

**ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL
STUDY SESSION MINUTES
Wednesday, February 19, 2025**

Mayor Graham called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Council Present: Mayor Graham, Councilors Knauer, DuQuenne, Bloom, and Kaplan.

Council Absent: Hansen and Dahle

Staff Present:

Sabrina Cotta	City Manager
Tighe O'Meara	Police Chief
Alissa Kolodzinski	City Recorder
Carmel Zahran	Assistant City Attorney
Dan Moulin	Deputy Chief
Alex Bonaparte	Ashland Police Officer

I. Public Input

(15 minutes – Public input or comment on City business not included on the agenda)

II. ELEA – Enhanced Law Enforcement Area

Discussion: Request made for meeting material to be more readily available ahead of time.

- Council discussed the intent of the study session for discussion about ELEA. There may or may not be direction for staff at the end of the meeting.
- O'Meara provided a power point presentation to aid in the conversation (attached)
 - Crime Data – CAP West Data has been provided annually since 2012 and includes calls for service for a variety of reasons in the downtown area intended to provide a metric for quality of life downtown. There has been a general trend down in the number of calls since 2011.
 - Cap East is showing a general increase in calls from 2012.
- There have been delays in hearing cases due to municipal backlog as well as a delay between when the Court processes sufficient violations to warrant a criminal complaint and when that is communicated to the Legal department for filing.
- Additional delays are due to failure to appear to trial as sentencing for crimes cannot proceed until there is a conviction by guilty plea or trial, whereas failure to appear for a violation can default to guilty and sentencing can proceed.
- Under the current system, three qualifying violation level convictions in an ELEA can result in an expulsion order – violation of that expulsion order will then result in being charged with the crime of trespassing.
- More streamlined processes exist regionally that have withstood federal challenge.

- Proposed changes:
 - After three or more qualifying violation charges, expulsion can be issued on an officer's authority with an option to appeal to the Judge within 10 days.
 - After one or more criminal charges in any court an expulsion can be issued with the same option to appeal.
 - Access to essential services (grocery, pharmacy, etc) will be included.
 - Elevate unauthorized burning to municipal court misdemeanor
 - Slight expansion of ELEA West to include the front lawn of the library, adjacent property, and the park area across the street.

Council discussed these recommended changes and how to make the ordinance and notification language in the violation itself simple and clear for those whose behavior it is intended to address. Graham clarified with O'Meara and Zahran that currently it is not the municipal court that initiates an expulsion order after three violation convictions, but rather the police or legal departments. Council discussed how might it be possible to streamline the process while maintaining appropriate separation of powers.

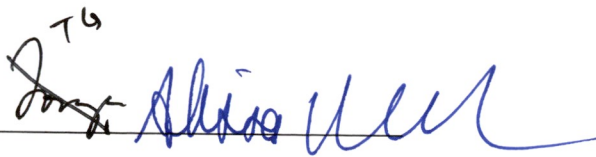
Public Comment – citizen spoke on their concerns related to the original ELEA proposal

Graham polled Councilors regarding direction to staff and discussed the difference between reckless vs. unauthorized burning:

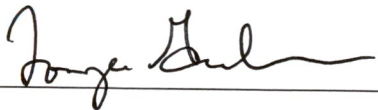
- Direction to staff to bring back a proposal to elevate unauthorized burning to a misdemeanor city-wide as a separate ordinance.
- Direction to staff to create a proposal for the expansion of ELEA West as outlined.
- Council would like to take up discussion on recommendations number one and two at another study session (1. allow for expulsions on officer's order and 2. Allow for crimes charge in a ELEA to lead to expulsion)

III. **Adjournment of Study Session**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

 ^{TG}

City Recorder Alissa Kolodzinski



Mayor Tonya Graham