

PAUL L. EVANS
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 20



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

June 26, 2017

Mayor Chuck Bennett
City of Salem
555 Liberty Street SE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Ref: Re-Opening of Fire Station 11 (for West Salem)

Mayor Bennett:

I write this letter in support of a reconsideration of "Project 6" listed on your May 3, 2017 "Wish List" document. While I understand making this choice would impact your ending fund balance, I believe the residents of West Salem – and the future residents of West Salem – warrant the investment. The price tag: \$1,200,000.00 is not a small "ask" but it would send an unequivocal signal to the larger community that West Salem matters – this is critical for ongoing and possible development purposes.

Please understand that I do not make this request lightly. As a former city councilor, mayor, school board member, and current legislator – I know the frustrations of modern budgeting. The realities of our time reflect the loss of more than \$4,000,000,000.00 in revenues associated with the passage of Ballot Measure 5 (1990) and Ballot Measure/s 47/50 (1996/97) since passage. The enduring legacy of these measures is an Oregon that struggles to keep up with current service needs at all levels of governance.

Over the years we have stretched available resources farther than imagined. And, after reviewing your most recent budget document I want to commend you for your approach. You and your budget committee deserve gratitude for putting the pieces of the puzzle together. What you did will support the existing requirements. Your investments are a solid foundation for potential development in several areas throughout the city. Today, I ask for you to stretch a little farther – just a little bit more – to lay a foundation for future development throughout the entire community: to invest in re-opening a fire station in West Salem to encourage expanded neighborhood growth and economic development.

Given the smaller staffing levels (since the passage of the ballot measures) and the 73% response-standards rate (within 5.5 minutes from dispatch) within the West Salem region, re-opening the station is a necessity: a need warranting an exception to policy – something worth decreasing your ending fund balance to less than 15%. Right now, three (3) firefighters are all that stand in the way of danger during times of either congestion on the bridges and/or high call volume. This means 30,000 residents depend upon the accessibility of equipment and personnel that may not be able to arrive in time: I believe now is the time to fix this. While we may not be able to increase staffing levels, we can improve both safety and standards through re-opening Fire Station 11. Both will be invaluable assets in attracting new partners for economic progress.

Thank you for considering my letter and allowing me to share a few thoughts with you about this issue. Please let me know if I can help provide additional information, or answer any questions you might have.

Respectfully,

Paul L. Evans
Oregon House of Representatives (HD 20)