

# MINUTES

Eugene Budget Committee  
Bascom-Tykeson Room—Eugene Public Library—100 West 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Eugene, Oregon

March 6, 2012  
5:30 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Claire Syrett, Chair; Shanda Miller, Vice Chair; Ken Beeson, George Brown, Chelsea Clinton, Pat Farr, Laura Illig, Andrea Ortiz, George Poling, Chris Pryor, Mark Rust, Doug Smith, Betty Taylor, members; Mayor Kitty Piercy; City Manager Jon Ruiz; Assistant City Manager/Planning and Development Director Sarah Medary; City Attorney Glenn Klein; Central Services Director Kristi Hammitt; Police Chief Pete Kerns, Fire and EMS Chief Randy Grove, Public Works Director Kurt Corey; Library, Recreation, and Cultural Services Director Renee Grube; Mia Cariaga, Sue Cutsogorge, Pavel Gubanikhin, Larry Hill, Keli Osborn, Central Services Department; Scott Luell, Planning and Development Department; Connie Bennett, Mike Magee, Library, Recreation, and Cultural Services; Lori Kievith, Eugene Police Department; Karen Gaffney, Lane County Animal Services.

**ABSENT:** John Barofsky, Mike Clark, members.

## I. OPENING REMARKS

Ms. Syrett called the meeting of the Eugene Budget Committee to order. She noted that replacement handouts had been provided because of an error in the materials distributed via e-mail.

## II. MINUTES APPROVAL

Mr. Pryor, seconded by Mr. Poling, moved to approve the minutes of May 18, 2011. The motion passed unanimously, 12:0; Mr. Zelenka and Ms. Miller not yet having arrived.

## II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Syrett opened the public comment period.

**Rita Castillo** shared handouts regarding the average cost of one dog bite.

**Sven Wahlroos**, Vice President of International Association of Fire Fighters Local 851, advocated for restoration of funding to support a fire engine at Fire Station #2. He did not think the City's financial situation justified station closures or rolling brownouts. Call volumes were up without any increase in staff. He believed the reduction created

**Sabine Dutoit** advocated for restoration of the hours proposed for reduction at the branch libraries. It was difficult for her to access the downtown library. Ms. Dutoit believed the reductions represented a loss to the neighborhoods and was willing to pay an annual fee to keep her branch library open.

**Michael Carrigan**, a member of the Opportunity Eugene Community Task Force, wanted the City to find money to support the recommendations of the task force but did not want that to affect funding for existing human service programs and agencies. He wanted City staff to find new funding sources and recommended the Riverfront Urban Renewal District be dissolved and the money used to help the homeless.

**Kathryn Ford** asked a series of questions about the reductions proposed in the City's Animal Services contract.

**Jill Winans**, Willamette Animal Guild, found the City's proposed reductions to its Animal Services contract unreasonable. She did not think that local nonprofits could assume the work done by Lane County in the time frame identified. She called for a longer time frame and asked the City to work with the nonprofits of Lane County to achieve a long-term resolution, although she questioned that given what she considered the City's failure to work with the nonprofits regarding their recommendations for the Spay and Neuter Clinic. Ms. Winans also questioned the City's plans for enforcement, suggesting that the City of Eugene would not want to emulate its enforcement practices on City of Springfield practices. She did recommend that the City emulate Springfield by turning the mayor and council into volunteer positions.

**Lisa Warnes** agreed with the remarks of Ms. Winans. She advocated for City workers to take a pay cut to fund Animal Services and encouraged the committee to find a "better way" to balance the budget.

**Bill Brommelsiek**, chair of the Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA) Board of Directors, asked the committee to restore Eugene's dues to LRAPA. He spoke of LRAPA's long-term partnership with Eugene to maintain the quality of the community's air. He suggested that it could have greater ramifications because LRAPA might not be able to meet matching grant requirements. He noted LRAPA's role in enforcing City air quality ordinances that benefited the entire region on behalf of the City.

**Howie Bonnett** spoke on behalf of the Sustainability Commission in support of some funding for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. He asked that the letter the commission sent the council regarding the plan be provided to the committee's lay members. He noted the many benefits of the plan, saying it would encourage people to use active transportation, reduce fossil fuel use, and reduce carbon emissions. He noted that the plan recommended reinstatement of the Sidewalk Infill Program to facilitate pedestrian trips and asked the committee to fund that portion.

**Bob Siegmund** expressed concern about the approximately \$25,000 Eugene had spent on a four-hour Sunday Streets event in the Whiteaker area. He subsequently learned from businesses that the event had restricted access to businesses and produced no additional income. He suggested the City could no longer afford such events even if the funding came from the federal government; such money still came from taxpayers. He noted that Portland held several such events at a time it lacked funding for street maintenance. Mr. Siegmund did not believe such programming represented a core service and suggested it was time for the committee to better prioritize City spending.

**Julie McDonald**, Cottage Grove, expressed concern about the City's proposal to reduce its contribution to Lane County Animal Services (LCAS) and turn animal enforcement over to the Eugene Police Department. She spoke of the many benefits of LCAS and said nonprofits could not deliver the same level of services. She did not believe the quality of service would be the same. She questioned the composition of the transition team overseeing the transition. She also questioned the unintended consequences of the change and anticipated that taxpayers would be asked to pay more for police. Ms. McDonald then went on to complain about the money being spent on the criminal justice system and the City's exclusion zone.

**Meg Schaffer** asked the City to fund LCAS for one more year so it could transition to a better model. She did not think it was possible to transition services by July 1. She recommended that the City approach what she termed “prominent members of our community” in Phil Knight or former University of Oregon coach Mike Bellotti to fund animal services for a year. She suggested it would be excellent public relations for those individuals. She also recommended that the City reduce what she termed “exceptional management salaries” instead of programs.

Mr. Zelenka and Ms. Miller arrived during the public comment period.

Ms. Syrett closed the public comment period. She solicited committee members’ comments and questions.

Speaking to the testimony regarding branch library hours, Ms. Taylor pointed out that many parts of Eugene lacked branch libraries. She recommended that people take the bus to the main library rather than take their vehicles. She believed that reducing branch library hours was preferable to closing the main library for one day. She hoped that branch libraries were everywhere someday. Ms. Taylor endorsed Mr. Carrigan’s recommendation to close the Riverfront Urban Renewal District. She supported funding the LRAPA dues.

Ms. Ortiz thanked those who offered testimony. Speaking to those who suggested that staff was being paid excessively, she noted that in many cases staff members were performing two jobs.

Mr. Farr said as the former director of Food for Lane County he disagreed with the contention that City did not do enough for nonprofits.

#### **IV. ANIMAL SERVICES**

Ms. Hammitt and Mr. Hill led the committee through a PowerPoint presentation entitled *City of Eugene Animal Services FY13 Budget Strategy*. The presentation summarized program goals, highlighted the current animal services model, outlined the City’s current contracts for animal services, and included fiscal year (FY) 2011 activity levels. The presentation set out context for the reductions contemplated for FY13 and included an update on implementation of the reductions made in FY11. The presentation summarized the results of a survey that staff did of 36 Oregon cities regarding their animal services models and funding levels and a survey staff did of local animal welfare organizations regarding their rating of City-funded animal services and key challenges and opportunities those organizations faced. The presentation also included information about current funding levels.

The presentation outlined the manager’s recommendation strategy for FY13, which was to reduce the General Fund appropriation for animal services by \$130,000; maintain funding for the Spay and Neuter Clinic; work cooperatively with the City of Springfield and Lane County to transition animal services to a new model that holds each jurisdiction individually responsible for its animal services; locate enforcement and dog licensing within the City organizational structure; and seek community partner(s) to provide shelter and adoption services at publicly owned shelter facility. The presentation concluded with an overview of the proposed FY12-13 Transition Strategy.

Committee members asked questions clarifying the information presented.

Mr. Rust left the meeting during the presentation for another commitment.

Ms. Syrett recognized the level of community consternation over the proposed reductions to LCAS. She believed that effective involvement of community volunteers had been a key element of the community's success in reducing euthanasia and increasing the live-release rate and encouraged the City to involve the nonprofit organizations in developing alternative models.

Mayor Piercy suggested the potential that a public oversight body was formed to oversee the transition process. She also suggested the possibility of a voluntary cat licensing program that could help to return lost cats to their owners.

Ms. Ortiz requested information about the budget reductions contemplated by Lane County and the City of Springfield and the impact of those reductions on interjurisdictional services.

Ms. Syrett called for a brief break.

## **V. LIBRARY SERVICES**

Ms. Grube and Ms. Bennett led the committee through a presentation entitled *Library Services Budget Presentation*. The presentation highlighted the history and mission of the Eugene Public Library, including the establishment of branch libraries in 2006. The presentation also included information about the adopted budget, patron visits, circulation levels, program attendance, branch services, library computer use, and library volunteers. The presentation also included the primary considerations staff used in proposing reductions to the fiscal year 2013 budget, specifically the proposed branch hours reduction.

Committee members asked questions clarifying the details of the presentation.

Ms. Ortiz noted a correlation between the programming made possible by the operating levies and the increases in patron visits and questioned how the City could continue to maintain premiere service levels at the library in light of anticipated shortfalls. She believed that areas such as south Eugene should have their own branch libraries and asked "where do we go from here?"

Ms. Syrett suggested that it had been bad timing that the operating levy had been allowed to lapse in 2007. She noted that branch library patrons had expressed concern about the loss of computer terminals and asked if the number could be increased at the main library to mitigate for the loss. She also wondered if the new Lane Community College (LCC) campus would add to the demand for the main library's computers. Ms. Grube said more computers could be added to the main library at a cost. She did not think that LCC students would add much to the demand for computer use because the campus would be equipped with both computers and wireless access.

Ms. Syrett suggested that staff might want to look at how the bus schedule worked for patrons of the branch libraries in accessing the main library. Ms. Grube concurred.

Ms. Syrett suggested that patron visits should include online activities. Speaking to virtual branch services, she pointed out that those also included music downloads.

Ms. Syrett wondered if the City's community centers could house some of the current programming in the branch libraries.

Mayor Piercy believed the libraries were many residents' connection to the City and community, and that was important in areas where people sometimes did not feel as connected as they might. She believed the

libraries built trust in the City. She feared that the proposed reduction to the branch libraries hours would be perceived by residents as disproportionate and a breach of trust. Mayor Piercy recommended the committee keep in mind the relative mobility of residents. She understood the reason for the proposed reduction, but many hours of service were involved.

Mr. Farr was struck by the number of people who visited the downtown library, but believed reducing the branch libraries hours seemed counterproductive for the reasons mentioned by Mayor Piercy. He had requested information about the costs per hour of operating the branches as opposed to the main library but had not found that information in the materials provided to the committee and asked that it be prepared. He anticipated he would recommend a compromise in the number of branch library hours reduced.

Ms. Illig suggested that 24-hour reference access might be a luxury rather than a necessity. Ms. Grube said she would look into the service for any savings that might be realized.

Mr. Pryor recalled the committee's discussion about absorbing the library levy into the General Fund and agreed with Ms. Ortiz that the City had been trying to operate as though the levy was still in place. The day of reckoning had arrived. The committee had imposed the decision on the organization and needed to determine how to accommodate it. He was open to a compromise but believed some reduction must be found. He agreed that branch libraries were a valuable point of connection for residents but believed that the organization was in a triage situation.

Mr. Poling agreed with Mr. Pryor. He recalled his opposition to absorbing the levy into the General Fund because of the voters support for the operating levies. He believed the voters were willing to pay for what they wanted. He advocated for discussion of another library operating levy. He opposed the reduction in branch library hours and questioned if the downtown library could absorb the additional patron visits that would result from the reduced hours. He was also interested in a compromise in the number of reduced branch library hours.

Ms. Ortiz also opposed the reduction in branch library hours. She supported another levy to maintain the desired service level, and emphasized the importance of the branch library in Bethel to area children, particularly in the summer time.

Mayor Piercy believed the libraries were a key part of the social service system because they provided people with places to go and things to do when they lacked resources to do other things. In addition, people used the library to get employment. She hoped that the reduction could be mitigated somewhat.

Ms. Syrett was interested in discussion of another levy, suggesting that, dependent on the amount involved, it could avoid service cuts and possibly free up General Fund moneys for other purposes.

Ms. Grube reported that it was too late to offer the voters a levy that would impact the FY13 budget.

Mr. Pryor recalled that the committee agreed to absorb the levy into the General Fund on an accelerated schedule because members believed the General Fund would ensure more funding stability; in addition, absorbing the levy provided an opportunity for another revenue-generating tax measure. He believed the committee needed to have a discussion about additional revenues and what precisely they would be used for. The library was just one need; human services were another.

## **VI. DISCUSSION, INTENDED MOTIONS**

Responding to a question from Mr. Poling, Ms. Grube indicated staff could provide estimates for a range of hours for the branch libraries.

Ms. Ortiz wanted the committee to allocate funding from the City budget to underwrite the costs of the Kids First service operated by Lane County. City Manager Ruiz concurred as to the importance of that service and pointed out the County might decide to defund other important services as well. He recommended that the City complete its budget process and await the outcome of the County budget process. If the council wanted to fill in service gaps it could do so through the supplemental budget process. Ms. Ortiz acknowledged the point but did not want the service to be dismantled to the point where the City would have to assume responsibility for it.

At the request of Ms. Miller, City Manager Ruiz reviewed the funding allocated by the council for Occupy Eugene.

There were no intended motions offered by committee members.

## **ADJOURN**

Ms. Syrett adjourned the meeting at 8:44 p.m.

*(Recorded by Kimberly Young)*