

Ruth Stellmacher

From: Carol M <carolmitc@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 19, 2019 12:32 PM.
To: citycouncil; Chuck Bennett
Subject: Please stop eviscerating the library

Categories: Council Dox

Dear Councilors and Mayor Bennett,

Please direct city staff to cease purging books at such a high rate from the city library.

Already I have found that books I enjoy are missing. No, I didn't always check them out but read what I wanted on the premises or enjoyed full-color artwork not really visible on a tiny phone screen. Other friends report similar experiences.

Some of the missing books are not readily available elsewhere.

We need diversity in life and in libraries. One size (popular fiction) does not fit all readers.

The city's library has been underfunded for years. Please do not impoverish it further.

Thank you,

Carol Mitchell, former Library Advisory Board member/chair

Ruth Stellmacher

From: Jim & Jo <jimjohock@comcast.net>
Sent: Sunday, April 21, 2019 4:10 PM
To: CityRecorder; citycouncil
Subject: For Council agenda, April 22nd Mtg.

Categories: Council Dox

Please include the following testimony relating to the library collection issue in the Salem City Council agenda information for the April 22, 2019, meeting.

TO SALEM CITY COUNCIL:

It appears that I made a mistake to vote for the Salem Public Library renovation. I presumed that my vote would lead to a better, larger and more comprehensive collection, as well as a safer building for library patrons. I include myself as an avid library patron.

I now realize that the Salem Library Board is planning for less feet of shelving for the library collections in the newly renovated building. Perhaps this is why the number of materials has declined so rapidly. Unfortunately, many of the materials that have already disappeared from the shelves are some of the most basic classical and regional books. The Salem Public Library's holdings of Oregon writers has really dwindled. The Salem Library should be the pre-eminent library in Oregon, which is not the case currently.

I am also perturbed that more floor space is devoted to "lounging" areas rather than to increased shelving for, hopefully, an increased collection. I am not thrilled to pay taxes for the "library" and watch books disappear while more reclining chairs move in. Something is backwards here.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns.

Jo Hockenhill

1705 Church St. SE, Salem OR 97302

Ruth Stellmacher

From: Lynn Takata <lynntakata@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, April 22, 2019 8:21 AM
To: CityRecorder; citycouncil
Subject: Northeast Neighbors (NEN) letter concerning the City of Salem Library Collection
Attachments: Library Collection.pdf

Categories: Council Dox

Attached is a letter from Northeast Neighbors concerning the City of Salem Library collection for your consideration.

Thank you,

Lynn Takata
NEN Chair



NEN

NORTHEAST NEIGHBORS
555 Liberty Street SE, Rm 305
Salem, OREGON 97301

(503) 588-6207
www.salemnene.org

April 21, 2019

From: Northeast Neighbors (NEN) Board
To: Salem City Council, Mayor Bennett, City Manager Powers
Re: Salem Public Library Book Collection

In response to recent concerns about policies managing the inventory of the collection of books for the Salem Public Library, the board of Northeast Neighborhood Association (NEN) unanimously voted on April 16 to urge your careful consideration of the following:

Currently library staff have been instructed to purge/discard a very large number of books from the collection. This has led to a current collection maintaining significantly less than two books per capita in the collection. Information source: State Library of Oregon.

Since many discarded books have been offered for sale in the Library's retail outlet, citizens are aware that many art books, poetry books, history books, geography books, etc. have been eliminated. Some of these are considered rare, and others are considered classics. Others are considered reference material.

Even the casual observer now notices large open spaces on the shelves in the stacks. Could the removed books be warehoused and made available to smaller city neighborhood libraries which could be established? In that way the citizens of Salem would have use of the full collection, just in other locations.

At a time of very tight city budgets it will be difficult to replace the lost books. If the goal is to reduce the collection to make renovation work easier, could the purged books be stored off site to be replaced in the collection later?

We hope to encourage protection and retention of the collection. Of course, as has always been the case, seriously soiled or damaged books would need to be removed. But, in the past, this normal process of maintaining the quality of the collection has not led to a dramatic reduction of total books.

We advocate for the preservation of a robust, well-balanced collection and that the removal of large numbers of books from the Salem Library be stopped.

Respectfully,

Lynn Takata
Chair, Northeast Neighbors (NEN)

Ruth Stellmacher

From: Jim Scheppke <jscheppke@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, April 22, 2019 9:02 AM
To: CityRecorder
Subject: Revised Testimony from Jim Scheppke
Attachments: 4-22-19 Testimony of Jim Scheppke.docx

Categories: Council Dox

Dear City Recorder:

I fixed a typo and changed a couple words in this. If it is not too late please substitute this testimony for the one I sent you earlier.

Thanks,

Jim

Jim Scheppke
jscheppke@comcast.net
503-269-1559

*Testimony of Jim Schepke, Oregon State Librarian Emeritus,
at the Salem City Council Meeting
April 22, 2019*

I have two things to say about Agenda Item 6.h, the library Collection Development Policy.

1) As you sit here tonight there is *no* Collection Development Policy in place that has been approved by the Salem City Council in accordance with SRC 18.050 which grants the sole powers to make policy for our library to the Salem City Council. Please ask your City Attorney about this. According to our Code the Library Advisory Board and the library staff have no power to make policy. None. They can only recommend policies to be approved by the Council. At your meeting last year on August 27th you were shown the policy under discussion tonight as an "information only" item on your agenda. You never approved it. So tonight there is no policy in place and the plan before you to implement it is not legitimate for this reason.

2) You were provided with lots to read in the staff report and attachments, but the most important facts in this matter were omitted. Here they are. At present our library has a book collection of approximately 1.6 books per capita. That is well below the average for public libraries in the State of Oregon of 2 per capita. This is all data is from the State Library which I directed for two decades. If you take the top 29 libraries in Oregon that serve more than 20,000 people, only five libraries have smaller collections per capita. The reason for this is that in the past five years our library collection has seen massive discards averaging 10% of the collection per year. The professional guideline in something called the CREW manual is 5% per year, but we have been discarding twice that. So to embark now on a massive removal project like the one that was suspended in December is wrong. Our collection is already too small. With the 4,000 or so books that were removed when the project began our collection has now been terribly depleted in poetry, drama, philosophy, and religion.

Those are the facts you need to know. You should not allow the further removal of books. We need to grow our collection now, not shrink it. And you, as a Council, need to approve a Collection Development Policy in accordance with SRC 18.050.

Ruth Stellmacher

From: Cynthia Thiessen <thiessencyn@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, April 22, 2019 9:39 AM
To: CityRecorder
Subject: Testimony of Cynthia Thiessen Agenda item 6h

Categories: Council Dox

Testimony of Cynthia Thiessen, retired Senior Reference Librarian at the Salem City Council Meeting April 22, 2019

I am here to share my belief that the "Collection Evaluation Project," underway at Salem Public Library represents a professionally and fiscally misguided project that needs to be reviewed and halted.

The facts are clear: books are being withdrawn at an alarming and unsustainable rate, (I will repeat others' notes: an average of 10% annually of the collection in the last 5 years, which is double the recommended professional standard. Also, 30% of the adult non-fiction has already been cut in the last 6 years.) And Salem's budget for purchasing new books is not robust – we have less than half the budget of Eugene Public Library for example.

The situation has produced two competing narratives: members of the public are alarmed, while Library Administration has defended current practices. They have offered inconsistent and changing stories to explain new, excessively rigorous guidelines for discards. "We are right-sizing the collection." "There isn't enough room." "This is deferred maintenance." And, finally, "We are the professionals; trust us." There is an uncomfortable need to review the element of professional trust. Librarianship is one of the traditionally most trusted occupations, and the library is a beloved institution. Council members are forced to ask themselves, "Why would Library Administration do the 'wrong thing?'"

My contention is that there is another party to hear from, and that is the professional selectors on the floor in Adult Services who uniformly objected to current Collection Development standards. My experience was that I had autonomy to make collection decisions in principle, but in practice, was forced to discard important literary works because they did not meet new, stricter circulation standards – regardless of if they were important classics, which the library should responsibly own and will have difficulty repurchasing. I am not alone among Adult Services professional librarians from Salem Public Library, who believe the Library Leadership Team is out-of-touch with the community and is sprinting towards the wrong goal. None have managed the adult non-fiction or fiction collection. None ever

regularly worked the adult information desk (which has been sadly removed), to interact directly with the public, and to gauge the public's interests.

The worry is that creating a supermarket-style collection, with possibly increased circulation statistics based on the number of check-outs per item, housed in an (expensive) physically beautiful space, might be an attractive goal for library managers – that a superficially successful department which lost essential value for the taxpayers, would receive praise from City Council and Management. I hope you will look more deeply.

Ruth Stellmacher

From: Craig Wasser <pastorwasser@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 22, 2019 9:48 AM
To: CityRecorder
Subject: Salem Public Library Hearing April 22 7pm
Attachments: Salem City Council Library Letter.pdf

Categories: Council Dox

Attached, Please find my signed Testimony for the hearing tonight concerning the reduction of our Library collection.

Craig Wasser
3394 Lawrence St SE
Salem OR 97302
Ward 2

Craig Wasser
3394 Lawrence ST SE
Salem OR 97302
Ward 2

Monday April 22, 2019

To The Salem City Council:

As a Salem taxpayer, I am deeply concerned about several decisions made by the Salem Public Library's leadership team during the past year. It is most illogical and very poor stewardship to have a massive Library with an intentioned goal to have the fewest books per square feet of any Library in Oregon. (Including the count of E-books) There is no way our \$18 million bond would have passed if we were told we are going to have 10's of thousands of fewer books after the retrofit. Instead, they told us this: (November 2018) . **"Every year, the Library adds 33,000 new items — books, DVDs, CDs, magazines, e-books and other resources — to satisfy the needs of every age group, pre-school to retiree."** (<https://www.cityofsalem.net/Pages/five-things-you-should-know-about-the-salem-public-library.aspx>) It went on to give a simple overview of the weeding process. But that is a deceptive, and I view it as a lie. While "adding" 33,000 new items, the reduction of older items is **GREATER!** The eye test alone proves this AND the raw data is irrefutable. The patrons have been patronized!

Also, there is an elephant in the Salem Public Library that must be addressed. The Adult staff (Non management/Leadership) is against this approach to reducing our collection under the extreme interpretation of the weeding policy. Here is an anecdote from the Library that highlights my point. Former staff described to me how a Senior Librarian cried as she was following the direct orders of management/leadership to weed out books that she felt needed to remain to have a great core collection. She cried as she weeded books that she also knew the Library could not afford to replace and were in great condition. So, she took action. She started checking out books herself to beat the system. By checking them out, they met the weeding criteria and could remain in our Library. She viewed these as core books the Salem Public Library needed. Yet, for this effort, she was given a formal reprimand, in writing, and told to cease and desist. Her judgment was stopped and the weeding policy was kept in place. The result, hundreds of books were discarded, maybe thousands, that would have been saved from this weeding project. So, to keep her job at the Library and avoid insubordination, she had to continue with the removal of books that tax payers could not afford to replace that she felt were part of the core collection. Please let that sink in as you come to a decision.

The Salem Public Library is below average in many ways. The table below shows how Salem Public Library is underfunded and understaffed compared to Oregon libraries of similar size. Despite these handicaps, the staff at the Salem Public Library has worked hard to provide a strong collection, numerous educational and entertaining programs, and professional reference services for the

community. (These numbers are from the 2017-2018 draft statistical report found on the State Library of Oregon's website - <https://www.oregon.gov/Library/libraries/Pages/Statistics.aspx>)

Library	Population Served	Total Staff FTE	Total Budget	Total Physical & Digital Items	Total Program Attendance	Total Reference Questions
Beaverton	145,118	64.60	\$9,186,109	440,637	85,987	58,985
Hillsboro	154,197	79.15	\$7,316,299	389,615	57,859	24,270
Salem	163,480	43.70	\$4,662,140	436,529	78,777	43,758
Eugene	167,780	105.00	\$13,081,566	1,162,610	67,478	107,900
Deschutes	182,930	87.78	\$10,838,437	992,172	108,310	82,888

During the past year, the Library's leadership team has made several major decisions that have been detrimental to the Library.

First, seven staff members (6.25 FTE) have left the library since April 2018. Two new staff members were finally added on April 1st, but the rest of those positions (10% of the library's FTE) are still vacant. How can the remaining staff serve the Salem community well when they are absorbing the workload from all of those vacancies?

Second, the leadership team made the decision to remove the reference desk. According to former library staff members, no one on the management/leadership team has worked at the reference desk for **NINE** years. (Except for a total of a few hours within those nine years.) How did the management/leadership team know that the reference desk was unnecessary when they never worked there? Those same staff said they were only given 2.5 weeks to develop a plan for providing reference services at the circulation desk. In the past, we always knew that our reference questions were being answered by experienced, professional librarians. Now, our questions are being answered by whom? An intern? A substitute who has worked at the library for a few months? Meanwhile, the experienced reference staff members are too busy checking out books to assist patrons with reference questions. That is not the best service the Library can offer the Salem community.

Third, the leadership team directed the staff to weed the book collection. Why? The leadership team has given various answers – the collection is too big, the collection is too old, the collection is too worn out, the collection needs to be moved to a temporary location. The truth is that the Library's collection has been shrinking for years because the staff is constantly weeding and there are very limited funds for replacing important titles. (The leadership team has identified \$15,000 of special funds for replacement books, but that amount is a drop in the bucket when working with a collection of over 350,000 physical items.) In particular, I have learned from former library staff that the adult nonfiction collection has shrunk by 30% since 2013 - from over 120,000 items to about 82,000 items earlier this year. And the weeding at the current pace is only 50% completed. (Estimate given at the February, 2019 Library Advisory Board Meeting.) Again, this reveals that 33,000 new items as mentioned above are not keeping up with what is discarded. Our community does not like to be manipulated.

The Library is no longer a place you go to discover and explore. You can find CD's in the center of the Library but not a reference Librarian. (Let that sink in for a moment.) We need our reference Librarians back full time. In the past I went to a reference Librarian and asked for a book on WWII submarines. What did she do for me? She did not just direct me to a section of the Library that had WWII stuff, and wished me well. No, I was directed to a book on one submarine and its life story: Archerfish. A book she had read and wanted more people to discover. It was fantastic. This book is not popular. It is the best book you can read on submarines. (My bias – I have read it three times now.) On another occasion, I went to the Library to find a book on the civil rights movement. The Reference Librarian directed me to go deeper. Claudette Colvin was a key person in the early days of the civil rights movement. Never heard of her? She was Rosa Parks before Rosa Parks. Yet, there was a lot of behind the scenes wrangling. I discovered the political forces behind the key players of the movements. I witnessed the deep sacrifices of men and women who sought to change this country and were willing to be arrested or even die if needed. I saw the flaws of humanity on both sides of this issue. It was fantastic. The book was not popular. Yet, it changed me. I thank our reference Librarian for leading me to it and working with me to discover more than just what is popular. I would never have heard about the conception of the civil rights movement before Rosa Parks if I only had the popular collection and no reference desk. Gone is the reference Desk and availability of reference Librarians working full time. Now it is a game of Reference Librarian roulette. Gone are the books which will not check out because there is no reference Librarian to help us discover them, cementing their fate as unpopular.

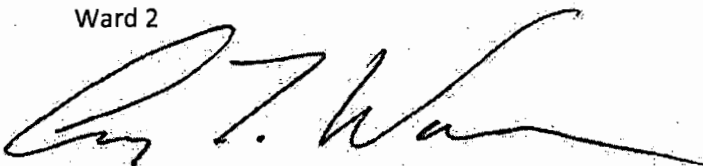
Now, it is revealed in the City of Salem Council agenda, after these major, detrimental decisions, the Library's leadership team has asked to use \$300,000 from unspent **STAFF** funds to purchase new AV equipment for the Library's meeting rooms. What is more important to the community and what will serve the community longer? A growing (not shrinking) collection of physical and digital titles that is **accessible by everyone** in the community? Or having potentially unnecessary equipment in the meeting rooms that are used **occasionally by a small portion** of Salem residents? I understand that the meeting rooms do need new equipment, but spending the entire \$300,000 on this equipment is an irresponsible use of my tax dollars.

After this pattern of bad decisions, I am asking the Salem City Council to:

- Urge the Library's leadership team to fill the empty staff positions
- Insist that a reference desk be reinstated so that Salem patrons can receive this core library service from experienced reference staff
- Direct the leadership team to stop this major weeding (wasting) project
- Oppose the use of \$300,000 for AV equipment in the meeting rooms and recommend that a large portion of these funds be redirected to the library's collection

Thank you for reading and considering my testimony.

Craig Wasser
Ward 2

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig Wasser', written over the typed name and ward information.

RECEIVED

APR 22 2019

SALEM LEGAL DEPT

April 22, 2019

To: Mayor Bennett and Members of Salem City Council

From: Jane Cummins, 158 Muirfield Ave SE, Salem 97306

RE: April 22 Information Item: Library Advisory Board Update Report

"A good library collection is like a good haircut. It's not what you cut - it's what you leave". (Quote from CREW. A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries)

This information item contains the Salem Public Library's Library Advisory Board recommendation to continue implementation of the Library's Collection Development Policy as had been conducted prior to December 2018. In other words: Continue the "Big Weed".

LAB is an advisory board making a recommendation. I suggest that the Mayor and City Council consider this as more than an "information item". Recommendations are only that. They are not adopted policy. The issues and community interest and concerns expressed by numbers of Library patrons demand Council consideration and action.

While I am unable to attend the meeting or the Budget hearings in May, I do want to comment on this item before Council tonight. I have been a life-long library user and have been in our public library once a week for more than 15 years as a volunteer in the Friends Store.

I support maintaining our public library's book collection at a level which is similar to other libraries in Oregon.

I strongly urge the Mayor and City Council members to specifically state that:

- 1) The Salem Public Library Book Collection shall be maintained at a level of 2 books per capita, and**
- 2) Weeding of books per year shall not exceed 5%.**

The Report to Council

The report with 13 attachments and links to further reading challenges even the most dedicated reader of Council reports. Please be sure to carefully read the last attachment containing public comments. I take issue with other parts, and offer my comments on several along with some observations about our library.

Dozens of this community's members stood up to say "Too many books are disappearing from our library. Why?" Several sections are cut in half (example - poetry). Large books, such as art and travel books, are pulled from the shelves. Library patrons who come to use books for research or to browse shelves out of curiosity about a subject no longer find the materials they used in the past.

After two months of public comment, action by LAB to continue the Big Weed came quickly. There was little to no acknowledgment of the public's comments, and there was not lengthy deliberation.

The Future of the Salem Public Library

We all recognize technology is creating new ways to receive information. Libraries are challenged to keep up. Book collections remain an essential element.

Our library is described as "a popular materials library" with an "emphasis on "up-to-date and in-demand materials." If a book isn't checked out within the last 3 years, out it goes. If a book is deemed worn, out it goes, even if it cannot be replaced. Even if a book is the only one about one of the most famous artists of our times, out it goes. We are told professionals know best. The result: many regular library patrons (users of books) are now being told that some of their usage and expectations are no longer valid. Do you expect to keep those regular patrons?

In an attempt to meet the future, essential parts of our library are being discarded.

The books: Thousands of books are gone, books that are an investment by the community. We pay for the books and expect to "use" them in various ways - checking out, research, browsing. We enjoy holding a book instead of a pad; we enjoy browsing to satisfy a new interest; we gather books to research a subject; we look at large art and travel books that are easily used in the library and not necessarily checked out. Many of the books weeded are among the adult non-fiction because they have the largest percentage of books not checked out. Some are the very books that are used in other ways. If I'm looking up history, I do not just want to look at the most current book, but also those written earlier to capture the perspectives at different times.

The CREW Manual offers several collection guides that are worth considering: 1) If budgets are tight, it may be necessary to lengthen age factors (given as 3-5 years for check-out) in favor of removing only books in poor condition. 2) Weeding should be done by staff who can consider collection and library needs from both a broad and long-range perspective. These staff have developed expertise through many hours of work and thinking about a collection. A good rule of thumb is if staff takes part in selection of materials. If no one on staff is as above, recruit talents of local experts such as high school or college instructors.

Staff and Reference Desk: The Salem Public Library no longer has a reference desk or adequate staff. Instead, we have an "Ask Me" desk where good intentions by remaining staff simply cannot provide essential services to library users.

The CREW Manual states that reference service is one of the most visible expressions of a library's mission and is key to many of the roles or service priorities. In spite of the Internet, reference service remains vital according to the manual.

Final Comments

The Salem Public Library is the largest library in the region and is used by many as a resource library. It is the public library in Oregon's capital city. Our public library is being put on a path which no longer meets the diversity of service needs expected by many library patrons: As a result of the Big Weed thousands of books amounting to thousands of dollars of investment by the community are gone. The emphasis and various reasons for weeding out so many books change. Few answers are given to questions from concerned library users. Staff is woefully inadequate, and the reference desk, an essential library service, is removed.

I ask you, Mayor and Council Members, to seriously take the time to reflect on the issues facing our community's public library, an essential service which unfortunately is in rapid decline.