

From: [Ina Vandever](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: Public Comment for the October 21st Council Work Session
Date: Tuesday, October 8, 2024 10:21:35 AM

Please save our beautiful library. It is vital to nurturing an informed welcoming community. Visit the library any day of the week and you will see a community in action as no other venue provides. It is not a luxury. It is part of the infrastructure of democracy.

From: [Kim Davis](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Cc: [citycouncil](#)
Subject: Yes for a Livability Levy
Date: Wednesday, October 9, 2024 1:38:12 PM

Dear Council Members:

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed Livability Levy. We need to increase our support for libraries, Center 50+ and our parks! Our city is flailing. The continual push for growth and development and the promotion of tourism is not addressing the lives of the citizens in this community.

Our library has the worst funding among OR libraries, and fewer staff and hours than comparable cities. What an embarrassment to our city. Our library provides the backbone to this community: as a very fun and interesting home away from home for young children learning to cherish reading and literature; as a safe haven and place to accommodate those who need places to escape excessive heat and cold; as a center for education via stacks of books and special programs addressing issues of our times, and as a place where community members come together to celebrate our cultures and arts. Cutting staff and/or hours is absolutely unacceptable.

As a senior, I greatly value the programming offered through Center 50+ and the South Salem senior center, as do most, if not all, seniors in our community. To become an 'age-friendly' community, the city will require an increase in services for its citizens, and most especially for our vulnerable elders who are often also homebound and/or disabled. Salem is home to an aging population and demand for services will continue to increase.

Still enjoying complete mobility, I cannot begin to state the importance of our parks to my physical and mental well being. As a daily walker, I cherish the close availability of well maintained parks and trails. As an avid birdwatcher, being in close proximity to natural environments is invaluable.

Cities allowed to deteriorate due to failures of funding and budgeting can be found throughout the United States. Don't let Salem join the ranks. Please support the livability levy and do everything possible to educate the community to its importance to increase support among our citizens.

Thank you.
Kim Davis
97306

From: [Karen Sjogren](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Cc: [citycouncil](#)
Subject: Livability levy
Date: Tuesday, October 8, 2024 12:12:38 PM

The purpose of this email is to ask and encourage the city council, after their October 21 work session, to put the livability levy on the ballot rather than a levy funding public safety. My reasons are as follows: (1) Funding for police has increased considerably (see Jim Scheppke's graph) whereas it has remained flat for libraries, in spite of population increases. Also, there are better means of funding the police. (2) Salem residents have consistently shown their willingness to fund both parks and libraries. They passed a bond issue which included improvements at Minto Brown, and a bond issue to renovate the main library. They should be given the chance to support funding to maintain these facilities. (3) Library levies have been successful in many other Oregon cities. (4) The Salem library has the worst funding of any major Oregon library. It is the most understaffed and open many fewer hours per week than peer libraries. It is positively shameful that the West Salem branch is only open 10 hours a week. (5) The main library is open only half as many hours as it was two decades ago. And, as someone who sat outside the library and collected petition signatures at that time, I can attest to the use of the library during those hours. (6) The child literacy rate is lower in Salem than elsewhere, in part because the library can't afford early literacy programs. So, please give Salem residents the opportunity to vote on supporting libraries and parks with a ballot issue next May. It is absolutely necessary, and there is every indication that the public will support it. Please confirm you have received this email.

From: [Merrilynn Rhoads](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: Public Comment for the October 21st Council Work Session
Date: Saturday, October 12, 2024 10:35:35 AM

I am in favor of more funding for the library. Being a reader, it's important to me that I can use these services. Our library (Salem) has recently cut its hours from 6 days to 5 days. Working citizens count on the extra weekend day (Sunday) to visit the library, which is now not available.

Thank you for your consideration,

Merrilynn Rhoads

cc:
citycouncil@cityofsalem.net

From: [Rainbow Olmstead](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Cc: [citycouncil](#)
Subject: Library funding
Date: Tuesday, October 8, 2024 12:12:42 PM

Hi! I'm writing to let you know that I support funding the library/etc. over the police/etc.
Thank you!

Rainbow Olmstead
1961 Fairgrounds Rd NE #101 Salem OR 97301

From: [Jim Scheppke](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Cc: [citycouncil](#)
Subject: Public Comment for the October 21st Council Work Session
Date: Tuesday, October 8, 2024 9:48:45 AM
Attachments: [Eight Reasons Why Our Library Should be First in Line.docx](#)

Dear Mayor and Council:

Please consider this testimony from Fund Our Libraries at your work session on October 21st.

Best,

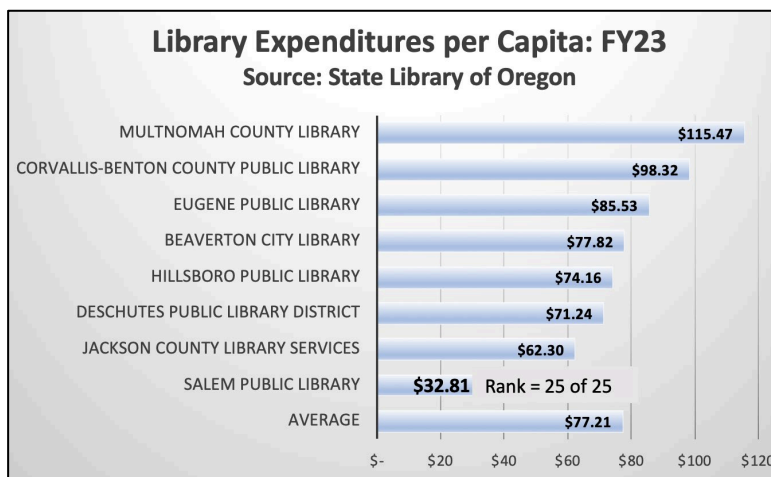
Jim Scheppke, Ward 2
jscheppke@comcast.net



Eight Reasons Why Our Library Should be First in Line (Ahead of Public Safety) for Better Funding

Reason #1: Our Library Has the Worst Funding of Any Major Oregon Library

The latest data from the State Library of Oregon for 2022-23 shows the Salem Public Library dead last in per capita expenditures of all 25 public libraries serving populations over 30,000. The chart below shows SPL far below our peer libraries. And when we get the data for 2023-24 in a few months the situation will look even worse because of the hiring freeze and budget cuts in that year.



Reason #2: Our Library Is Open Only Half of the Hours it Was Open Two Decades Ago

Today our main library is open only 38 hours a week and the West Salem Branch only 10 hours a week, a total of 48 hours per week. Two decades ago, when our population was about 40,000 less than today, our libraries were open twice that (96 hours)! And we also had a bookmobile making 27 stops a month throughout Salem

Library Hours in 2003

Hours

Central Library Hours
585 Liberty Street SE

*Sunday 1 - 5 PM
Monday 10 AM - 6 PM
Tuesday - Thursday 10 AM - 9 PM
Friday & Saturday 10 AM - 6 PM



For Reference and information call 503-588-6052.
24-hour automated information 503-589-7740

*Closed Sundays from June 2 through September 1

West Salem Branch Library Hours
395 Glen Creek Road NW

Sunday CLOSED
Monday Noon - 8 PM
Tuesday - Friday Noon - 5 PM
Saturday 10 AM - 5 PM
For information call 503-588-6301.

Library Hours in 2024

<p>Main Library</p> <p>585 Liberty St. SE Salem, OR 97301</p>  <p>Main Library Open Hours</p> <p>Tuesday 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Wednesday 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Thursday 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday 10 a.m.-5 p.m.</p>	<p>West Salem Branch</p> <p>395 Glen Creek Rd. NW Salem, OR 97304</p>  <p>West Salem Branch Open Hours</p> <p>Tuesday 1-6 p.m. Saturday 12-5 p.m.</p>
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Reason #3: Our Main Library is Open Many Fewer Hours Per Week Than at Our Peer Libraries and Even Less Than in Much Smaller Cities

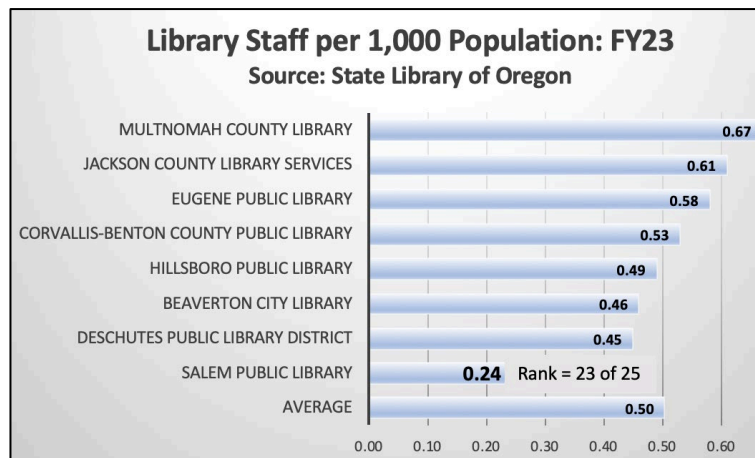
The open hours at our main library do not even come close to those at our peer libraries. And there are even 20 Oregon cities *with populations under 10,000* whose libraries are open more hours per week than our library!

	Days of Service at Main Library	Weekly Service Hours At Main Library
Deschutes Public Library	7 days	71
Eugene Public Library	7 days	64
Corvallis-Benton Co. Library	7 days	62
Hillsboro Public Library	7 days	56
Beaverton City Library	7 days	56
Jackson Co. Library (Medford)	7 days	54
Salem Public Library	5 days	38

	Population	Weekly Service Hours at Main Library
Gold Beach	5,221	55
North Plains	5,106	52
Seaside	7,157	51.5
Sheridan	6,377	48
Toledo	6,557	48
Warrenton	6,352	47
Banks	6,474	45
Coquille	4,710	45
Myrtle Point	5,555	45
Garden Home	5,528	45
Clatskanie	6,214	44
Burns	7,537	44
Milton-Freewater	9,847	44
Dufur	2,027	43
Echo	905	40
Enterprise	2,080	40
Lakeview	8,177	40
Maupin	2,612	40
Stanfield	3,033	40
Vernonia	2,403	40
Salem	177,694	38

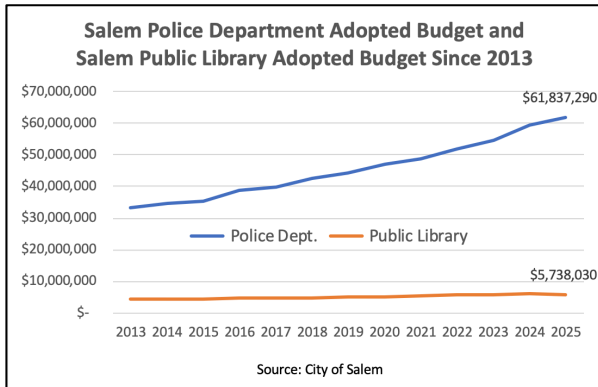
Reason #4: Our Library Is By Far the Most Understaffed Among Our Peer Libraries

With our substandard library funding it should not be a surprise that our library staffing is way below our peer libraries, and 23rd out of all 25 Oregon libraries serving more than 30,000 population. This will look even worse when the State Library releases data for 2023-24.



Reason #5: Our Library Is Much More Underfunded and Understaffed Than Our Police Department

The Salem Police Department’s budget has nearly doubled since 2013 while the Library budget has been basically flat. And the latest data from the FBI shows that Salem Police Department staffing (employee count, not including vacancies) is 80% of the average for peer cities. Data from the State Library shows that the Library’s employee count is not even half of the average of its peers!

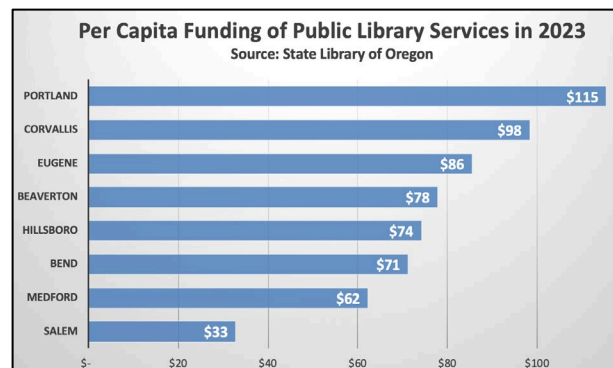
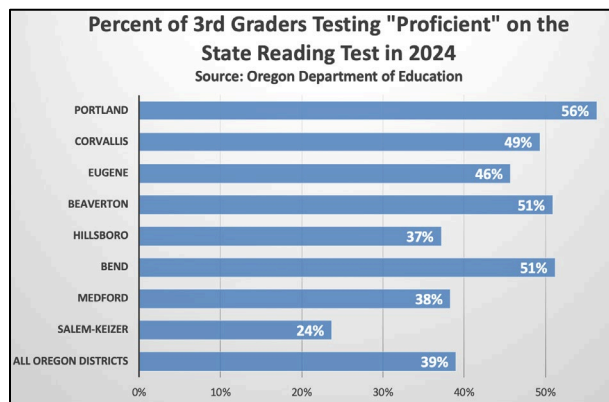


City	Police Department		Library	
	Employees per 1,000 Pop.	% of Average	Employees Per 1,000 Pop.	% of Average
Beaverton	1.85	113%	0.46	82%
Bend	1.28	79%	0.45	80%
Eugene	1.85	113%	0.58	104%
Gresham	1.28	79%	0.67	120%
Hillsboro	1.66	102%	0.49	88%
Medford	1.75	107%	0.61	109%
Portland	1.76	108%	0.67	120%
Salem	1.31	80%	0.24	43%
PEER AVERAGE	1.63		0.56	

Source: FBI, State Library of Oregon

Reason #6: Our Children Are Not Learning to Read Because Of Inadequate Library Services

It is no coincidence that 3rd graders living in cities with well-funded public libraries score much better on the state reading test. These libraries are *prioritizing early literacy* with frequent library reading programs for preschool children and outreach to daycares and preschools. They have the staff to do this. Our library does not. The fact that only 24% of Salem-Keizer 3rd graders test “proficient” is an indicator of our failure to adequately fund our libraries.



Reason #7: There are Other Ways to Better Fund Public Safety Than A Local Option Levy

The Salem Revenue Task Force recommended eight different options for increasing General Fund revenue in the City budget, in addition to reform of the Operations Fee which the Council already planned to pursue. Many of these would make sense as a way to improve funding for public safety. Specifically, the Council should consider Payment in Lieu of Taxes funding from the state, reform of the Operations Fee, and a Business License Tax before considering a local option levy for public safety.

Recommended Revenue Options
Overarching Considerations
Revenue Options Summary
Near-Term Revenue Option Details
A. Business License Fees
B. Franchise Fee Increase
C. Urban Renewal – Increase Frozen Base
Medium-Term Revenue Option Details
D. Local Option Property Tax Levy
E. Personal Income Tax
Long-Term Revenue Option Details
F. Payment in Lieu of Taxes (From the County, State, or Federal Government)
G. Intergovernmental Agreements & Entities
H. Tax Reform/Restructuring

Reason #8: 111 Cities in Oregon Have Dedicated Funding From a Voter-Approved Levy or Taxing District. Why Not Salem?

For many decades voters have said ‘yes’ to funding their public libraries with dedicated property tax funding from a levy or taxing district. In 2024 that is true for 111 cities in Oregon. Why? Because Oregonians love their libraries. They want good libraries for themselves and their children. *How can anyone think Salem would be any different?* Salem voters showed their love for our library in 2017 when 62% said ‘yes’ to an \$18 million bond measure to renovate our main library. It’s time to ask them again to vote for a modest tax increase so that we can once again have a full service library for Salem.

OREGON LIBRARIES FUNDED WITH LOCAL OPTION LEVIES IN 2024	
Aloha Community Library	North Plains Public Library
Baker County Library District	Sherwood Public Library
Banks Public Library	Stayton Public Library
Beaverton City Library	Sweet Home Public Library
Cedar Mill Library	Tigard Public Library
Cornelius Public Library	Tillamook County Library
Corvallis-Benton County Public Library	Tualatin Public Library
Eugene Public Library	Union Carnegie Public Library
Fern Ridge Library District	Warrenton Community Library
Forest Grove City Library	West Slope Community Library
Garden Home Community Library	
Hillsboro Public Library	