

**From:** [April Brenden-Locke](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [citycouncil](#); [Julie Hoy](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for the January 21st Work Session  
**Date:** Thursday, January 16, 2025 7:40:18 AM

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Dear Mayor Hoy and Salem City Councilors,

My name is April Brenden-Locke, and I live in South Salem. I urge you to support a Livability Levy that sufficiently funds city parks, Center 50+, and the city libraries.

I know the city is facing a large budget shortfall, and these city services are critical to our community. I love our local parks and visit parks in my neighborhood often. I take the dogs for a walk and see people I know or recognize in the neighborhood. Our parks make me feel part of the community. Well-maintained parks feel safer than neglected spaces and invite more use. This levy would allow our parks to remain open and maintained.

I would like to use the downtown library during the week, but it is only open when I and many other people in the city are at work. I would like to see more library hours, not fewer. This levy would provide critical funding for services and convenient hours at the libraries to allow as many people as possible to access these services.

During this post-Covid period, when many in the community are dealing with loneliness and mental health challenges, these community spaces provide a place for people to gather, learn, and enjoy the outdoors. Please help us preserve these important places.

Thank you,  
April Brenden-Locke

**From:** [AJ Vaughan](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for the January 21st Work Session  
**Date:** Thursday, January 16, 2025 10:10:26 AM

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Dear City Council Members,

Save the Library! I was shocked when I saw that the Salem Public Library is the worst funded major library in the state and that other libraries have better funding and hours. This is absolutely terrible and it cannot continue. No more cuts!

Salem should be the best library in the state. Local schools and colleges need an outstanding resource center as well as other people.

I always enjoyed going to the library on Sunday afternoons when the parking was free. The atmosphere was relaxing and there are a lot of people out there that still like to read real books, newspapers, magazines. It's great to be able to rent movies too.

**From:** [Ai-Lan Whitson](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for the January 21st Work Session  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 15, 2025 7:43:11 PM

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Hello,

Please keep our library open since our library is a safe and inclusive space for people of all ages, cultures, and backgrounds. My son was 13 months of age when we first moved here. He grew up with invaluable story times at this library. He still has some baby books that look brand new because he knew the importance of taking good care of books thanks to this library. He is now a smart, educated person with great critical thinking skills and graduated Summa Cum Laude from UO because we started to go to the library at a very early age.

Furthermore, this library has just been beautifully remodeled and I love this library. I spend some of my quiet time at this library to browse books, read books/magazines and/or just chill. Besides, we live in the capital city of Oregon and what would a capital city be without a library?

Thank you so much for your consideration!

Take care, Stay well and Stay safe,  
~ Ai-Lan (*Pronouns: She, Her, Hers*)

**From:** [Becka Brisbin](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for the January 21st Work Session  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 15, 2025 1:14:40 PM

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Dear City Council Members,

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for including the Livability Levy on the May 20th ballot to preserve and enhance our library services. As someone whose life was profoundly shaped by our public library system, I can personally testify to its vital importance as both a sanctuary and a springboard for opportunity.

In the 1980s, I was an unsheltered youth with my teenage mother, and the library became our sanctuary. From the bookmobile to the main library building itself, these spaces provided us with safety, warmth, and dignity during challenging times. We would spend entire days there while my mother gathered resources. I remember watching movies in the auditorium, attending guest readings, and most importantly, discovering the transformative power of books.

The library's summer reading programs became a highlight of my childhood when I was 8 and 9 years old. However, it was a pre-teen/teenage writing group led by a local educator when I was 12 that truly changed the trajectory of my life. In that group, we received story prompts and encouragement to develop our writing abilities. That early support and guidance helped nurture my passion for writing, and today, I am a published author, constantly working on new books and articles. Without the encouragement I received in that writing group, I might never have seriously pursued becoming a published author.

Today, as a small business owner and active community member, I see how our library continues to serve as a vital resource and safe haven for youth and families facing similar challenges to those I once experienced. The library's groups, clubs, and programs continue to provide the same essential combination of sanctuary and opportunity that was so crucial in my own life.

The proposed Livability Levy would ensure that these life-changing services not only continue but expand to meet our growing community's needs. It would help maintain appropriate staffing levels, update materials and technology, and preserve operating hours that make the library accessible to working families and those who need it most.

In today's digital age, libraries have evolved to become even more vital as community hubs that bridge the digital divide and provide trusted information resources. They offer technology training, research assistance, and access to digital resources that many of our residents could not otherwise afford.

I urge you to place the Livability Levy on the May ballot and allow our community to invest in this essential institution. The relatively modest cost to taxpayers will yield tremendous returns in terms of educational achievement, workforce development, and community vitality. More importantly, it will ensure that our libraries can continue to serve as a sanctuary and launching pad for those who need it most.

Our library system needs sustainable funding to continue serving future generations. Please

support this measure and help ensure that Salem remains a city that values education, opportunity, and community engagement.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

In love and buttons,

-Becka Brisbin

Salem, OR Resident

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**From:** [Bonnie Heitsch](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [Vanessa Nordyke](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for the January 21st Work Session  
**Date:** Thursday, January 16, 2025 12:52:33 PM

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Please refer a Livability Levy out to the voters in May. Our community is a community because of the public services that connect individuals to each other and to the greater world. Our library is a vibrant hub of activity of people of all ages. Salem is the City of Trees because we plant and take care of our tree canopy. Our parks are alive with children and adults bonding with neighbors and with nature. Some of us remember Salem before we invested in the development of Riverfront Park, the construction or rehabilitation of the pedestrian bridges and splash pads and safe playground equipment. Let's not go back. Let's find a way to go forward. Together.

Thank you,  
Bonnie Heitsch

**From:** [Chris Clarke](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [Julie Hoy](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for the January 21st Work Session  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 15, 2025 11:48:57 AM

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Please be sure to include the LIVABILITY LEVY proposal to our upcoming May Ballot.

Our parks, libraries & Center 50 + are not only vital for our citizens; but are good for our local businesses. Salem is a lovely city to live in, however we have very few attractions to bring in visitors. Our parks , in particular, provide this. Our IRON MAN & WOMAN events are a prime example.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Clarke  
736 Rural Ave S, Salem, OR 97302  
503-910-2080  
[cclarke777@gmail.com](mailto:cclarke777@gmail.com)

**From:** [David Craig](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** I support the Salem Public Libraries.  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 15, 2025 10:26:13 PM

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I support the Salem Public Libraries, and they are an essential public service that complements my role as an educator at Willamette University. Every year encourage and engage my students in the American tradition of public libraries and appreciate how the holdings of Salem Public Library are distinct from Willamette U and reflect the Salem-Keizer community.

I also champion the American tradition of public libraries in civic life and that everyone who can have a library card should get one and use it - it is the responsibility of every informed citizen to vote in every election and to stay informed about public interest issues. The library is a shared resource valuable to folks, no matter who they vote for, and is also an especially important resource that supports those with low resources.

Libraries are crucial to help create and strengthen reading habits in children from birth to adulthood. I grew up in Scappoose, OR, where the public library was often threatened. Neither of my parents went to college, but they prized the variety and abundance of resources in the public library, and they never balked at paying more taxes to keep the library open. They also appreciate Carnegie and the elite donor class of past ages that promoted public good with their extraordinary fortunes. I wish today's billionaires were modeling traditions for library support, but until they do it is essential for taxpayers to support our libraries.

The Library has already taken severe budget cuts and is only open 48 hours per week at both locations, about half the hours the libraries were open two decades ago.

We need a full-service library open seven days a week at the main branch and five days a week at the West Salem Branch, with evening hours at both locations.

We already have the worst-funded major library in the state, with less than half the library funding per capita of libraries in Eugene, Hillsboro, and Beaverton. Our library cannot sustain any more funding cuts.

There are 37 cities in Oregon with populations under 20,000 whose main libraries are open more hours than ours. And there are 10 cities with populations under 6,000 whose libraries are open more than just 38 hours per week, like our main library!

Please find a way to keep our Library funded.

David P. Craig  
445 Leslie St SE, Salem, OR 97301  
.--  
David P. Craig ([he/him](#))  
[Professor of Biology](#)  
[Willamette University](#)  
900 State Street SE, Salem, OR 97301  
[dpccraig@willamette.edu](mailto:dpccraig@willamette.edu)  
[Office Hours by appointment](#)



**From:** [Dorothy Kimball](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [salemcitycouncil@cityofsalem.net](mailto:salemcitycouncil@cityofsalem.net)  
**Subject:** January 21, 2025 Budget Meeting  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 15, 2025 9:59:50 AM

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I would like to express my support for the Salem Livability Levy to be debated at the meeting.

I consider the library as a critical service to the residents of our city including those of all socioeconomic groups. It is hard to imagine a state capital without a functional library.

Although I'm not able to come in person, I'll look forward to watching the meeting on youtube. Thanks to whoever arranged to provide that option. Thanks also to all of the council members for their hard work and service to our community.

Dorothy Kimball  
4124 Duane Dr. S.  
Salem, OR 97302

**From:** [debbie lockhart](#)  
**To:** [Julie Hoy](#); [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Funding for Community Spaces  
**Date:** Thursday, January 16, 2025 3:40:47 PM

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Dear Mayor Hoy and Councilor Brown:

I'm reaching out to you today as a strong supporter of our library, parks, and Center 50+, and I urge your support of these vital community services.

**Please refer a bold Community Livability Levy to support the Salem Public Library, City Parks, and Center 50+!**

Salem residents rely on these community spaces and it is paramount that the City Council prioritize revenue for all three of these services. As a growing coalition, we stand together in support of these services and urge you to do the same.

I am a frequent user of the library and would be lost without it. If you are unwilling to support a levy, please consider adding a fee to residents' water bill to allow our parks, library and senior center to continue operating. Since voters have made it impossible to increase taxes but the minimum wage and, therefore, the cost of living continues to rise, we have to be creative in funding the things that make our community livable.

Thank you in advance for your support of our library, parks and Center 50+!

Debbie Lockhart, Salem Resident

**From:** [Debra Vassallo](#)  
**To:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Cc:** [Tony Vassallo](#)  
**Subject:** Support A Livability Levy  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 15, 2025 1:50:29 PM

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Good afternoon,

I fully support putting a Livability Levy on the May 21st ballot for the City of Salem to fund the Salem Public Library, parks maintenance and Center 50+. It must be large enough for our main library to provide the services it has provided in the past. We need more funding rather than less.

If you want to attract new businesses to Salem, you need a high quality of life for its citizens. We need a strong library and well maintained parks. What would a prospective business think of a city with no public library? A city with deteriorating parks? Not much.

The library means so much to me. My sons grew up going to the library and still have a love of reading today. We check out books on a weekly basis. The library is a community center with computer services to help those looking for a job.

It brings reading programs to children. Do you know that there are no librarians is Salem-Keizer Public Schools? All the more reason for vibrant library services for kids.

For a capitol city to not have a full-service library would be an utter catastrophe. It would be an embarrassment.

Please put the Salem Livability Levy on the ballot and please make it an amount to make our the City of Salem proud!

With kind regards,  
Debra and Tony Vassallo

**From:** [emily9972@comcast.net](mailto:emily9972@comcast.net)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [CityRecorder](#); [Julie Hoy](#); [Linda Nishioka](#)  
**Subject:** please consider a Livability Levy  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 15, 2025 11:42:23 AM

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Hello, City Council Members and Mayor,

I am the Volunteer Coordinator for Mission Street Parks Conservancy. We partner with the City to help preserve, maintain, enhance, and interpret Bush's Pasture Park. Our volunteers work every Tuesday morning March through November planting, weeding, mulching, pruning, creating new spaces like the Woodland Garden. Many volunteers are often at the park on other days working on projects, photographing, assisting with children's activities, or just enjoying the beautiful spaces. This means that our group, with its close connection to the park, understands fully what could happen if city services are reduced further. We've already seen the results of vandalism, homelessness, theft, and of course the fatal shooting last year.

If Park services are cut, a downward spiral of decline would occur. Parks would become less safe, so residents would not frequent parks as often, leading to more theft, vandalism, destruction of habitat, potential fire risks, and more. Even with our current funding levels, monitoring parks is extremely difficult. Earlier this week, there was evidence of a "camp" fire near The Bush House!

If a state of decline occurs, plants will suffer from neglect and abuse. Infrastructure will deteriorate. Neglect will certainly lead to an increase in future spending in order to restore our parks' safety and beauty. Just like home repairs, it's much less expensive to take care of issues now than deferring maintenance.

I know our Libraries and Center 50+ centers also are in need of money. But the people of Salem deserve to have parks that are safe and well taken care of.

Thank you for your consideration,

Emily Standish

Salem OR

**From:** [Gretchen Coppedge](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for January 21st Work Session  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 15, 2025 1:52:40 PM

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As an educator and active community volunteer I request a Livability Levy be placed on the May 20th ballot.

Our youngest citizens are the hope for the future of our city and state. They deserve to have their future success supported by schools and the community. Sadly the schools are struggling to provide the educational support these youngsters deserve. For example, schools do not have sufficient staff to allow for librarians and library aides. The very people who could give student support within the school libraries are being tasked with substitute teaching roles and having to 'cover' for teachers. (Salem Reporter)

At the same time Salem's Public Library hours have been reduced to a level where parents are unable to avail their family of the resources the library could provide.

These factors exist at the same time our students' reading scores are falling.

I volunteer with SMART Reading at the pre-K level. We introduce reading and the love of books at a crucial time in the students' lives, also at a time when a love of reading can be crushed by the lack of continuing resources.

We can offer hope through our public library, hope to the families and to the future of our young citizens.

I spent nearly twenty years teaching in developing countries, where donated books were often secreted in the directors' offices. The books were prized possessions and not available to students. Returning to Oregon, I celebrated the learning opportunities offered to our students. Are we going to lock up our books too?

Our library must be funded and fully operational.

Gretchen Coppedge

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*Gretchen Coppedge*  
*PO Box 4473*  
*Salem, OR 97302*



January 16, 2025

Dear Mayor Hoy and Members of the Salem City Council:

On behalf of the Gilbert House Children's Museum, I am writing to express my concern about the impact of proposed budget cuts on our city's parks, libraries, and senior programs. As a solution, a community-wide partnership of local, mission driven organizations have come together to champion the proposed *Livability Levy*.

Gilbert House Children's Museum has been part of our community in Riverfront Park for over 35 years. The museum provides educational opportunities for families in our community and those visiting from outside the city limits. The museum and the park are economic drivers for Salem. The beautification, functionality, and appearance are important factors in the success of these programs.

I believe that the *Livability Levy* will be well received by our community and can serve as an essential funding source to preserve and protect the contributions parks play in the health and happiness of our community. With our colleagues and partners, I stand ready to help mount a strong and vigorous campaign to pass the Levy.

Thank you for your time and service to the community. This is a challenging issue, and I value the attention you are giving to it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alicia Bay". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alicia Bay  
Executive Director

116 Marion Street Northeast  
Salem, Oregon 97301

**From:** [Ina Vandever](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for the January 21st Work Session  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 15, 2025 12:57:43 PM

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The library is an irreplaceable community asset. Go there any time it is open and you will see people interacting with each other in a peaceful, friendly, rational environment. It isn't just access to books, magazines, movies, audiobooks, etc. It is access to a community. The dedicated staff helps with the whole range of inquiries people might make. The facility provides space for meetings, study, conversation. or gazing out of a window and just relaxing. There is no other option available for any of this in any other public venue. The libraries, not just the main branch but all of the libraries must be funded. The return on investment cannot be calculated.

**From:** [Jane Cummins](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Comment for January 21 work session  
**Date:** Thursday, January 16, 2025 12:17:27 PM

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I am a longtime user of public libraries along with millions of families in this country. In Salem, despite strong community support, library hours have been slashed. I urge the Council to restore Sunday and evening hours, at the very least.

Having served as a councilor for 8 years during a time of real budget issues, I am aware that our public library is used and supported by all ages. Just as the former Council heard from many community members last year, we in that earlier time heard loud and clear how important the library is in so many lives.

Our Public Library is a community center, offering services and programs for toddlers to seniors. It provides a safe and welcoming place for teens, and it offers the use of computers and other items to those without them.

I have been in our library at least once a week for the last 20 years as a patron and volunteer. During that time, even with fewer hours, the community supported a bond to renovate the library, only to find further cuts being made. It is now shameful that library doors are closed during evenings and Sundays, denying access to some in our community, especially working families.

Jane Cummins-Fidler  
Ward 4

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)



**From:** [John Hughes](#)  
**To:** [Julie Hoy](#); [Linda Nishioka](#)  
**Cc:** [citycouncil](#); [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** City Council Meeting 1/21/2025 agenda - Support Our City's Community Services  
**Date:** Friday, January 17, 2025 3:29:20 PM

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Dear Mayor Hoy and Councilor Nishioka:

I'm reaching out to you today as a strong supporter of our library, parks, and Center 50+, and I urge your support of these vital community services.

Please refer a bold Community Livability Levy to support the Salem Public Library, City Parks, and Center 50+!

Salem residents rely on these community spaces and it is paramount that the City Council prioritize revenue for all three of these services. As an advocate for seniors, I stand with the coalition in support of these services and urge you to do the same.

I understand that you face a difficult challenge with the next city budget, but please do NOT cut funding for these services. Many of our seniors use these services and they are some of the things they look forward to doing each week and by removing these services, you may inadvertently remove the main reasons that they leave their home. Do not turn more of our seniors into being homebound, isolated, and contribute to their loneliness.

Thank you in advance for your support of our library, parks and Center 50+!

John Hughes

--

John Hughes, CSA, CCSI, CAEd

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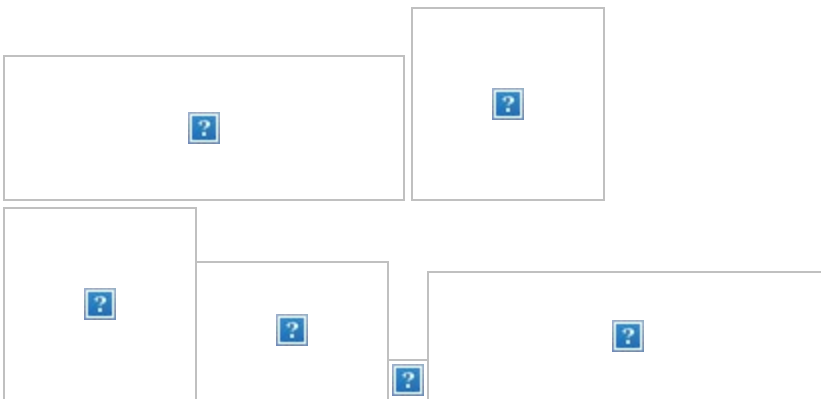
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**From:** [gonehikingor@comcast.net](mailto:gonehikingor@comcast.net)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for the January 21st work session  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 15, 2025 2:32:02 PM

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Mayor Hoy and Councilor Varney:

As chair of the Assistance League of Salem-Keizer's R.E.A.D. (Read, Explore, Achieve, Develop) program, I urge your support of our Salem Public Library. The Assistance League partners with the library to support the Bookmobile program. Every year the Bookmobile visits the elementary schools, allowing students to check out books and to obtain a library card to be activated by their parents. This early introduction to literacy is vital to the future success of our children. It would be tragic if this program could not continue due to library budget cuts. It would affect hundreds and hundreds of first graders eager to read a book of their choice.

Our community needs an open and vibrant library. When I was returning books to the library this week, I stood a minute and listened to the hum of folks busy using the wonderful resources our library now provides. It is a place for folks of all walks of life, a third space to be safe and to access many resources FREE.

City Council, please put a Livability Levy on the May 20th ballot to preserve and restore services at our library, parks and Center 50+.

Respectfully,

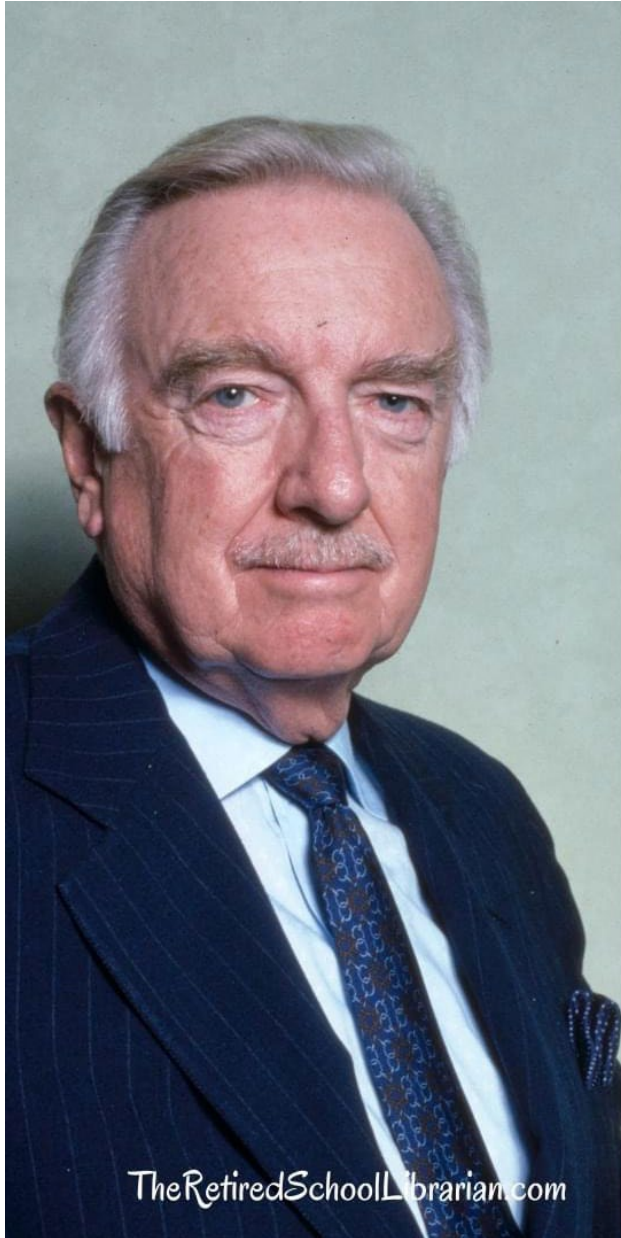
Jane Lamb

R.E.A.D. Chair

Assistance League Salem-Keizer

**From:** [Jane Cummins](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#); [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Another comment for January 21 work session  
**Date:** Thursday, January 16, 2025 12:24:58 PM

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**“Whatever  
the cost of  
our libraries,  
the price is  
cheap  
compared to  
that of an  
ignorant  
nation.”**

--Walter Cronkite

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Kim Davis](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for the January 21st Work Session  
**Date:** Thursday, January 16, 2025 9:05:55 AM

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I am writing again to support putting the proposed Livability Levy on the May 20th ballot. The City has failed to come up with other funding options and there is so much at stake.

As a huge fan of public libraries, I cannot overstate the threat of further reductions -- to old and young citizens alike. The reading programs, the internet services, the books, music and e-books, art works, language and literacy programs, conference and study rooms all provide essential services to a community that is otherwise often and easily fragmented. The library is the glue that holds Salem together.

Center 50+ is another asset that is threatened by reduced funding. It would be unconscionable to disrupt this critical programming. Our community's seniors depend on the countless services and opportunities provided through Center 50+.

And of course, our beautiful parks. Without them, the necessary connections to natural settings will result in worsening physical and mental health of our community members. The wildlife that live and migrate to and from Salem also depend on our parks as refuge from the concrete and traffic.

It is shocking to me that the budget is so out of balance, and shocking to me that citizens refused the payroll tax. I can only hope that our community will get over its anti tax stance long enough to vote yes for maintaining the few things that make this City livable.

Please get this on the ballot!

K Davis  
97306

**From:** [Karl Roth](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for the January 21st Work Session  
**Date:** Friday, January 17, 2025 10:26:48 AM

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To whom it may concern-

I fully support adding a Livability Levy to the May 20th ballot in order to fund our library, parks, and other city amenities. I, along with my family, utilize the library at least once a week, not only to check out books, movies, and things, but also to use the conference rooms and to browse through the great collections available. Usually when I arrive at the library at the 10:00 opening time there is already a line of people outside-- it's a wonderful library and I'd be in favor of expanding the hours and services rather than cutting anything.

As for the parks, they are one of the great features of Salem, and I walk and run through them on a near daily basis. They are one of the reasons Salem is special, and we need to protect and maintain them as much as possible.

I understand that the city is experiencing some financial difficulties, but we need to find ways to fund these important city amenities and I would be willing to pay a levy to support them

Thank you!

Karl Roth, Ward 3  
608.957.3514

**From:** [Lily Barton](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for the January 21st Work Session  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 15, 2025 6:05:30 PM

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Dear Salem City Council,

Please keep the Salem Public Library open. Put a Livability Levy on the May 20th ballot. Every community, let alone a large city, needs and benefits from having a public library. My family have been going to the library since we moved to Salem ten years ago. It is a beautiful and inviting library with so many resources available to anyone with a library card. We spend hours there on weekends, reading magazines, browsing the DVD section and checking out so many books. It is always filled with people -- children, teens, adults, seniors -- every time we go.

What is the harm in making learning and intelligent entertainment, books, accessible to people? What about those that cannot afford to buy books or do not have access to the internet? Salem will lose a lot more than what they could gain from not having the library.

Sincerely,  
Lily Barton



**From:** [Michael Brown](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for the January 21st Work Session  
**Date:** Thursday, January 16, 2025 2:27:39 PM

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As an active consumer of Salem Public Library services, I encourage continued funding of our full service library, at a level seven days/week at Main Salem Branch, five days/week at West Salem Branch, with evening hours at both locations.

As a long-time, committed and involved member of Salem Business and General Community, I encourage this continued support. To cut back will make Salem's future more bleak, as we try to attract new businesses, investments and vital/healthy new members to our wonderful community.

Sincerely,  
[Michael Duane Brown](#)  
711mdb@gmail.com

**From:** [Mary Ginnane](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for the January 21st Work Session  
**Date:** Friday, January 17, 2025 11:25:55 AM

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Honorable Salem City Council Members:

Congratulations to the newly sworn-in Councilors and thanks to all Councilors for what you do for Salem residents.

I understand the city is facing a \$13.8 million deficit in the FY2026 budget that may force the library and Center 50+ to have to close in July and for parks maintenance and recreation programs to be cut. Living in the capital of a state that didn't have a free public library is not to be considered. Living in the capital of a state that didn't offer an array of needed services to aging citizens is not comprehensible. Living in the capital of a state that couldn't maintain its network of parks is not acceptable.

All of these services in America have long traditions: libraries from early colonial times, and in Salem since 1912. Public parks also have colonial precedents in the creation of Commons areas, and in Salem since 1926. Targeted social services for seniors really jump-started with social security after the Great Depression. All these services provide opportunities for personal pursuits of education, happiness, and health and are "third spaces" fostering social connections. All have changed with the times. All contribute to Salem's livability and must continue to exist.

I support the idea of a livability levy and encourage you to structure one that can be supported by a majority of voters in an election as soon as possible. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,  
Mary Ginnane  
Ward 7 homeowner

**From:** [Megan Harper](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for the January 21st Work Session  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 15, 2025 7:57:57 PM

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Books keep me busy when I'm bored, especially chapter books, which are my favorite. I like reading books about other people's lives. When I walk into the library, I feel excited to see all the books, and I feel happy because I can get a variety of books to read. I've been reading since before kindergarten! I'm going to keep pushing and pushing until the library gets enough money. And I won't stop pushing until the library does get enough money! I just want the library to be protected. I love the library at my school and the books be in the city, it feels special to have so many books around me.

In first grade, I went onto a bus where I got my first library card, and it was so exciting to use it to pick out my own book! I'd like to keep being able to use this library card.

Thank you for reading this.

Zoey Harper, age 8, ward 4  
My mom helped me send this email, but I wrote it

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Peter Bergel](#)  
**To:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Yes on a Levy to sSave the Library, our parks and the Senior Center  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 15, 2025 4:35:41 PM

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**To: Members of the Salem City Council**  
**From: Peter Bergel, 1850 Saginaw St. St., Salem, OR 97302**  
**Re: Funding the Salem Public Library**

**Dear Madame Mayor and City Councilors:**

**As you grapple with the difficult task of finding sufficient funds to keep our city running, I want to urge you to prioritize the Salem Public Library, our parks and the Senior Center. I know cuts have to be made somewhere, but the Library, Senior Center and parks are not the place to make them.**

**Our Library is already not funded sufficiently for the second largest city in Oregon. In the past, it was one of the most-used public libraries in the country – testimony to its preciousness to the residents of Salem. It provides places to meet, educational and recreational opportunities for our people, and resources that are simply not available elsewhere.**

**Our parks are jewels that enhance our city’s livability as well as mitigating climate change.**

**Our Senior Center is an important way the city can show the respect that is due to elders who have contributed to the city’s public, economic, educational and social life over the decades.**

**The levy you are contemplating is essential – unless you can think of some other way to keep these services going. This time, however, please not only put the levy on the ballot, but also fund a campaign to pass it. It is easy to say no to higher taxes, but taxes are what we pay for civilized society, as Oliver Wendell Holmes famously pointed out. If we want the services, we have to pay for them, just like anything else. The public must be forcefully reminded of that. Let’s not leave it entirely to already-overworked**

**volunteers to do that reminding and persuading.**

**Thank you,**

**Peter Bergel**

**From:** [Robert E. Atchison](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for the January 21st Work Session  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 15, 2025 3:44:03 PM

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I am a senior citizen with some health issues. A big part of my life is reading lots of books from the Salem Public Library. I could never afford to buy, even used, all the books that I read. Closing the library would put a huge hole in my life. Also, walking in Bush park is my main recreation.  
Please put the levy on the ballot.

**From:** [Rylan Keeley](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [aawada@uw.edu](mailto:aawada@uw.edu); [rylankeeley@gmail.com](mailto:rylankeeley@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Thoughts? Univ. of Washington Research Project  
**Date:** Thursday, January 16, 2025 6:20:58 AM

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I hope you are doing well!

Andrew and I started a project at the University of Washington to help cities manage legacy records by automatically grouping them.

I have a 3-minute video that shows how our system organized 1,000 building records. Would you mind if I sent it over?

Our goal is to automatically apply retention based on state requirements for each group of records (all while flagging PII and removing ROT).

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thanks,  
Rylan  
(206) 755-9206

**From:** [Sarah Harkey](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for the January 21st Work Session  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 15, 2025 1:26:55 PM

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To Our City Council:

I am writing with concern for our Library and Parks, and to urge you to take action to save them. Currently, the best path is to put forward a Livability Levy for the May 20th ballot. I know that, historically, our city and state balk at the idea of any taxation- but I am hopeful that with your leadership and transparency, we might educate the public on what the individual cost to each family is and thereby calm voter fears. There are already 22 cities in Oregon who fund their libraries with local option levies including Eugene, Corvallis, Hillsboro, and Beaverton. Help us join them in supporting our city's future.

My husband and I moved to Salem in the autumn of 2023, and very shortly thereafter had our daughter. As a family adjusting to our new single-income lifestyle the library and parks have been an absolute Godsend. Our daughter loves going to the Salem Library, and even at her young age recognizes (with glee) when we pull up to the building. The storytimes have become a staple in our week, and we often take advantage of the Cultural Passes and board books. Our daughter has learned new ways of interacting with the world around her, as well as how to crawl, by watching other children her age at the library events and playrooms. I had the pleasure of watching a mom witness her child take their first steps right in the library story room, so I know we aren't the only ones who have benefited from this. We have learned a great deal about how to encourage early literacy with the help of our local librarians, and have found many local resources for furthering her early education through the library. We already struggle with the reduced hours, it would be devastating to face further cuts.

Our parks have been equally important in our child's development. We have the great fortune of living near Englewood Park, and our daughter adores our daily walks there. The playground has been a great opportunity for exploration. The splash pad was so helpful on those hot days when we desperately needed to cool down. The trees and natural plants around the park seem to fill her with wonder and curiosity. Our daughter was a bit too young to take advantage of the Movies in the Park program last summer, but we were so looking forward to joining the fun there this year. We would be heartbroken to see our parks fall into disrepair, our splash pads to be discontinued, and our wonderful park programs disappear.

Please, consider that we are this state's capital and should be a leader in what it means to be an Oregonian. We need a full-service library, one that is open 7 days a week. As it stands, our library is the worst-funded major library in the state. Similarly, we need well-maintained, accessible parks as a safe place for exploring the beauty of nature in Oregon. Our local schools are falling behind, and closing or reducing our library and park availability will surely do us no favors in helping to educate our youth. We need our great outdoors, and our great indoors, to help our community thrive.

Thank you,

Sarah Harkey



**From:** [Steve Rosen](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Salem Public Library  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 15, 2025 5:09:48 PM

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“There's a term you don't hear these days, one you used to hear all the time when the Carnegie branches opened: Palaces for the People. The library really is a palace. It bestows nobility on people who otherwise couldn't afford a shred of it. People need to have nobility and dignity in their lives. And you know, they need other people to recognize it in them too.”

– Eric Klinenberg (author), [Palaces for the People](#)

By 1771, as the Revolution neared, Franklin reflected in his autobiography on the lending library's crucial role in fostering democracy: “These libraries have improved the general conversation of the Americans” and “made the common tradesmen and farmers as intelligent as most gentlemen from other countries.”

**From:** [Talia Turner](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for the January 21st Work Session  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 15, 2025 11:31:22 AM

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There is no way to justify shutting down the library. Salem is already sorely lacking in "third spaces" and the library is one of the safest and most welcoming that remains. With the new police station, the upcoming development on front street, and the frivolous use of funds evident in the most recent budget, members of the council have an obligation to our community. At the very least the council owes us the chance to vote on a livability Levy. Taking away the community's say in this is salting the wound that the potential of losing the library causes.

**From:** [Virginia Green](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** A living treasure, our City Library  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 15, 2025 12:46:51 PM

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Dear Members of our Salem Council:

We are all readers. Where do we find those written sources of information that enrich our families? We can get snapshots of opinion, like this one, on devices at home. But nothing can compare to the treasure of a library. Twenty-five years ago I saw Salem for the first time and was impressed that the City Library was so important that it was prominently placed in the heart of the downtown, in the "arena" of city life. Knowing no one here, I volunteered at the Library, found fellowship and mission to contribute to my new "Hometown".

I can't imagine what a loss it would be to both old-timers and new residents if the library were just a museum to a lost culture.

Please consider what it would say about us, as Salem citizens, if we lose the wealth of knowledge and community spirit found in our library.

Please fund the levy that will support this valuable, and yes, essential, city institution.

Virginia Green

1601 Water Street NE, Apt 9

**From:** [Bill Galbraith](#)  
**To:** [Linda Nishioka](#); [Julie Hoy](#); [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** In favor of a Livability Levy  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 15, 2025 3:43:07 PM

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I am a volunteer for Mission Street Parks Conservancy, working to preserve and enhance Bush's Pasture Park under a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Salem. I am also a volunteer with Salem Art Association working as a tour guide for Bush House Museum. So I know the park inside and out. I can tell you from my own experience that Salemites LOVE Bush's Pasture Park. My personal area of work is in the rose bushes. I've worked those bushes for years, and pretty much every Tuesday when I work there, some locals come by to view the gardens. They always thank me for the work that we do, and say what a lovely park Bush is. I know that resources are scarce and that if nothing is done, park services will be cut. I've discussed this possibility with park employees and expert gardeners who say that if the park is neglected, some irreparable damage may be done that would take years to ameliorate.

I respectfully ask that you consider putting on the ballot a Livability Levy that will provide funds to keep Center 50+, the libraries and the parks funded. I was one of those who voted for the payroll tax increase which failed. I believe that if the citizens of our town were engaged in this discussion and energetically educated about the need to keep these beloved quality-of-life services going, they would vote for the Levy. Speaking as a property owner in Salem, I know I would.

Thank you for your service to our City, and thank you for considering my request.

Very sincerely,  
Willam E. Galbraith  
1475 Saginaw St. S.  
Salem OR 97302