

From: [Alex Saloutos](#)
To: [Finance Committee](#)
Cc: [Lankella, Badri](#); [Verveer, Michael](#); [Vidaver, Regina](#); [Madison, Sabrina](#); [Mayor](#); [O'Brien, Sean](#); [Evers, Tag](#)
Subject: Public Comment, Item 16, File ID 93677, 2027 Operating Budget Outlook
Date: Monday, June 29, 2026 4:12:52 PM
Attachments: [260629_LEGISTAR93677_MEMORANDUM_FINANCECOMMITTEE.pdf](#)

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Members of the Finance Committee,

I'm sorry I am unable to attend your meeting today. Attached is my written public comment on Item 16, Legistar File ID No. 93677, 2027 Operating Budget Outlook and Request for Guidance, on today's agenda.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'AS' or a stylized 'A' with a horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Alex Saloutos

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M E M O R A N D U M

Date: June 29, 2026
To: Finance Committee
From: Alex Saloutos
RE: **Agenda Item 16, Legistar File ID No. 93677, 2027 Operating Budget Outlook and Request for Guidance**

I have two comments on the proposed budget guidance on your agenda today (Legistar File ID No. [93677](#)).

First, the 2 percent across-the-board reduction is neither thoughtful nor strategic. It treats every service as if it carries the same weight. It does not. The City should fund its core services first. After that, it should help the neighbors in greatest need. A flat cut does neither. It spreads the loss evenly across every agency and calls the result fair.

Setting priorities is the hard part, and it is the job in front of you. It belongs to this committee, to the City's committees and commissions, and to the Council. You cannot hand that work to a formula that trims the same percentage from every department. That is where you need to roll up your sleeves, rank what matters, and make the difficult calls.

The guidance also appears to let each department keep the savings it finds and spend them on its other needs. Those savings should be weighed across the whole City, not held inside the agency that produced them. If every department keeps the same slice of the pie, the City never asks the harder question of where a dollar does the most good.

Second, Results Madison is a good program, and the underlying goals have merit. Measure what's important to help set budget priorities. But the measures have to come from the public, not from staff. What's important to the public may be different from what's important to staff. The way to learn that is to ask them and to use what they tell you.

I have spent years in quality improvement, and I have served as an examiner for the Wisconsin Forward Award. In that work, failing to use the voice of the customer to set your measures of success is a fatal flaw. You have to ask the people you serve what's important to them to truly know and achieve the highest performance and organizational alignment.

Thank you for your consideration.