



## Staff Report

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**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**THROUGH:** Keith Stahley, City Manager

**FROM:** Scott Archer, Deputy City Manager

### **SUBJECT:**

Reduction in Library operational hours, beginning January 2, 2024.

Ward(s): All Wards

Councilor(s): All Councilors

Neighborhood(s): All Neighborhoods

Result Area(s): Good Governance; Safe and Healthy Community; Welcoming and Livable Community.

### **SUMMARY:**

The Salem Public Library has faced staffing shortages and increased demands for service. The lack of staffing has led to difficulty in providing service to patrons during open hours, cancellation of library programs, and inequitable distribution of workload among staff. In an effort to proactively conserve resources in anticipation of the potential for expenditure reductions in either the current FY24 Budget or the FY25 Budget, Community Services and Library management have for the past several months chosen not to fill most staff positions as they become vacant. These are vacancies created by normal, ongoing staff turnover due to retirements and resignations. As such, this has created a reduced level of staffing and an increasing burden to existing staff in maintaining the current levels of service. We have now reached a point of no longer having the staffing capacity to operate the Library at a level needed to support the current levels of service. Given this, it has become necessary to reduce the days and hours of operation at both the Main Library and the West Salem Library, beginning January 2, 2024. The reductions in days and hours are reflective of our capacity to staff the operation of our two Library buildings including all accompanying services and programs.

### **ISSUE:**

Information only.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Information only.

## **FACTS AND FINDINGS:**

The decision to reduce operating hours was not taken lightly. Department and Library leadership considered the time periods and days that the library is most utilized and ensures provision of weekend hours at both locations for maximum accessibility. Our primary goal remains to continue serving our community with excellence while navigating the limitations imposed by our current and anticipated fiscal reality. Our staffing limitations have been created due to our decision to hold open most of our vacancies in anticipation of the looming revenue shortfall in the City General Fund.

Effective January 2, 2024 the adjusted operational hours at the Main Library will be Tuesday through Thursday 10 am to 6 pm, Friday and Saturday 10 am to 5 pm. The new operational hours for the West Salem Branch will be Tuesdays from 1 pm to 6 pm and Saturdays from 12 pm to 5 pm. While this adjustment in hours is difficult, it is an imperative step that we must make to provide the best service to our community. Additionally, this adjustment decreases the stress and workload that our staff are facing due to capacity limitations. For the past several months, the library has been operating at regular operating hours and providing programs and services with approximately 20% less staffing. The impacts of this have been felt throughout the whole organization. Management has seen an increase of sick time usage up 65% from last year and when surveying staff, they have relayed concerns of burnout, increased workloads, and stress. These adjusted hours are reflective of the current staffing level and capacity.

## **Beneficial Impacts:**

- Consolidation of staffing and resources during the Library's most utilized days and times.
- Staff capacity will increase and workload will be more equitably distributed due to more staff availability throughout the busiest workdays (Tues-Thurs).
- Staff callouts anticipated to decrease - currently at 62% increase over last year.
- Easier to schedule staff and less burden to Library Leadership Team.
- Decrease in staff burnout due to more staff on each shift to help with daily tasks and service desks.
- Reduction in staffing turnover.
- Increased budget savings for utilities (gas, electric).
- Increased budget savings for on-call staff.

- Increased budget savings for supplies.
- Less strain on facilities maintenance and cleaning since we would be open less hours to the public. More hours mean higher use of facilities and building wear and tear.

**Adverse Impacts:**

- Reduced accessibility to our community since the Library will be open less days and hours.
- Reduced programming.
- Elimination of curbside pickup on Sundays.
- Reduction of availability of meeting room space and study rooms.
- Cancellations of existing room reservations.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Salem Public Main Library currently operates 6 days a week for a total of 52 hours per week, and provides over 50 programs and events per month. The West Salem Library currently operates 5 days a week for a total of 30 hours a week, and provides 1 program per month.

Bridget Esqueda  
City Librarian (AIC)

**Attachments:**

Salem Public Library Operational Hours