

From: [Roz Shirack](#)
To: [citycouncil](#); [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: FY 2024 Budget Adoption, June 12 Council Meeting
Date: Wednesday, June 7, 2023 4:54:36 PM

I am writing to encourage you to adopt the FY 2024 budget, as recommended by the Citizen Budget Committee. That budget seeks to increase funding for the General Fund to begin recovery from past years of underfunding, and in some cases, outright budget cuts, of basic city services supported by the General Fund.

As you know, the recommended budget relies on an increase of revenues from 1) raising the city's existing operations fee; and 2) enacting a new employee-paid payroll tax. Please vote to pass those two revenue measures as part of the budget adoption process. Without those revenue increases the city will not be able to hire the staff needed to continue the current level of services in FY 2024 and would need to make large cuts in the FY 2025 budget.

I am particularly concerned about the need to continue the city's significant investment of one-time funds in programs to support the homeless with short-term shelter and then transitional housing. The new Navigation Center and micro-shelter villages are examples of large upfront costs that need funding to continue operations. The city and its partners have made significant progress in addressing the homeless crisis. We need to continue the multi-pronged programs that exist, not walk away from them due to lack of funds. Funding programs for the homeless benefit not only the recipients, but all Salem citizens by providing shelter off of the public sidewalks, parks, and streets.

Enacting a new tax is a big ask, but I think the proposed employee-paid payroll tax is a good fit for Salem. Many employees who work in Salem do not live in Salem. One survey found over 50% of Oregon State employees who work in Salem do not live in Salem. Out of town employees do not contribute to the city's property tax base or pay the city's operations fee, but use the city's streets, parks, and police and fire services when needed. Salem's largest public and private employers (the State of Oregon and Salem Health) are exempt from the property tax. Marion County and federal employers are also exempt. Therefore, Salem needs to look to other revenue sources to augment property taxes to pay for our basic services.

Thank you for your consideration.
Roz Shirack, member
Citizen Budget Committee

