, 2026 [[agenda](#); [meeting transcript](#); [webcast recording](#)]

What: A public hearing, in which community members were invited to comment on a city proposal to require that homeowners disclose a home energy-use assessment whenever they list a home for sale. The City has a goal to reduce fossil-fuel use to 50 percent below 2010 levels by 2030, and this is one strategy that would help people be more aware of the costs of energy inefficiencies. Statewide, Portland, Hillsboro, Milwaukie, and Bend already require this disclosure.

Details: Eighteen people commented; 17 of them supported the proposal for a variety of reasons:

- It allows sellers to better reflect the market value of energy-efficient homes, empowering buyers to make informed decisions.
- It helps homeowners think about ways to lower energy bills and improve performance.
- It supports economic development by creating demand for energy assessments and energy-efficient project investments.
- It provides greater transparency around energy costs.

A representative from the Chamber of Commerce, while neutral on the proposal, said the City should measure what the policy actually accomplishes. “We urge the Council to build in accountability, clear metrics, cost tracking, and a two-year review. Good policy is about results, not just implementation,” she said.

Next steps: The Council will vote on the ordinance at its October 28 meeting.

September 23, 2026 [[agenda](#); [webcast recording](#)]

What: Work session with a focus on the annual report on street repairs. In 2022, Eugene voters approved \$61.2 million of general obligation bonds to fund street repairs and safety improvements over a five-year period beginning in 2025.

Details: Among the findings:

- 34 percent of Eugene streets are in excellent condition.
- 22 percent are in very good condition with only minor maintenance needed.
- 16 percent are in good condition, needing surface treatments or overlays.
- 28 percent are in poor to fair condition.

September 28, 2026 [[agenda](#); [webcast recording](#)]

What: Work session offering an update on the [Community Safety Payroll Tax](#), which was approved in 2019 and began to be collected in 2021 to help cover increasing police and fire department costs. Besides funding for those departments, money has been used to provide free activities for at-risk youth and staffing a Rapid Response Clean Team that works to keep the downtown clean and accessible. It’s overseen by a community advisory board.

Details: From 2021 through 2025, the tax raised \$100 million for the city. The city's annual budget is roughly \$965 million. From 2019 to 2024, employment in Eugene decreased by 4 percent, mostly in service sector jobs. (Statewide employment grew by 2 percent during that period.)

Next steps: Councilors will review the investments from the tax and outcomes from those investments at their October 14 meeting.

September 28, 2026 [[agenda](#); [webcast recording](#)]

What: Councilors voted to send Council President Lyndsie Leech as a voting delegate to a League of Oregon Cities meeting.

Details: The only other item on the agenda was public comments, with 17 people speaking to the Council. The main topic was continuing concern about data centers, with community members wanting specific language about these centers written into city code.

 **Reported by:** Susan Palmer

Springfield School Board

September 28, 2026 [[webcast recording](#)]

The Board approved the revised Immigration Enforcement on District Property policy. Each Oregon school district is required to adopt a policy by September 30 that is consistent with the model policy put forward by the Attorney General's Office. Bus drivers and other staff who are more likely to encounter immigration authorities will be the first to receive training under the new policy.

A report on the Summer Learning and Engagement program rated it as successful and engaging even though the program had to be scaled back from last year because of reduced state funding. Bringing smiles to everyone's faces was Melissa Locke's description of young children reading to the F.E.T.C.H. dogs, the therapy dog group serving Eugene and Springfield. The program includes credit recovery for high school students; credit recovery involves retaking courses to earn credit during a two-week intense learning timeframe. This program increases the number of seniors graduating.

Taylor Madden presented the purposes, goals, and statistical analyses of the English Learner Program from the 2024-2025 school year.

The new Dual Language Advisory Committee will meet for the first time in mid-October. Another presentation included purposes and goals of both English Learner and Dual Language programs.

After analyzing four proposals, the Board opted to go with Superintendent Shawn Stover's recommendation to have the Hungerford Law Firm at select Board meetings via Zoom, on an as needed basis.

The Springfield Education Association (SEA), Oregon School Employees Association, and Springfield Association of Administrators will work with Stover to fashion a format for providing reports from these three bargaining units at Board meetings. This decision follows a request from the SEA to report to the Board on a regular basis outside the three-minute time constraint of Public Comment.

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

Oakridge City Council

September 17, 2026 [[meeting agenda](#); [webcast recording](#)]

The Council heard complaints from two local residents, one regarding property damage from a broken water main and another over harassment related to a fire department volunteer's work with the City:

- Water from a pipe the city was repairing on September 15 flowed downhill across a residential driveway and under the house. The City delivered two truckloads of rock the next day, but the resident said more was needed to restore the driveway. She left photos with City Administrator James Cleavenger to support her request for additional repairs.
- The fire department volunteer alleged that a local citizen had made threatening comments, posted her photo alongside false accusations, and defamed her and others online. She told the Council that the City should take action to help protect her.

In action before the Council:

- Mayor Brian Cutchen read a proclamation recognizing October 2026 as National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The Hope and Safety Alliance of Eugene asked the city to help educate the public and support people affected by violence.
- Cleavenger presented a draft resolution identifying surplus property and updating two resolutions from 2023.
- The Council approved the annexation of properties at 48521 E. First Street and 48117 E. Second Street.

The Council also welcomed Lane County Commissioner Heather Buch, who stopped in while in Oakridge for another meeting.

☀️ **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.