

**From:** [Rachel Niesen](#)  
**To:** [Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** 2022 City Budget  
**Date:** Monday, October 24, 2022 10:03:47 AM

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Hello,

My name is Rachel Niesen, I live here in Madison in Eken Park. I work as a psychotherapist and social worker in the Atwood neighborhood.

I'm writing to speak to the importance of investing in our community, not cops.

True solutions to safety come from investing in resources that meet our community's needs and support our neighbors who are vulnerable. Policing is a reactive response that often causes harm. Hiring an Independent Police Monitor is an important step towards addressing this harm. We can also further prevent this harm by directing more city funding towards programs like CARES rather than increasing police spending.

The current budget allocates over half (52%) of the city's funding for public health & safety to the police department. This is 10 times what is allocated for the public health department (\$84.2 million compared to \$8.2 million).

Additionally, the finance committee voted to approve federal COPS funding for 6 new officers, which will leave the city on the hook to pay for them in 3 years. We cannot afford more policing when it doesn't meet the needs of our communities, doesn't prevent violence and, most importantly, continues to harm the most vulnerable among us.

Instead, the city should continue to increase funding for the CARES program, which helps to prevent people who are experiencing mental health crises from being put in jail. The current proposal includes an additional \$160,000 for the program. While this is a step in the right direction, we should direct a more significant portion of the \$350 million city budget to this program that directly meets an important community need.

Other needs that were identified as high priorities by Freedom Inc's community survey in 2020 include "grocery stores, parks, community centers, street lights, bus stops and affordable housing; we do not need more police, we do not need differently trained police, and we do not need community outreach from police."

Thank you for your time, and for working to create a city budget that reflects our community's values and priorities.

Sincerely,  
Rachel Niesen, LCSW

**From:** [Erica Ramberg](#)  
**To:** [Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Invest in communities, not COPS  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 18, 2022 9:59:13 AM

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Dear Finance Committee,

I appreciate your work on behalf of our city as you undertake the complex work of the city budget. As you consider this year's budget, I ask you to make the decisions to support our communities instead of increasing funding for the police department.

I can imagine that you'll get pressure to support the addition of 6 new officers through the COPS grant - that leaves the city on the hook for paying for the officers in three years. Policing already takes an outsized portion of our budget in comparison to other city services. **Continuing to increase the portion of the budget that MPD gets does not reflect our values and priorities, nor does it make us safer.** In fact, it puts BIPOC youth and communities in more danger for criminalization, surveillance, and harm (see [here](#) for critiques of COPS funding, and [here](#) for a sense of the harm caused by youth encounters with police).

It's time to build a different vision of safety for our community - ones that understand that building a safe community means supporting the dignity, humanity, and capacity of our BIPOC youth and communities. I believe Madison can be a leader in providing care rather than criminalization to our most vulnerable community members. Programs like CARES represent an important step and an effective alternative to further policing. In order to do this, **CARES needs robust funding.** I support the Mayor's vision, but it is simply not enough. I want to see this program not only exist, but thrive as a viable alternative our city can be proud of.

There's much to celebrate in this budget - reproductive health, young adult employment programs, a purpose-built homeless shelter, affordable housing, and emergency management for climate change. There would be more to celebrate when the finance committee decides to reject the COPS funding and increase funds for programs that actually robustly contribute to genuine community safety and prioritizes the livelihood and wellbeing of those most vulnerable.

Thank you for your time.  
Best wishes  
Erica Ramberg

515 Briar Hill Rd

**From:** [Jake Rodgers](#)  
**To:** [Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Madison Operating Budget  
**Date:** Monday, October 17, 2022 6:32:47 PM

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Good evening Finance Committee Members,

I am writing quickly to give my two cents on the Madison Operating Budget for 2023. All I am asking is that you do not use any discretionary funds for the Police. We already spend over 86 million dollars on Police and we as a city do not need to be spending any more money on Police. I would like to see as least amount of money as possible on the police and instead spend it on services for people, education, health care, housing and food.

Thank you,  
Jake Rodgers (he/him)  
2518 East Johnson Street  
Madison, WI  
53704

**From:** [Krista Eastman](#)  
**To:** [Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** operating budget  
**Date:** Monday, October 17, 2022 7:23:53 AM

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Dear Finance Committee,

As you consider the city budget, I know you will get pressure to support more funding for police and policing, but I ask you to have the courage to take our city on a different path – one that understands that building a safe community means supporting the dignity, humanity, and capacity of our BIPOC youth and communities.

I strongly oppose adding six police officers through the COPS grant; we as taxpayers will be on the hook to pay for these officers in a short few years, at a time when our city will be dealing with large deficits. Policing already has an oversized budget in comparison to the rest of city services; committing new funds to an additional six officers does not reflect our values or actually contribute to more safety for children and youth.

If we want to reduce racial disparities, we must start by rejecting a costly proposal that puts more police in neighborhoods with BIPOC youth and use those funds to invest in what works.

I also believe Madison can be a leader in providing care rather than criminalization to our most vulnerable community members. Programs like CARES represent an important step and an effective alternative to further policing. In order to do this, CARES needs robust funding. I support the Mayor's vision, but it is simply not enough. I want to see this program not only exist, but thrive as a viable alternative our city can be proud of.

I'm happy to see significant funds in this budget earmarked for things such as reproductive health, young adult employment programs, a purpose-built homeless shelter, affordable housing, and emergency management for climate change. Unrelated to this budget, we also applaud the City's work on guaranteed income. I'm excited to see the portions of the city budget that honor community, care, human rights, and racial justice. But we can and should do better.

Thank you,

Krista Eastman

940 Clarence Court

**From:** [Larissa Duncan](#)  
**To:** [Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Public comment on 2023 Operating Budget -- please rescind COPS match  
**Date:** Monday, October 17, 2022 3:23:50 PM

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Dear City of Madison Common Council Finance Committee:

I am a resident of District 15 in Madison, an MMSD parent, and a faculty member at the university.

There is much to like in the 2023 Operating Budget for the City of Madison, such as increased funding for reproductive health, expansion of the CARES program to run 7 days per week (from 5), and funding for an Independent Police Monitor.

I am very concerned, however, that the matching funds the city is providing for the federal COPS program to hire 6 new police officers to engage in community policing will backfire and make us less safe.

The COPS matching funds the Finance Committee approved for this year's 2023 operating budget seem minimal (\$95K), however the City will soon have to pay the entire salaries for these 6 new positions in just a few years (at a cost of over half a million dollars per year). Those funds would be much better spent by increasing CARES funding and investing in youth programs and community development work that we know prevents violence.

The COPS community policing model has a stated purpose of improving police "legitimacy" which sounds like a public relations job. In a city where we already spend 10 times as much on policing than we do on public health, we don't need more police. We need more investment in BIPOC led youth-serving organizations and public infrastructure that prevents the root causes of violence.

I have spoken with many other parents who feel the same way. We do not want more police in our neighborhoods surrounding our schools. We want more neighborhood resources.

Please rescind your Finance Committee support of the 2023 match for federal COPS funding. Please don't send taxpayers a bill in just a few years to pay for these 6 new police officers we don't want or need.

Thank you,  
Larissa Duncan  
41 Farwell St.  
Madison, WI 53704

Professional contact information:

Associate Professor and Elizabeth C. Davies Chair in Child & Family Well-Being  
Department of Human Development & Family Studies  
School of Human Ecology  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
1300 Linden Drive, Madison, WI 53706

\*Views represented in this email are not those of the University and I am not representing the University.

**From:** [Susan Freiss](#)  
**To:** [Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Support Community Care, Human Rights, & Racial Justice  
**Date:** Wednesday, October 19, 2022 11:26:47 AM

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Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Finance Committee Members,

**As you consider the city budget, I know you feel pressure to support more funding for police and policing, but please have the courage to take our city on a different path.** Understand that building a safe community means supporting the dignity, humanity, and capacity of our BIPOC youth and communities. We must move against the tide of fear mongering that calls for increased policing.

I applaud the significant funds in this budget earmarked for things such as reproductive health, young adult employment programs, a purpose-built homeless shelter, affordable housing, and emergency management for climate change. Unrelated to this budget, I also applaud the city's work on guaranteed income. These allocations reflect our community values.

However, I strongly oppose adding six police to the force through the COPS grant regardless that the cost will not be immediately assumed by taxpayers. **Increasing the police force does not reflect our community values** or contribute to the safety of young people. (In fact, evidence shows that "[police encounters in early childhood increase risk of arrest in young adulthood for Black but not white](#)" youth; for more info on that, see [this](#), and [this](#)).

I believe Madison can be a leader in providing care rather than criminalization of our vulnerable community members. Programs like CARES represent an important step and an effective alternative to further policing. In order to do this, **CARES needs robust funding**. I support the Mayor's vision, but it is simply not enough. I want to see this program not only exist, but thrive as a viable alternative our city can be proud of.

As an educator and longtime resident of Madison I'm excited to see the portions of the city budget that honor community, care, human rights, and racial justice. **But we can and should do better.**

Thank you for your service to our community,

Susan Freiss

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*Be willing to be surprised!*

*Susan Freiss*

*608-609-7961*

*[Jane Addams Peace Association](#)*



**From:** [Anwar Hossain](#)  
**To:** [Finance Committee](#)  
**Cc:** [a\\_nwar@hotmail.com](mailto:a_nwar@hotmail.com)  
**Subject:** Dane County Property Tax Reduction  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 25, 2022 1:00:01 AM

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Dear Representative(s):

I lived in Madison almost 30 years and lot of great things has happened but rising property taxes year over year causing high stress of living; and not to mention, rising costs on everything thing else. It's preventing to do any meaningful thing for the community because I'm too busy working to maintain modest living.

Anwar

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Bryan Manning](#)  
**To:** [Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** 10/31 - Agenda Item #20  
**Date:** Monday, October 31, 2022 1:49:50 PM

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Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Greetings,

This morning, I registered in SUPPORT of agenda item #20 for today's meeting. I am specifically in support of Operating Budget Amendment #22 to close the pay parity gap between MPD/MFD staff and the other City employees. I wanted to clarify my support of this specific amendment to agenda item #20 and do not wish to speak at the meeting this afternoon.

Thanks

Bryan Manning  
3014 Pelham Rd  
Madison, WI 53713

**From:** [Bonnie Roe](#)  
**To:** [Rhodes-Conway, Satya V.](#); [Finance Committee](#); [All Alders](#); [Tishler, Bill](#)  
**Subject:** Amendments  
**Date:** Monday, October 31, 2022 1:26:06 PM

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Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Mayor, Alders, and Members of the Finance Committee,

Please **OPPOSE Amendment #23** to vastly increase Alder salaries during a time of massive structural deficit. This is an unnecessary expense our city does not need, and all residents I've spoken with are against it. To try to sneak it through the budget as an amendment as opposed to the regular budget process is disingenuous and last minute. The amendments were not posted in a timely fashion on the city's Finance page and instead had to be located on the Finance Committee Agenda on Friday afternoon. This is unacceptable and residents deserve more time to see what you are all up to and have a voice in the process. There are many, many more important objectives for us to spend our taxpayer dollars on (such as public safety, rising gun violence and violent crime, youth recidivism, and people who are currently housing challenged or in need of help entering the workforce) than increasing salaries for a 20-hour per week job. What happened to the concept of public service?

Please **ACCEPT Amendment #13**, the COPS Grant for a Police Community Advisory Board. This is in keeping with all of the reports and feedback given through the ad hoc policy group, the OIR Report, the Quattrone Center Review, and the feedback MPD received through many meetings with the public. The community wants more say in policing and this is a no-brainer, as it is grant funded.

Please **ACCEPT #14**, if legally possible, to be able to have third party transports after an emergency detention. As far as I can tell, this costs the city nothing and it would meet a huge need. It would help those who do not need a return trip based on their state of mind and behavior by the end of a detention, and it would help our police officers by saving them time on work that might not need to be done by them (in some cases).

Please **ACCEPT #16**, another COPS Grant for officer health and wellness. Nothing is more important than a properly-funded and resourced police department, with physically and emotionally healthy police officers responding to the scenes of so many types of incidents, especially when they are short-staffed, frequently unable to meet hard minimums throughout the city, and maxing out on overtime. Burnout and attrition are high, longevity is low and shrinking. We need healthy officers dealing with the public, and especially those in a mental health crisis, to make the best, most sound split-second decisions, especially in life or death situations.

Thank you,

Bonnie Roe  
District 11  
608-239-1748

**From:** [Larry and Ginny White](#)  
**To:** [Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Proposed Alder Wage Increase  
**Date:** Friday, October 28, 2022 1:47:32 PM

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For your information...

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** **Larry and Ginny White** <[lgwhites@gmail.com](mailto:lgwhites@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** Fri, Oct 28, 2022 at 12:20 PM  
**Subject:** Proposed Alder Wage Increase  
**To:** Nikki Conklin <[district9@cityofmadison.com](mailto:district9@cityofmadison.com)>  
**CC:** Madison Alders <[allalders@cityofmadison.com](mailto:allalders@cityofmadison.com)>, <[mayor@cityofmadison.com](mailto:mayor@cityofmadison.com)>

Dear Nikki: We oppose the 150% salary increase for city council members that you and three other alders have proposed.

We view the position of city council member as public service, not civil service employment. We and other Madison residents donate countless, uncompensated hours of our time to making our neighborhood and city a better place to live.

The opinion of city residents on alder positions was made clear in 2019 when 70% of voters opposed making the positions full-time, raising salaries and increasing term length.

We recognize that being an alder is a demanding job and we commend you for serving, despite the challenges it brings.

Regards,

Ginny and Larry White  
71 Oak Creek Trail

**From:** [jhirsch@chorus.net](mailto:jhirsch@chorus.net)  
**To:** [Finance Committee](#)  
**Cc:** [Mayor Committee Applications; All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Oppose Budget Amendment #23 Increase Alder Pay  
**Date:** Monday, October 31, 2022 9:57:46 AM

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Attn: Finance Committee Members

I ask you to **OPPOSE** the ***Increase in Alder Pay*** which is outlined in Amendment #23. It's not needed.

I question the comparison to "...mean hourly rate for all permanent city employees..." which was used to develop the figures. The alders are not permanent city employees.

Thank you for dealing with the fiscal challenges that we face.

Janet Hirsch  
District 9

**From:** [Paul Skidmore](#)  
**To:** [Finance Committee](#)  
**Cc:** [Mayor Committee Applications; All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Oppose Budget Amendment #23 Increase Alder Pay  
**Date:** Monday, October 31, 2022 12:42:05 PM

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Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Attn: Finance Committee Members

I ask you to **OPPOSE** the ***Increase in Alder Pay*** which is outlined in Amendment #23. It's not needed or warranted, but it will waste our tax dollars.

I question the need for such a dramatic increase in the pay for alders, who are part time employees of the City of Madison. The City has highly qualified, full time staff to manage all aspects of City operations. There is no justification for such a dramatic increase in pay, especially since the City already has a significant structural deficit which will get dramatically larger as the City continues to borrow money for capital projects.

As a former alder and member of both the Task Force on Government Structure (TFOG) and the TFOG Implementation Work Group, I observed very little public support for changing the City's governmental structure, or for increasing alders pay. These observations were born out by the failure of the advisory referendum on restructuring City government. I consider this amendment a 'back door' attempt to circumvent the will of the public.

Please vote no on Amendment #23.

Paul Skidmore  
District 9 Resident

**From:** [Rachel Niesen](#)  
**To:** [Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Oppose Item 20  
**Date:** Monday, October 31, 2022 11:22:42 AM

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Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

My name is Rachel Niesen, I live in Eken Park. I work as a psychotherapist and social worker in the Atwood neighborhood.

I'm writing to speak to the proposed city budget and to share my opposition to the budget and the values and priorities demonstrated in the executive operating budget which indicate that you, our city governance, prioritize racist policing over the wellbeing and health of our most vulnerable community members.

True solutions to safety come from investing in resources that meet our community's needs and support our neighbors who are vulnerable. Policing is a reactive response that often causes harm. Hiring an Independent Police Monitor is an important step towards addressing this harm. We can also further prevent this harm by directing more city funding towards programs like CARES rather than increasing police spending.

The current budget allocates over half (52%) of the city's funding for public health & safety to the police department. This is 10 times what is allocated for the public health department (\$84.2 million compared to \$8.2 million). We cannot afford more policing when it doesn't meet the needs of our communities, doesn't prevent violence and, most importantly, continues to harm the most vulnerable among us.

Instead, the city should continue to increase funding for the CARES program, which helps to prevent people who are experiencing mental health crises from being put in jail. The current proposal includes an additional \$160,000 for the program. While this is a step in the right direction, we should direct a more significant portion of the \$350 million city budget to this program that directly meets an important community need.

Other needs that were identified as high priorities by Freedom Inc's community survey in 2020 include "grocery stores, parks, community centers, street lights, bus stops and affordable housing; we do not need more police, we do not need differently trained police, and we do not need community outreach from police."

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Rachel Niesen, LCSW