

**From:** [Anne Mozell](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** city taxes  
**Date:** Monday, November 25, 2024 4:55:42 PM

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This is for public distribution if needed :

Parks, sidewalks, library services, fire fighting and police services all contribute to the civic good. This in turn improves citizens' quality of life and very likely decreases crime, saving money. City Councillors should be interested in the common good, and do all they can cheerlead for these services, and to find ways to fund these services. There are very wealthy individuals who make their money in the city of Salem, and they should be encouraged to contribute in the form of taxes, building those sidewalks, and supporting the Commons.

**From:** [Alison Taylor](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment on Item 5.d  
**Date:** Monday, November 25, 2024 4:53:40 PM

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I'm adding my voice to those who are advocating for a local option levy to fund our library, parks and recreation facilities, as well as the 50+ Center. While other city services are important to the wellbeing of our city, they should not be funded at levels that are detrimental to the above mentioned services, that improve livability for so many in our wonderful city.

There has never been a more important time in our history to ensure that we maintain a vibrant, well funded public library system in Salem. Literacy is the key to a strong democracy.

When I worked as an SPL outreach librarian in the 1980s/90s, we won national recognition, and awards, for having exemplary programs that other libraries wanted to emulate. As a parent, I was fortunate to be able to make weekly library visits to check out books with my sons, attend story times, go to special events in the auditorium, as well as go to special programs offered during the summer vacation. Families today deserve these same options, and a local option levy would allow us to increase library hours, especially in the evenings and weekends which are the only times available for many families.

Later as an educator, I relied on the public library as a way to supplement my classroom library. On each visit I checked out 50 books that I could read/share with young children for the sheer joy of enjoying a wonderful book together, as well as developing vocabulary and comprehension skills that are critical to lifelong literacy. Many of our schools don't have librarians on their staff, or the money to add current literature to their school libraries, and our public library is an amazing resource for educators, families, grandparents/guardians, who are charged with educating our collective children.

Libraries are changing with our times, but getting books into childrens' hands has never been more important. Getting high quality, varied literature into the hands of our children/teens equates with children being more academically successful.

Salem is a diverse city and it's citizens deserve a vibrant public library system. A local option levy would allow us to provide outreach to residents of Salem who currently don't have ways to get to the main library, or West Salem branch library. Bookmobiles are a great way to get library materials and programming to neighborhoods, especially those where large numbers of families with school age children live, as well as seniors who might not have a way to get to the library themselves.

I sincerely hope that at the City Council meeting this evening, a motion will be put forward to fund the Salem Public Library. We need an option that allows hours to be increased, services considered for parts of our city that are currently library deserts, and to open both the main branch, and the West Salem Library with increased hours, particularly in the evenings and weekends. There is no better use of our tax dollars.

Yours truly,  
Alison Taylor

**From:** [Bilal Jones](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** Bilal Jones: Public Comment for Salem City Council Meeting (11/25/2024)  
**Date:** Monday, November 25, 2024 4:59:10 PM

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*This comment is for the public record.*

My name is Bilal Jones. I have been a resident of Salem since January 2022. I have enjoyed my time here, experiencing the wonders of the PNW, but the issues plaguing Salem are quite concerning and perplexing.

Right now, we face the closure of our library, the inability to maintain necessary staffing for our emergency services (police and fire safety), and may have to sacrifice popular and crucial community services and events such as the services provided by Center 50+ and our city's "Movies in The Park" summer program. As a resident who has become increasingly aware of these impending cuts, I am greatly disturbed and motivated to be involved in any way to prevent these actions.

I do know that the council has proposed a "livability levy" to fund the Library, Parks, and Center 50+. While I admire the efforts of concerned citizens who have come forward to defend and argue for these services- in particular the library. But, my fear is that the levy doesn't address the most concerning potential budget cut for most Salem residents (which would be potential cuts to emergency services). While I don't believe any poll is without flaws and bias, there are reasonable arguments for why people in Salem would be worried about cuts to emergency services. Both fatal car crashes and drug overdoses are two public safety concerns that can't be properly addressed without adequate staffing. The city's goal for 1.5 officers per 1000 people has never been realized which is alarming for a city the size of Salem.

But, maybe even more importantly, my issue with the levy is that I find that it contributes, albeit indirectly, to this notion that in making "hard decisions" for the city's municipal government, we have to choose between funding public safety and funding "livability". Funding police or funding the library. I have seen this dichotomy present in almost every conversation I've had (either in real life or online) about Salem's budgetary crisis and in many ways it's used insidiously to prevent any sort of change from the status quo.

In my opinion, I would prefer a levy that funds both emergency services and the library. I believe that much could be gained by combining the budgetary priority that has the most common support across the city (emergency services) as well as the priority that seems to have the most public attention and enthusiasm (the library). In addition, I believe that it's in the city council's, and all of Salem's, best interest to fight back against the cynicism that lurks in so much public discourse that makes us believe that someone cannot want to feel safe and want a nice, quiet place to read and gather.

**From:** [Taylor Sarman](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** Nov 25th Council Agenda Public Comment  
**Date:** Monday, November 25, 2024 4:48:02 PM  
**Attachments:** [SPLF Support Letter.pdf](#)

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Greetings,

Please see the attached comment on behalf of the Salem Public Library Foundation (SPLF) for tonight's City Council meeting.

Taylor Sarman  
Executive Director  
Salem Public Library Foundation  
C: 541.910.5711



## Salem Public Library Foundation

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November 24, 2024

Mayor Hoy and Members of the Salem City Council:

I'm pleased to submit these comments on behalf of the Salem Public Library Foundation. As you are likely aware, the Salem Public Library Foundation was established in 1981 and is a community-based group of library supporters who raise and administer funds for enhancement projects and programs at the Salem Public Library. The Salem Public Library Foundation provides resources to support literacy, promote arts and culture, and fund library improvements. In addition, the Foundation partners with the Library on a variety of programs for children, teens, families and adults, and views the Salem Public Library as Salem's community center.

The Salem Public Library Foundation was encouraged to see such strong support expressed from community members for the Library during the City of Salem's Budget Committee Meeting on November 13th. We are excited that the City Council is exploring the referral of a local option levy to support the Library and other community services on its November 25th City Council Agenda. We believe it is vitally important that the City invests and prioritizes library services as a cornerstone for equitable access to the arts, technology and public gathering spaces. We are confident there is strong and broad support for the Library in our community.

While we recognize that there are still several details to be explored and considered regarding the levy, the Foundation wants to express its strong support for the Salem Public Library and elevate its importance in these continued conversations. Any operating levy referral must ensure and prioritize investments in the Library and the incredible staff that faithfully serve our community day after day, and we hope to see you and your constituents continued support for its inclusion.

As city leaders continue to explore a local option levy referral, we stand ready to help support efforts to raise awareness with our community about the vital importance of our Library and work collaboratively with other community partners to grow support from the community.

Best regards,

Taylor Sarman  
Executive Director

**From:** [William Wherity](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** Proposed Livability Levy  
**Date:** Monday, November 25, 2024 3:04:28 PM

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Dear Counselors and Mayor,

I am concerned about the prospects for success of the proposed livability levy. As I understand it, polls suggest it won't be passed by voters shy of additional taxes, and similar measures have not fared well recently in the region. My worry is that should such a levy fail, it would be thought of as a mandate to decimate services.

What polls better is a public safety levy. As we know, the police and fire departments account for the majority of the general fund. I urge the council to adequately fund such things as the libraries and the parks, and then let voters decide whether ballooning public safety costs are appropriate. If a public safety levy failed it is certain that the police and fire departments would not be shuttered, but it would send a message that these departments need to make sacrifices too.

What is certain is that Salem needs libraries and parks to make it a livable city. These services are essential to educate and recreate our citizens. A city without commons and "third spaces" would be an embarrassing affront to our democratic ideals, and I implore the council to act with courage and creativity to ensure this doesn't happen.

Thank you for your time,

William Wherity  
Ward 3