

Draft letter for the Madison Public Library Board to consider at the August 6, 2020 meeting

August 6, 2020

To our Madison library community:

On July 9, 2020, the Madison Public Library Board approved the proposed 2021 Operating Budget on a five to four vote to meet the five percent reduction directive given by the mayor to all city departments. The proposed budget includes roughly a million dollars eliminated with major reductions in library staff, programming, services, reduced operating hours, and the temporary closure of a neighborhood branch, the Monroe Street Library, during 2021.

The Madison Public Library Board is committed to its statement it released in June 2020 on racial equity, specifically, “as a board, we are committed to examining policies, procedures, and projects through a racial equity lens and we make budget decisions through a racial equity lens.” The Madison Public Library Board made this budget decision with input from the community, information from library staff, and through a racial equity lens.

The Madison Public Library Board would like to reassure the community that we will continue to seek opportunities within the budget during 2021, as is our purview, to restore services to the Monroe Street Library as well as regain staff and services if conditions permit.

Although we are cognizant of the economic uncertainties that the current global public health crisis has wrought on our community, we implore Mayor Rhodes-Conway and the Madison Common Council to reconsider the requested cuts to the library, allowing the library to continue its award-winning services to the community at a level worthy of the citizens of Madison.

Madison Public Library Board

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