

From: [Jim Scheppke](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Cc: [citycouncil](#)
Subject: Testimony on Agenda Item 5.a
Date: Sunday, August 25, 2024 11:37:21 AM
Attachments: [Email Header.png](#)

Dear Mayor and City Council:

Fund Our Libraries urges positive consideration of Agenda Item 5a., a proposed work plan and budget for initial steps to understand our communities priorities for City services. It is especially important to do polling of likely voters to find out the degree of support for increasing property taxes to fully fund our library and better fund our parks and Center 50+.

It will be important to ask the right questions to get solid answers. For example, we need to ask likely voters if they would be in favor of a tax increase of 50¢/per \$1,000 of assessed valuation to have a main library open seven days a week, several evenings a week and a West Salem Branch open 5-6 days a week with one or more evening hours. We also need to ask likely voters if they would be in favor of a tax increase of 75¢ per \$1,000 of assessed valuation to fully fund our library and better fund our parks and Center 50+ (the “livability levy”).

Respondents need to be made aware of the difference between assessed value and real market value, which are quite different, and they will need to understand what 50¢ and 75¢ per \$1,000 mean in actual dollars per month or per year. They need to be given specific information about what they would be buying with a property tax increase.

Fund Our Libraries will continue to spread the word about our need for a full service library, as with this FAQ ...



Frequently Asked Questions about Better Funding for Our Library

Why does our library need better funding?

Our library has the worst funding of any major library in Oregon. According to the latest statistics from the State Library for FY2023, our per capita funding was only \$33. Compare that to per capita funding for libraries in Eugene (\$85), Beaverton (\$78), Hillsboro (\$74) and Corvallis (\$98). Our library's funding does not even come close!

What is the result of not having better library funding?

The result is that our library is not open when people want to use the library. Our downtown

main library is closed on Sunday and Monday and has no evening hours after 6 pm. The main libraries in Eugene, Beaverton, Hillsboro and Corvallis are all open seven days a week and several evenings during the week. Our one branch in West Salem is only open two afternoons a week.

Are there other problems with having poor library funding?

Yes. Our library is not able to purchase enough books, ebooks and audiobooks to meet the demands of library users. In FY 2023 we only spent \$3.75 per capita on library collections. Compare that to Eugene's library that spent \$10.95 per capita. Eugene spent \$1.49 per capita on ebooks alone, compared to our library spending only 8¢ per capita.

Are we able to offer adequate reading programs for children with our poor library funding?

No. Over 14,000 children attended library reading programs in Hillsboro in FY 2023, over 10,000 in Eugene. At our library the number was not even half that: 4,607.

Did our library used to have better funding and was open more hours?

Yes. Two decades ago our libraries were open a total of 96 hours per week. That's exactly double what they are today (48 hours)! Our main library was open seven days a week including three evenings until 9 pm. The West Salem Branch was open six days a week including one evening until 8 pm. Even a century ago in 1924 our Carnegie library on State Street was open six days a week from 9 am until 9 pm, a total of 72 hours per week.

How much do we need to have fully funded library?

The library budget now is about \$5.7 million per year, but about \$1 million of that is one-time funds that we won't have next year. We estimate we need \$5 million in new revenue, added to the \$4.7 million in existing revenue to have a fully funded library. That would mean a main library open seven days a week with evening hours and a West Salem Branch open 5-6 days a week with evening hours.

How could we raise \$5 million per year to have a fully funded library?

The City Council could take the suggestion of their Revenue Task Force and ask voters next May to pass a five-year local option levy for 50¢ per 1,000 of assessed value. That would mean a property tax increase for the average homeowner of only \$7 a month. Another idea is to vote on a "Livability Levy" like they have in Corvallis that would fund parks and Center 50+ in addition to fully funding the library. That would cost the average homeowner about \$11 per month. There are 23 libraries in Oregon that currently operate with local option levies. Our library should join them!

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From: [Mary Ginnane](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Cc: [citycouncil](#)
Subject: City Council Meeting, Agenda Item 5.a
Date: Monday, August 26, 2024 1:39:03 PM

Good afternoon,

After listening to the presentation and discussion at the August 19th work session about the Revenue Task Force recommendations it is great to see a work plan for next steps proposed on the agenda tonight. Having polling completed and considered at the October 21st meeting is encouraging to meet the February 28th deadline for the first paperwork submission for a May, 2025 local option levy. My perspective is one of urgency for the earlier election date to prevent the roller coaster of deep cuts and eventual restoration.

As a library supporter I ask that you advance the process with an affirmative vote on agenda item 5.a. tonight.

Respectfully,
Mary Ginnane
Ward 7 resident/homeowner

From: [Randall Ray](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: NO NEW TAX
Date: Monday, August 26, 2024 8:14:34 AM

Dear City Council,

I'm sure I speak for 50% to 75% of citizens of Oregon.

Cut as much spending as possible on the homeless pandemic several states are having as well as the Western states.

To much time and \$\$ are spent by Police, Sheriff, Fire and First Aid taking away from services that TAX Paying citizens are due to manage this crisis.

Federal \$\$ need to come to all states as this situation was caused by closure of Federal funds during the Regan administration. We do not blame our past but demand a fix from our current and future administrations as they can clearly see the draw on local cities, counties and states.

DEMAND IS COMING FROM YOUR VOTERS! TELL THE FEDS TO WAKE UP AND PAY THEIR DUE.

Respectfully Submitted,

Randall Ray