

From: [Karen Sjogren](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#); [Sandy Whittington](#)
Subject: Proposed budget cut alternatives
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The following are my comments on the alternative budget cuts, to be considered this evening, to be entered into the public record. I did not vote for the payroll tax as it is unfair. It taxes those who live outside of Salem but work here, rarely if ever using the services the tax supports. On the other hand, it does not tax retirees who live here, such as myself, who do use services such as parks and libraries more heavily because we have spare time and live here. The tax is also unwieldy to administrate. I'm sure the tax will fail, so I offer my thoughts on budget cuts. (1) DO NOT CUT THE LIBRARY BUDGET AT ALL, HOURS, PERSONNEL, CUSTODIAL AT EITHER LOCATION. This includes events at the adjacent auditorium and downstairs meeting rooms. The main library recently had a thorough expensive remodel and you simply cannot reduce the avail ability of this beautiful facility to the public who paid for it. The West Salem branch is located on land owned by Roth's and leased for free, so long as it is used as a library a sufficient number of hours a week. The construction was funded in part by local residents and others. Closing it down would be an insult to Mr, Roth and the founders, and possibly eliminate the free lease. It is also extremely valuable to residents who cannot make it to the main library. Plus, it is part of our neighborhood. City Council passed the recent bond issue in part based on a promise to build a branch library in East Salem. I'm all for it. But to now close the one existing branch library due to budget concerns would be hypocritical, or I believe it is known as a bait and switch. (2) Salem has an extensive park system, parks of all sizes and in all of our neighborhoods. It costs a lot of money to keep up the parks, even with considerable volunteer help. I'm glad they finally got new facilities and have upgraded their equipment. But you still have to pay personnel who maintain the parks and make them even better with tree plantings, etc. And you absolutely must have clean restrooms at the larger parks as a matter of public health and convenience. The splash pads are critical on hot summer days. A very important addition to the park system recently has been a Park Ranger, who has improved the larger parks by his presence in a major way. The City should hire another Park Ranger. We have a lot of parks over a wide geographical area and some are quite large. The ranger reduces the need for law enforcement in the parks as well. (3) Homeless population. This is an enormous problem not unique to Salem and I do not know how to solve it. The parks need to be free of these campers because they degrade the parks, demoralize parks personnel, and discourage legitimate park use. In terms of funding, it should not be at the expense of funding libraries and parks, which are used by taxpayers. (4) The most painless cuts to my mind are eliminating positions not filled at present, and instigating furlough days for present employees. Thank you for considering my comments.