

# City council votes to develop living wage ordinance

Members meet to levy the ordinance, which would provide a higher wage for temporary city employees

By Jillian Daley  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Yesterday, city council members discussed a proposal for a Eugene living wage ordinance during the first work session held in Eugene concerning this issue.

The council voted unanimously to develop a city living wage ordinance that they will later decide to pass or reject.

"It's the quintessential economic development strategy," Eugene City Councilor Bonnie Bettman said during the work session. Bettman said raising city wages keeps money in the local economy, which is a sound

strategy for alleviating the current recession.

A living wage law is not a federal standard like the minimum wage. It usually focuses almost solely on full-time city workers.

However, the proposed ordinance would focus primarily on temporary city workers, who often receive lower pay. It would also increase the income of employees of business that have a contract with the city as well as employees of businesses that receive significant financial aid from the city.

During the work session, City Councilor Nancy Nathanson raised questions about the proposed ordinance, but eventually supported the proposal.

The effort to push the proposal, led chiefly by the Eugene-Springfield Solidarity Network, has been developing for some time.

ESSN organizer Sarah Jacobson said that at

first the group thought the living wage should be only a few dollars above the minimum wage, but as Eugene's cost of living has risen, so have ESSN's standards for their living wage proposal.

Last August, the Economic Policy Institute's 500-city study helped provide more impetus for new legislation. The findings showed that a one-adult, one-child family has to earn more than two times the federal poverty level to be making enough to sustain themselves. Since it is hard to determine a living wage value, the EPI compared it to the poverty level of the adult-child, two-person family.

The EPI's study listed \$11.42 an hour with health care benefits and \$14.28 an hour without as an appropriate wage for a one-adult, one-child family.

The ESSN used these findings to set the

wage standard for the proposed legislation.

However, there are reasons in addition to the EPI's study that have inspired the ESSN and more than 30 other community groups to support a new initiative.

"There are two issues," University labor education instructor Lynn Feekin said. "One, it's an issue of fairness, and two, it's an issue of accountability around the use of tax dollars." Feekin said that more tax dollars should support city workers, rather than being poured into city projects.

"It's very hard to gauge where this is going," Feekin said. "I assume that there will be many issues that follow, but at this point we're at the beginning of the process."

The City Council will later setup a hearing to vote on whether or not to pass the ordinance.

Contact the reporter at [jilliaandaley@dailymerald.com](mailto:jilliaandaley@dailymerald.com).

## Senate brief

### ASUO Student Senate hears special requests

The ASUO Student Senate held a meeting Monday to make more summer financial transfers and hear special requests from the Women's Law Forum, Outlaws, Project

Saferide and the ASUO Women's Center.

The Women's Law Forum requested a \$162 transfer to buy a new banner to display at conferences.

The WLF also requested \$750 to finance a program aimed at introducing first-year law students to the group.

Outlaws — a group representing gay, les-

bian, transgender and bisexual law students — requested \$230 to purchase a banner for their student group.


Saferide requested \$15,276 in transfers to cover payroll expenses. Student groups must always obtain senate confirmation when dealing with payroll accounts.

The ASUO Women's Center requested

\$1,122 to send the office coordinator to an international conference about campus sexual assault. The Center hopes the skills learned from the conference will benefit their sexual assault programs at the University.

The senate granted \$715 to cover registration to the conference and airfare.

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## Eviction

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which hurts him financially and emotionally.

"I have a wife that is very sick, and this is going to make an impact on our wage earning because she can't work," Sellars said.

Sue McGuire has owned Alder Street Market, located on 798 East 11th St., for 12 years, and stands to lose a significant amount of money because of the timing and short notice. McGuire said she had just bought her liquor licenses and paid other fees for the month, which amounts to between \$500 and \$1,000, and the fees and licenses are nontransferable.

"I'm very angry at the way it was done. It's a mean-spirited thing to expect businesses to move in 30 days," McGuire said.

McGuire plans to fight it. She's begun working with a Salem legislator to try to raise a bill to lengthen the amount of notice for business owners.

McGuire has made tentative arrangements for a new location, but she would not disclose the location. She said she wanted to move near campus, as students

are her main clientele.

Students who live in Sigma Nu, a nearby fraternity, say they will miss McGuire and Sellars and their businesses.

"I think everyone is going to miss Sue," University student and Sigma Nu member Geoff Kessler said. "She's been a great person to us. Even when we don't have money, she'll front it to us."

Despite the amount of time establishments have been in place and the friends the business owners have made, they will have to move on. Although Sellars and McGuire have made plans for their new business locations, the property owners' lack of an explanation for the evictions and the short notice has created some bitterness.

"Give me five minutes of four-letter words, and that pretty much explains how angry everyone down here is," Sellars said.

Wheeler Properties, LLC, could not be reached for comment, and its attorney, Standlee Potter, and the property management company, Jennings & Co. Property Management, would not comment.

Contact the reporter at [jilliaandaley@dailymerald.com](mailto:jilliaandaley@dailymerald.com).