

From: [Bill Dixon](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Testimony regarding Agenda Item 2.a. 26-56, Options for City Operations Fee Restructuring and Cost Analysis of Service Expansions.
Date: Monday, February 16, 2026 5:33:10 PM

Testimony regarding Agenda Item 2.a. 26-56, Options for City Operations Fee Restructuring and Cost Analysis of Service Expansions.

My name is Bill Dixon, and I live at 608 Salem Heights Ave. S. in Ward 7. I write to offer the following recommendations for restructuring the operations fee.

First, the Council should document the nature, extent and financial impact of the unfairness that is thought to be embedded in the current rate structure. Much of the public discussion so far has treated this concept as a given. More is needed to justify substantive action.

Second, the Council should consider adjustments to meet service needs affecting critical infrastructure. In particular, the Council should look at using an adjusted fee to maintain current roadways and water distribution systems. Based on information from the city, these vital functions are underfunded by a combined \$36 million a year. Underfunding them constitutes a hidden subsidy that favors new growth while degrading service quality for current residents.

Third, in addition to engaging the community during its decision-making process, the Council also should authorize a public vote on whatever it decides. Community members are well aware that their operations fees have doubled in six years. They deserve a direct voice in any action that could cause further increases.

I urge the Council to approve further work toward an operations fee restructuring and to include the recommendations above in its plan.

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Bill Dixon, 608 Salem Heights Ave. S., Salem 97302

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From: [Douglas Luth](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Operation fee
Date: Tuesday, February 17, 2026 9:52:52 AM

Repeal the operation fee! It was enacted without approval of affected citizens. As with all of these types of fees it started small and has now become substantial burden on homeowners along with ever increasing property taxes and other government levied costs!
Stand up; do the right thing, repeal and refer to voters!

Douglas Luth

Ward 7

Sent from my iPhone

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From: [Hale, Matthew](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Comments for City Council Work Session - Operations Fee Restructuring and Funding Priorities
Date: Monday, February 16, 2026 7:54:54 PM

2/17/2026

Good Evening Mayor Hoy and City Councilors. I'm Matt Hale, and I reside in Ward #4.

I have several recommendations as you begin this journey tonight on improving fairness in how the City Operations Fee is administered, "particularly for non-commercial accounts". I sat in a similar work session in February of 2023, when I learned that the new billing system would provide staff and Council the ability to "restructure" the Operations Fee. I ask that the Council and City staff work in a transparent manner with the public, and adhere to the language you are using in the report given to you by the Chief Financial Officer to "improve fairness", especially for "Non-commercial accounts". As you proceed, please look for ways to make changes that bring back affordability to Residential account holders, while transferring the burden of the Operations Fee to those account holders that are heavy users of City Services.

As you conduct your research and analysis, please strongly consider shifting the burden of the City Operations Fee to those account holders that:

- Use a disproportionate share of essential city services, e.g. ambulance services, police and fire services, and water and wastewater services. Some examples of these organizations are State buildings, Healthcare facilities, Assisted Living & Rehabilitative facilities, large industrial and commercial buildings, and others. I'm sure you have data in your Public Works and Police & Fire databases on the frequency and number of occurrences these facilities use essential services, as well as the extra strain they put on our water treatment and wastewater treatment facilities compared to a typical residential customer.
- Add to the additional repair and replacement of our roads due to the large amount of heavy truck traffic that supports these account holders. One option would be to look at the number of loading docks account holders have at their facilities that support large numbers of heavy truck traffic to support their operations. Over time, this causes a disproportionate amount

of city resources to be dedicated to repairing and replacing roads, and other critical infrastructure.

In addition, your work should be laser focused on reducing the \$195.36 per year each residential customer pays, the equivalent of either one of the current City Bonds/Levies that they had a chance to vote on. In just six years, the Operations Fee has increased by 103.50%. This is unsustainable, and becoming a burden for many Salem residents.

Lastly, your work should only be focused on improving fairness and remain strictly revenue neutral.

Sincerely,

Matt Hale

Ward #4

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