

**From:** [Greg Macdonald](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** Vote count; re: Feb 24 Council agenda item 5b  
**Date:** Sunday, February 23, 2025 6:40:04 PM

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Context: You have positioned the Livability Levy as needed for the Library, Center 50+ and Parks. Judging by the November 2023 special election (1) and the 2024 general election (2), we can expect 30,000 to 64,000 Salem voters to cast a ballot for this levy. While the public participation in city meetings and their feedback given directly to councilors have been significant and definitely show an interest in and need for these services, the number of outspoken citizens is actually just in the tens or hundreds. A generous number might be a few hundred voices. But, this only tells us there are a relatively small group of voters who are passionate about the issue. It doesn't necessarily mean that over 50% of those who vote will share that opinion.

Question: Considering the efforts made for the 2023 Payroll Tax and the success of that campaign, what is your plan to capture the 14 to 31 thousand more votes needed to pass the measure?

References:

(1) Special Election 11/7/2023, City of Salem Payroll Tax

<https://www.co.marion.or.us/CO/elections/Results/Documents/20231107/Cumulative%20Results-11-30-2023%2011-26-51%20AM.pdf>

(2) General Election 11/5/24, Salem Mayor

<https://www.co.marion.or.us/CO/elections/Results/Documents/20241105/Cumulative%20Results-12-2-2024%2007-23-18%20PM.pdf>

**From:** [Greg Macdonald](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** Public expectation and trust - re: Feb 24 Council agenda item 5b  
**Date:** Sunday, February 23, 2025 6:42:03 PM

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Context: The positioning of the Livability Levy sets the expectation that it is all about funding for the Library, Center 50+ and Parks. However, if the levy fails then this will mean cuts across the board. If the levy fails and then we cut the known highest priority of citizens - police, fire and emergency medical services - it is reasonable to expect that many, if not most, voters will be surprised. Some will surely posit that if they had known the true impact they would have voted differently. At least some voters will surely be angry.

Question: How will failure of the levy impact public trust in city government? How do you plan to deal with the publicity and image impact?

**From:** [Greg Macdonald](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** Public expectation of levy cost - re: Feb 24 Council agenda item 5b  
**Date:** Sunday, February 23, 2025 6:45:11 PM

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Context: Statements about the Livability Levy, including an article in the Salem Reporter (1), suggest that the average cost of the levy will be about \$229 a year. Human behavior suggests that most people who encounter this statement, will assume their bill will be about this much or maybe a little more if they think of their home as being above average. This is the expectation homeowners will have when they get their property tax bill, and this number will set the expectation of renters when their landlord explains a raise in rent due to the levy. Their reaction to their actual bill relative this expectation will translate to trust and satisfaction with Salem government.

Question: What is the median taxable base of homes in Salem, thus how many households will face a tax bill greater than \$230? What is the distribution of values for the half of Salem households that are above the median? Most importantly, how disappointed might Salem property owners be when they get their actual bill and what can we do to set a better expectation so there is less dissatisfaction and reduced negative impact on citizen trust of city government?

References:

(1) "Council opts to present voters with lower of two proposed property tax increases"

<https://www.salemreporter.com/2025/02/11/council-opts-to-present-voters-with-lower-of-two-proposed-property-tax-increases/>

**From:** [Keith Norris](#)  
**To:** [Paul Tigan](#); [Linda Nishioka](#); [Shane Matthews](#); [Deanna Gwyn](#); [Dr. Irvin M Brown](#); [Vanessa Nordyke](#); [Micki Varney](#)  
**Cc:** [CityRecorder](#); [Scott Archer](#)  
**Subject:** SPRAB - Support for local option levy  
**Date:** Sunday, February 23, 2025 8:54:08 PM  
**Attachments:** [SPRAB Revenue-Levy-Support Feb2025.pdf](#)

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Dear Mayor Hoy and City Councilors -- please see the attached letter from the Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board in support of the \$0.98/\$1,000 Community Services and Livability local option levy.

Best,

Keith

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**Keith Norris** He | Him | His  
[keith.norris.salem@gmail.com](mailto:keith.norris.salem@gmail.com)  
217.855.6324

# Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

## (SPRAB)

February 21, 2025

Dear Mayor Hoy and City Councilors:

I write to express the Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board's **support for the proposed \$0.98 per \$1,000 of assessed value Community Services and Livability Local Option Levy to provide funds for parks and recreation programs, Center 50+ and the public library for the next 5 years.**

The Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board provides recommendations and guidance to the City regarding our park and recreation lands, facilities and programs. Our eight volunteer board members, appointed by the City Council, receive input from the community to guide our recommendations aimed at enhancing Salem's >90 parks and the natural resources and recreation opportunities they provide across their 2,500 acres.

We see the proposed livability levy as the most appropriate and expedient option available to avoid damaging budget shortfalls in the next budget cycle. Potential cuts could drastically impact existing access to our parks system, reduce services and available infrastructure in our parks, and limit the availability of recreational programming. These cuts would have disproportionate impacts on families and youth, and degrade the overall value of the Salem community.

Our board believes that maintaining these community services is essential for our city. Parks and recreation programs are key functions that help our community connect. Thousands of city residents participate in recreation programs each year, and thousands more benefit and enjoy our parks on a regular basis. Parks and recreation opportunities also bring in visitors and generate millions of dollars in economic impacts for our city each year. Losing these services will be detrimental to each of our city's residents, our city's economy, and our city's future.

Our board recognizes that passage of this levy will provide a degree of certainty in funding for parks, recreation, Center 50+, and the public library over the next 5 years. We remain concerned, however, about the long-term plans to secure budget funds for these critical services and offer our services to assist you in creatively working on a more long-term solution.

**We urge you to adopt Resolution No. 2025-6 and put the 5-year Community Services and Livability local option levy to Salem voters in May.** Parks, recreation, Center 50+ and the public library are a critical part of making our community more welcoming, livable, and enjoyable. We strongly urge you to consider this levy and move forward with plans to generate revenues that will support our community.

Sincerely,



Keith Norris  
Chair, Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board  
Member, 2024 Revenue Task Force