

From: [Susan Adib](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Property Tax Measure
Date: Sunday, August 4, 2024 9:23:31 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from sladib@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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The City of Madison and those who govern the City, have embarked on **extravagant** spending without having "the money in the bank" to fund the projects or positions. As most people learn along the way, **as** there are precious few classes addressing finances and economics until students reach college-level coursework, **one** should plan **ahead** for expenditures and ensure **one** can cover the costs before making purchases. The comment keeps being repeated: "everything costs more due to inflation", as a **justification** for the referendums asking the taxpayers to pay more. It should be **obvious** that "the taxpayers" are experiencing the same "everything costs more". **phenomenon**. Yet, they are expected to adjust their household budgets accordingly in order to not go into debt and still provide for their family's needs. As an **example of communities' adjustment efforts**, fast food restaurants have introduced their \$5 "meal deals" in an attempt to **bring** customers back who could no longer afford **higher** fast food prices. It is the opportune time for the City of Madison and the people who administer it, to adjust their expectations and finances accordingly by "downsizing" services and positions in an effort to conserve financial resources. Going forward the motto should be a "balanced budget" that does not rely on further taxation of the taxpayers, who have their own financial challenges. Regarding the proposed school referendum, it should first be determined what facilities could be consolidated. There is currently an overwhelming trend of families with school-age children moving to the surrounding suburbs of Madison, leaving MMSD with decreasing enrollment. For the same reason that taxpayers should not be relied on to fund deficits in the City budget, they should not be relied upon to fund a \$600 million project for MMSD. As the Dane County birth rate continues to decline, now is the time for statisticians to determine what the MMSD projected student population will be over the next 10 years. Only by doing this one can make reasonable plans for the required number of facilities and personnel.

Respectfully,
Susan Adib,

1

It is time that the City Council and City government realize that they need to "downsize their expectations", and, like households have had to do, cut spending.

It is quite possible that the United States is entering a recession, and now is the time to

From: [Nino Amato](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [Nino Amato](#)
Cc: [Scott Milfred](#); [David Wahlberg](#); [Robert Chappell MSN 365](#)
Subject: Mayor Satya proposed city budget cuts which include all city funding to the Goodman Pool, reduction in snow removal & other city services if property tax hike doesn't pass by referendum in Nov.
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 10:18:20 AM
Attachments: [apple-touch-icon.png](#)

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TO: Fellow Property Taxpayers

From: Nino Amato, 64 Oak Creek Trail

In one of the most stunning acts of politically Cowardliness by Mayor Satya —who refuses to cut her mayoral budget or cutting the city council budget, or shutting down the crime ridden, Dairy Drive illegal drug sanctuary, or eliminating all out-of- state travel for the mayor, city council members and Dept. heads & staff, or by rolling back mayoral staff and city council salaries to 2024 salary levels, or by putting a freeze on all bike paths and bike path city staffing — the Mayor has instead, threaten to make deep cuts to city snow removal, cuts to Madison’s only community pool for economically disadvantaged children of color (Goodman Pool), cuts in road maintenance, cuts in water usage in Madison’s public fountains — if residents don't approve her \$22 million dollar property tax increase referendum this November.

Other Proposed City Cuts by Satya are:

- Eliminating Sunday and some evening hours at city libraries.
- Reducing water use in decorative fountains at Capitol Square, State Street and Peace Park.
- Eliminating the police department's Gang and Neighborhood

Crime Abatement Team.

FISCAL FACTS: Since 2019, the Mayor and the vast majority of this Common Council have refused to accept their responsibility in the financial mismanagement of the city's capital and operating budgets since 2019. • The City's \$27 million dollar structural budget deficit for 2025 was caused by poor policy decisions made by Mayor Satya and the vast majority of this city council, when they:

(1) spent the entire \$47.2 million it received in federal pandemic aid, on increase wages and none essential city services,

(2) by increasing the City's operating budget by 22.1% and the capital budget by 27.5% since 2019,

(3) by giving costly employee bonuses to all city employees and by increasing city employee wages and benefits in 2023-24 with a total increase by 25.2% and 37.7%, respectively, since 2019, and by

(4) passing Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway's \$250 million dollar costly signature BRT initiative — a Bus Rapid Transit system, that leaves the city on the hook for at least \$70 million.

NO SHAME: Instead of accepting their responsibilities for creating this crisis — the Mayor & City Council President are blaming their self-induced financial crisis on the state legislature — which is intellectually dishonest and utterly disingenuous.

Worse yet, the Mayor and the Common Council is abdicating their elected and fiscal responsibilities — by passing the fiscal crises they created, onto the voters, by asking them to bail them out.

We Tge Taxpayers can register to voice our opinions against a tax increase referendum in person or virtually, at tonights city council meeting. Please use the link below to register your opposition and let your Voice Be Heard. — Nino Amato



Sent from my iPhone

From: [Brenda Baker](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Budget!!!!
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 1:05:26 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from brendaleighbaker@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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I am writing to let you know how angry and upset I am about the budget cuts that are being suggested for this next year, especially the cuts to the Parks department and basic city services.

It is such a tiny investment to keep our beaches open, and staffed with lifeguards, and our hockey rinks and skate rentals, and ski rentals open for the winter!

When we start cutting things that make a community seem worth living in, I guarantee, other problems will quickly come.

This is the time for some creativity and ingenuity, not slashing the very things that keep our community feeling alive.

I suggest that our city focus on creative solutions to this shortfall, rather than these draconian measures that suggest that our city is dying, or rotting at its core.

Instead of thinking small, think BIG about the community we want to live in, and embrace the challenge to meet those needs. We need leadership here, not death spiral thinking.

Brenda Baker
Avid park user in all seasons

While the time to start thinking of new ways to generate revenue was years ago, it is not too late!

Take a look at Theodore Wirth Park in Minneapolis if you need inspiration on how to generate revenue AND serve the community through increasing park services!!!!

From: [Jennifer Bastian](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Agenda Item: 68 84443
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 2:20:04 PM
Attachments: [Bastian Library board letter.pdf](#)

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jenniferhbastian@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Alders,

I am writing in support of Authorizing the Scheduling of a Referendum Relating to Exceeding the Municipal Property Tax Limits in the City of Madison. I am attaching a letter I wrote to the Library Board last month regarding the library budget specifically, and I would also like to add that the cuts to city services across the board look bleak, to say the least. All marginalized people, especially the very young and the very old, will be harmed if we don't put this referendum on the ballot and get it passed. Please do the right thing and move forward with the referendum.

Thank you,
Jennie

--

Jennifer Bastian
414.748.8127
<http://jenniferbastian.com>
Pronouns: she/her/hers

Hello, Community..

My name is Jennifer Bastian. I am an interdisciplinary artist, and cofounder of Communication, a Madison nonprofit arts and music organization founded in 2018.

As a young child, I was watched over by city librarians during the summers while my mother worked as an alder and later, mayor, in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. I have worked in public and university libraries and archives for a great portion of my adult life. You get it - I love libraries.

When I moved to Madison in 2016, my first jobs were working at the Fitchburg Public Library, and as a teaching artist for the Bubbler at Madison Public Library. Bubbler Team members introduced me to **every single artist** I met my first year here. Over the years, I have been an artist in residence at the Central branch, exhibited my work at multiple library branches, collaborated with librarians and Madison Senior Center staff, worked with library staff on the annual Print & Resist Zinefest, taught in the juvenile detention center and the men's jail. This Fall, I will begin a year as artist in residence at the Thurber Park Studio, an incredible opportunity to collaborate with the city of Madison, the libraries, and the Town of Blooming Grove. **Library staff have helped me to have a holistic and realistic view of the community I am a part of and that I seek to support and serve with my art practice.**

When Communication opened, Bubbler staff helped us to form community partnerships all around Madison with their already established relationships. They shared out our events, our flyers and calls for exhibition. **I cannot emphasize enough how much stronger Communication is as an org today because of the support the libraries and Bubbler have given.**

As you can see, I am a living example of the impact our libraries, and the Bubbler, can have. By supporting me as one individual artist, they've made it possible for me and the other Communication team members to support hundreds of artists in turn. That ripple of opportunity, creativity and equity must continue to grow. **Every staff member at the Bubbler is an essential part of the fragile web of arts infrastructure that our republican majority state legislature has attempted to repress over and over again.** As cofounder of Communication and a working artist, I do not take lightly how much the Bubbler has made possible for the arts in Madison.

I can think of one city agency that could easily take the library's budget gap out of its budget. This entity does not support the marginalized in our community, and in fact commits regular harm against them. The Bubbler's Making Justice program, in all its iterations, has worked toward reducing some of that harm by bringing art and care to children in the detention center and men in the jail. The Madison Police Department should voluntarily reduce its budget to accommodate the needs of the Library budget (I won't hold my breath).

Whatever the library board decides, I know that this issue will move on to other policy makers at the city. **Please know that I and many others are ready to demand that our libraries remain fully funded, that the Bubbler will remain in its current formation, and that NO STAFF of any kind at the library are eliminated.** We will not accept anything less than full library funding, and we are ready to work for it. Thank you.

From: [tom Beck](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Fwd: Over budget \$\$
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 12:15:21 PM

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to solve the budget problem, stop scare tactics about cutting FD & PD cuts. Start common sense , reduce the unnecessary positions.

See below, why does the mayor need to travel overseas?

Tom

Protect our 1st. & 2nd. Amendment rights

FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!

Begin forwarded message:

From: tom <cnse55@yahoo.com>
Date: June 19, 2024 at 10:05:37 AM CDT
To: City of Madison <district10@cityofmadison.com>, district1@cityofmadison.com, district11@cityofmadison.com, district12@cityofmadison.com, district2@cityofmadison.com, district3@cityofmadison.com, district5@cityofmadison.com, district6@cityofmadison.com, district7@cityofmadison.com, district8@cityofmadison.com, district9@cityofmadison.com, City of Madison <district4@cityofmadison.com>, district14@cityofmadison.com, district16@cityofmadison.com, Mayor <mayor@cityofmadison.com>, Our Rep <district15@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Over budget \$\$
Reply-To: tom <cnse55@yahoo.com>

Easy fix:

1. eliminate both asst.mayors
2. Mayor takes 10% pay cut, travel budget cut 20%
3. Alder's take 10 % pay cut
4. All DEI positions cut

Tom,
Protect the 1st amendment, stop the censorship Google, FB, Twitter, MSM!

From: [Clifford Blackwell](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: public comment on agenda item 84443
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 4:15:07 PM
Attachments: [STATEMENT OF CLIFFORD BLACKWELL.docx](#)

Some people who received this message don't often get email from ceblackwell3@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Attached, please find my comment with respect to the above referenced agenda item.

I welcome any questions, thoughts or comments.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Clifford E. Blackwell, III

From: [Dorothy](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: council meeting 8/6/24 - agenda item # 84443
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 9:23:29 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from dborchardt1@charter.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

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DATE: 8/5/24
TO: Madison City Council
FROM: Dorothy Borchardt
RE: \$22 million referendum

I'm opposed to adding a larger property tax burden on the Madison taxpayers. Many life long Madison residents can no longer afford to live in Madison. You have forgotten about the middle income residents, many of them living on limited incomes. Many of my friends and all of my family have moved out of Madison.

The last five years budgets have been leading to this crisis. When you approved the budgets you were aware of the state's shared revenue system, but you went ahead and approved them anyway. You can't blame it on the state.

Did you ever meet with your state representatives and try to work out a better system? Don't blame it on the Republicans or the Democrats if you didn't try to make changes by working with them.

Stop putting wants in the budget, only needs. Stop building subsidized apartments to increase the density of Madison for the BRT. Madison needs more middle income homes.

Save our middle income residents from having to leave the city they love by NO to the referendum.

Dorothy Borchardt

From: [Dan Boyer](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Referendum Resolution: Agenda Item 84443
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 1:17:09 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from boyer.dan@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Alders,

I am writing to voice my strong concern for the proposed cuts to Madison parks, including closure of all shelters, restrooms, and the elimination of winter rentals and rinks. Madison's parks are a major part of what makes this city so great and active, and to cut that piece out would be a real shame. My family – and countless others – use these beautiful spots and services weekly and very much hope that a different solution can be proposed that is not at the expense of recreation and health of Madisonians.

With thanks for your consideration and understanding.

Warmly,
Dan

From: [James Braun](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Budget cuts
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 9:43:39 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from losbrauns@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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One proposal I have is not to raise taxes, but to examine leadership and remove unnecessary or redundant positions. Start with those putting in the million dollar bus stops where 3 riders wait, and the leaders who pay transit operators overtime to stand around the Capitol trying to explain a transit system put in place with neither driver nor public input. Millions and millions aiding Parisi Construction and giving the Mayor a Bus Rapid Transit badge in a city where "20 is Plenty". Don't ask taxpayers for more money: spend their tax money helping all taxpayers.

James Braun

From: [Randy Bruegman](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Letter on the Proposed Referendum
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 1:30:17 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[No on Placing the Tax Referendum on the November Ballot.pdf](#)

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Chief Randy Bruegman (Ret.)
PRESIDENT + FOUNDER



<https://www.theleadershipcruciblefoundation.org/>

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No on Placing the Tax Referendum on the November Ballot

Item number 84443.

With the 31.2 million dollar surplus in this year's budget, there is no need at this time to call for this referendum. From my calculation the city would only be in an approximate six million dollar deficit for the next fiscal year, not accounting for any other gains realized from the city investment funds for the remainder of this fiscal year. This could be made up by use of one time funds from the "rainy day fund," and leave the city well within the guidelines of the GFOA. This would provide over a year for the Mayor and Aders to develop other strategies that could balance the budget. The mayor has stated "a referendum is not my preferred solution. But it is the most progressive and realistic option for Madison given the current political makeup of the state government." The fact is, that property tax is the most regressive on people that own homes and rent who are in low to middle income.

There are other strategies that are far more progressive and realistic than driving people from their apartments and homes due to increased taxes. The city has over the past five years used federal ARPA funds not for one time expenditures, but those that create long-term operational cost. The use premium, the additional money that is paid to a lender to service funding when doing borrowing, has contributed to the deficit, and then rolling that into the ongoing operational budget is also an issue. Continuing to use the cost-to-continue budgeting approach enables and even encourages the mayor to overspend, and stifles innovation. The mayor is not compelled to exhaust the entire property tax and other tax windfalls each year. According to the city's admission, spending on transportation is 320 percent higher, and on human services is a staggering 700 percent higher compared to our peer cities. One of the troubling issues in this budget process is that the city appears to have rolled a significant amount of the one-time COVID relief money of 47 million dollars into its ongoing budget. If that is the case, that raises a host of questions regarding proper budget practices, ethics, and transparency. In addition, debt service should be in the area of 12% of the operating budget. Presently it's over 16% and is heading toward a 20% threshold. A high ratio threatens the AAA bond rating of the city which, if lost, will increase borrowing cost.

The city ordinance requires a fiscal note on major projects which seems to be no longer in use. The fiscal note should provide the total cost of the project, the annual operating cost, and the revenue source for the initial cost of the project and its long-term operating cost. As an example, has there been fiscal note provided for the operating costs of the new Bus Rapid Transit system?

It is recommended that you place this referendum on hold and take the following actions over the course of the next year to resolve this deficit.

1. You have an exceptionally talented core of department heads and senior staff, ask them how they would innovate services and reduce cost. The city has done business the same way for many years. If you promote the need and desire for innovation, which starts with you, the elected officials, you may be surprised with what they come back with.
2. The consolidation of services across the entities of this county would not only be cost effective, but would likely improve serviced delivery to all resident of the county. I know

this to be true, as I have consolidated several agencies in the past, and each time it improved services and saved money for the taxpayer. It is time to stop being so parochial and become an innovative organization.

3. Take a page out of Milwaukee playbook and revisit the State Allocation Policy. Milwaukee was successful because they brought the Mayor, Alders, Chamber of Commerce, Labor, and business together to collectively lobby the State Legislature for the changes that were passed last year. The city of Madison should do the same, but it will require leadership to bring those factions together toward a common goal of meeting and lobbying our State Representatives. Yes, that will require you to speak to Republicans and develop a professional relationship with them. The city should seek changes to the shared revenue formula, authorization for a sales tax for the city and/or a transit district covering the Madison metro service area, and an increase in the state payments for municipal services for state office buildings and the University of Wisconsin.
4. The city should also exercise more fiscal discipline by:
 - a. By not using one time revenues to create long term operational expenses.
 - b. Discontinue the use of premiums when borrowing money.
 - c. Reduce the amount the city is currently borrowing.
 - d. Properly providing fiscal notes on projects that are proposed within the city.
 - e. Examine all contracted expenditures, particularly in social services, for proven results.

I believe that these efforts are necessary before you ask your constituency for more money. The other point to keep top of mind is this. Property tax hurts those that can least afford it, the most. People in lower to middle income are disproportionately impacted by property tax whether an owner or renter. The city has said “well it is only going to 20 to 30 dollars a month on the average value of a home”. But for many people, that is often money they don’t have. Couple with that with the two other referendums that are on the ballot, if all three were to pass, that would likely put many people on the streets or into a subsidized housing situation. I think it is your responsibility to get your fiscal house in order first before you ask the taxpayers for more.

Randy R. Bruegman

Madison Resident

From: [Susan Bruegman](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: NO on agenda item #84443
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 3:27:57 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from susan.bruegman@att.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

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

To the Madison Alders,

I oppose the proposed Tax Levy Referendum.

Given this budget's \$31.2 million surplus, there's no immediate need to pursue a referendum. With an anticipated approximate \$6 million deficit for the next fiscal year, utilizing one-time funds from the "rainy day fund" could provide a window of over a year for the Mayor and Alders to explore alternative strategies for balancing the budget.

While the Mayor sees a referendum as the most viable option, realizing the property tax disproportionately impacts low to middle-income individuals, including homeowners and renters, is important. Using "scare tactics" to advocate for the referendum may not be in the city's best interest.

Exploring the consolidation of services across the county's entities could yield cost savings and potentially improve service delivery for all residents. You have a highly skilled core of department heads and senior staff, and seeking their input on innovative cost-saving measures would be valuable. Encouraging a culture of innovation and openness to change could lead to positive outcomes for the city's financial future. It's important to make decisions that address the budget deficit now, prevent future shortfalls, and put the city on a path to financial stability without excessively burdening taxpayers.

Sincerely,

Susan Bruegman

Susan Bruegman
313 Sauk Creek Drive
Madison, WI 53717
559-999-0287
susan.bruegman@att.net

From: [Tamara Bryant](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Support referendum resolution 84443
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 1:21:57 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from bryant.tamaraj@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Madison City Alders,

I am writing in support of the referendum resolution number 84443. I am an outdoor enthusiast and value the services provided by Madison City Parks. I like to hike at Elver, play tennis at Odana, Nordic ski at Elver and Odana, and bike on our bike trails within the city. Our city parks and trails are part of what makes our community such a great place to live in. We all can agree that our connection to the outdoors is crucial for our physical, mental, and social wellbeing, so I do not want to see cuts in services to the Madison Parks (or the other agencies of the city).

I have watched the Mayor presentation on the 2025 budget issues and I appreciate the information made available to our city residents. Thank you to our Mayor and staff for a thoughtful proposal to address this issue for 2025 and the years following. I hope our residents will support a referendum and I also hope the State of Wisconsin will make the needed changes in the allocation of funds for the future -- it is quite unfair that Madison city only gets 18 cents for every dollar collected in State taxes!

Thanks you for considering my comments. I appreciate your service to our city.

All the best,

Tamara

Tamara Bryant
2254 Keyes Ave
Madison, WI 53711

From: [Ann Conroy](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: referendum 84443
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 3:36:11 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from annjconroy@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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I am very upset to see the budget cuts that would affect winter sports in Madison. This is exactly the time of year when we need to get people outside and moving. Not filling ice rinks, having warming shelters open, and all the other cuts affecting winter parks is one of the saddest things I can think of. Madison needs to do better. Please find a way to add these back in so that the mental and physical health of our citizens can be met.

Ann Conroy

From: [Liz D.](#)
To: [Sally Young](#)
Cc: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Re: Referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 2:00:48 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from liz.winter.dannenbaum@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Excellent! ♡♡

On Tue, Aug 6, 2024, 11:41 AM Sally Young <sallyryoung@gmail.com> wrote:

To: Madison City Council

In the past, Madison residents have been generous with voting to voluntarily increase their property taxes. However, I would like to go on record as being against the city's upcoming referendum. I am on a fixed income that is not keeping up with inflation. We have an ambitious mayor and I have not seen the city council doing much to restrain her ambitions. It is no surprise that the state has unfairly targeted us with a paltry amount of state funding. It is no surprise that the pandemic funds would end soon. So, why did this 'crisis' materialize in the past year? Why were we not working harder to balance the budget by forgoing wonderful, forward-looking but unnecessary projects two, three, four years ago?

Sally Young

4112 Major Ave.

"One of the most dangerous illusions of the climate crisis is that the technology of modern life makes us invincible...our bubble of invincibility is far more fragile than we know."

Jeff Goodall author of *The Heat Will Kill You First: Life and Death on a Scorched Planet*.

From: [Liz D.](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 9:54:21 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from liz.winter.dannenbaum@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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We have rarely, if ever, voted no on a city referendum, but we believe this administration has squandered money on unnecessary projects, like the public market, and especially on salaries for upper echelon city posts (how many deputy mayors do we really need?).

Don't even get us started on the failed BRT.

Time for Madison to focus on essential services and do **those** correctly!

Liz Dannenbaum
Donna Winter
4313 Major Avenue

From: [c d](#)
To: [Rummel, Marsha](#)
Cc: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Budget shortfall
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 11:15:33 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from kashkakat99@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Ald Rummel (cc all alders)

Could you discuss use/possible mis-use of TIF. Is there any part of the city today that can be called truly "blighted" or is lacking in investors/developers ready and willing to pounce upon any available square footage that comes up for sale? It's not unreasonable to expect that investors/developers many from out of state share in the cost of providing services/infrastructure to thousands of their future residents who arent even here yet. Why does that fall on our shoulders? Madison does not seem to realize that its an attractive city in the proverbial catbird seat - we can pick and choose to do business with whoever will bring the most benefit to our city.

Secondly, the Mayor needs to lead by example. What cuts are occurring in the mayors office?

Thank you for your consideration

Cathy Debevec /1885 E Main Street

Rummel, Marsha <district6@cityofmadison.com>: Aug 06 01:35AM

We will be discussing the potential referendum at Tuesday's Council meeting. Lots of details in the blog including today's posting of city agency's proposed 5% cuts to make up for the \$22M budget deficit if the referendum fails in November. We are seeking your input.

From: davedesign@tds.net
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: city referendum
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 7:52:35 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from davedesign@tds.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Totally against. WITH THE SCHOOL REFERENDUM. both will be hard on seniors with set income. Delay a year

From: [Joan D.](#)
To: [All Alders](#); tctvoice@captimes.com
Subject: Re: financial options for Madison for Tuesday's meeting and letter to the editor of The Capital Times
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 12:43:40 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from joandowns911@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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I strongly believe that Madison should first use its \$31.2 million end-of-year surplus from 2023, to counteract the projected \$27 million shortfall for the 2025 budget. It is unacceptable not to use the money available to Madison and instead put yet another onerous burden on Madison's citizens. This is a matter of common sense and simple mathematics.

Joan Downs
765 West Washington Ave.
Madison, WI 53715-1486

Cell (for identification purposes only):
608-669-5510

From: [Jess Draws](#)
To: [Latimer Burris, Amani](#); [All Alders](#)
Subject: No Cuts to Libraries: Support Option C
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 11:38:25 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jessicalyndraws@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hello to Alder Amani Latimer Burris and all Alders of the Common Council,

My name is Jess Draws and I have been a resident of Madison and a user of the Madison Public Library system since 2012. I currently live in City of Madison Common Council District 12, but have lived in various districts in the 12 years I've lived here. I am writing to you to express my strong support for the libraries in the face of potential budget cuts for the next fiscal year.

I am aware of Option A and B as proposed by the Madison Public Library Foundation. I do not find either of these acceptable. I want Option C. I support the proposal for a \$22 million referendum that would increase property taxes by about \$20 a month to balance the budget rather than taking \$6 million in cuts from city services. This is agenda item #84443 (Authorizing the Scheduling of a Referendum Relating to Exceeding the Municipal Property Tax Limits in the City of Madison) at the Common Council Meeting tomorrow (8/6/2024). I have already registered my support, although I will not be able to attend the meeting.

Libraries are essential to marginalized communities, providing free access to resources such as books, internet, educational programs, and safe spaces. They serve as a lifeline for low-income families, the elderly, immigrants, and people experiencing homelessness. Cutting library funding would disproportionately impact these vulnerable populations, deepening existing inequities in our city. Furthermore, maintaining robust library services is a smart financial choice; libraries contribute to the local economy by supporting workforce development, literacy, and lifelong learning, which in turn fosters a more informed and connected community.

Thank you for your time,
Jess Draws
1630 Fordem Ave, #110
Madison, WI 53704

--

Jess Draws
(920) 428 - 9137 || jessicalyndraws@gmail.com
[Pronouns](#): she/her/hers

From: [Deuce Dubs](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: NO on the 22 million dollar extra tax on homeowners real estate tax bill!
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 4:52:50 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jrwan53593@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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We do not support the additional real property tax burden as our taxes are the highest in WI already. We need fiscally responsible people administration our city budget, and people who understand that means you spend no more than revenues coming in. Did you ever consider having a surplus for once? We have "X" dollars coming in our household budget, we can only spend no more than X, actually less because of unprecedented inflation and ALL living costs like home maintenance, insurance and food--who needs those, right? Our household income has gone up a total of 5 percent over the past five years, but costs of living and taxes maybe 20 plus percent--hence we are in the red, and you want to burden us more for taking care of everyone else, at our expense so we cant take care of our own needs and responsibilities.

No doubt you know well of the proposed MMSD referendum which will ask an extra 1300 a year on property taxes on an average Madison home, a half billion dollar school rebuilding program. No doubt the county will ask and MATC...and costs of everything else will go up. But you do not care...remember, the city has NO MONEY, you extract it from taxpayers..it must be nice to have a bottomless checkbook that feeds off others. Shame on you! We believe in pay our fair share, but not funding all things that pop into our leaders minds and paying for all these needy people who move here and bring nothing with them and do not pay their share of living costs and just live on the system...in a perfect world, we would not care...but the world and the politics and fiscal mismanagement at all levels of government are a complete mess, and we can't bare the burden of this over taxing anymore.

So please, learn to define, spell and live within a budget, prioritize and spend no more than you can afford. Its tough that you can't fund every social program YOU FEEL needs to be addressed, but we say don't lay it on us. Show some real leadership, and stop running us out of this city. We used to patronize local businesses many times a week...not the past 5 years, we pay too much just to live and pay taxes...tell the businesses what they can do when none of us will come out to support them!

NO on you ask for additional special taxes from we two taxpayers. We know we will be ignored, because thats how our leaders are. We are retired and on a fixed income and now are looking to leave our home and life here because of you!

From: [Terry D](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Agenda Item 84443 comments
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 2:04:59 PM
Attachments: [Comments84443.pdf](#)

Some people who received this message don't often get email from tprong91@charter.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Please find attached file for my comments on the agenda item.

Thanks!

Terry Durham
402 Acewood Blvd
Madison, WI 53714

First, I would like to express my appreciation to the council for the time and work it puts in for the city. I realize it's not an easy job, and it takes a lot of time and effort. Thank you for your service.

I don't claim to be an expert on city budgets, I probably know very little. My father was a county board supervisor for many years, however, and I have at least a little concept of it (at least I think I do!). I'm merely giving you a perspective on the current budget situation from a common property owner's point of view. I have attended the budget event and followed as much as possible the information given to us via the city website, alders' blogs, etc.

While I've been a strong supporter of city services, public services, school referenda, etc. in the past. I cannot come to be supportive of a referendum regarding the current budget dilemma. I will try to explain my point of view.

I'm a firm believer of the saying "we make our own beds". I simply find it hard to believe, given there are well qualified financial advisors, planners, budgeters, etc. in the city that this could not have been foreseen and avoided years ago. How could the deficit be allowed to balloon to such a large amount, only to now be dumped on property owners at a quite inopportune time?

I'm well aware of the "causes". One of which we hear is/was the COVID-19 pandemic. Please keep in mind the pandemic was just that, a pandemic. It did not exclusively affect the City of Madison. It was worldwide. Personally, I was furloughed multiple days per pay period. This significantly affected my revenue. So, I had to make both lifestyle and budget changes to compensate, which wasn't by any means easy. I did not have the luxury of dumping my financial burdens on my neighbors. Millions of other people had to do the same.

Then, there's those mean Republicans. I get it. Rarely, if at all, do I ever agree with anything that our state Republican majority does or says. In 2010, Act 10 significantly impacted my budget and take-home pay. However, all the ranting, raving or protesting I did was futile. Again, I had to make difficult lifestyle and

budget changes. Again, I didn't have the luxury of dumping my financial burden on someone else.

Madison is becoming ever increasingly ridiculously expensive to own a home or even rent an apartment. The city's budget woes and proposed tax increases won't make it any easier. Given the city's history, I certainly don't see this as being the last time property owners will be forced to shoulder its budget woes.

"It's only a dollar a day, though". Sure, doesn't sound like much, but neither do those late-night TV commercials that state the same thing. Let's look at it. Let's take someone making an average salary of \$50k/year. If (and that is a big IF) they are lucky and receive an annual 3% cost of living increase, that's nearly 25% of that increase automatically taken by the city. And that's before taxes. Even more if the school district gets its money. That's a big deal, given the a cost of living increase is typically fully needed for all the other "Only X amount a day's", such as increases in medical insurance, medical bills, auto insurance, auto repair, groceries, water, heat, electric, home maintenance, child care, vet care, clothing, home insurance, pharmaceuticals, phone bill, internet... just to name a few. I find it hard to imagine someone trying to live here on a fixed income.

Personally, I can realize that if large property tax increases continue each year, it's not a question of if, but when I will be taxed out of my house. And I understand it's happened before, in other cities, this city, to probably many other people. And someone wealthier will be able to buy my house and afford it. But then what exactly has happened? Yeah, gentrification. Can the city then continue to boast about equality and opportunity for all? Or will you have to add the stipulation "Only if you've got the money."?

I also have concerns for what it may do for the future. Will future city councils look back and say "hey, we can really spend as much as we want. If we get in a hole, we'll just pass another referendum!".

Thank you for taking the time to read. Again, please realize these are just some of my viewpoints, and not meant to be insulting or attacking. I generally am supportive of city services and have been in Madison for nearly 20 years because

of its attributes. However, I need to be aware of my own wellbeing. I've spent a lot of time and hard work making my house my own. It should be realized that property owners are not a bottomless well of funding. Unfortunately, I also have no easy solutions, other than responsibly reducing services and/or staff of the city.

Again, I do thank you for your service to the city and appreciate the time you all take to serve on the council.

Terry Durham

402 Acewood Blvd

Madison, WI 53714

From: [Liz Ellis](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Please support the Madison budget referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 9:07:06 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from imaginarybrassica@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Good morning,

I am writing in support of the proposed \$22 million city budget referendum. The proposed budget cuts would harm almost every city resident, but especially those with the fewest resources. This is not what our city stands for.

Liz Ellis
3149 Stratton Way #309
Madison WI, 53719

From: [Bob Entwistle](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Proposed Property Tax Referendum
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 9:49:28 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from baentwistle77@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Madison Alders,

My feedback on the referendum is that I'm not voting yes at this time. There are too many things going on that show that even a modicum of fiscal restraint is present. And while the city talks a good game in housing affordability, approval of this referendum essentially jacks the rent for every resident of the city, in addition to adding to homeowners' tax load. You're not being "inclusive" by affecting housing affordability in a negative way!

1. Imagination Center at Reindahl - the city has continued to push this forward despite knowing full well there is no money to support ongoing operations. While it's a good idea, maybe it needs to wait until after other city priorities (BRT, new homeless shelter, etc) are completed.
2. City Market - we are probably too far along with this at this point but there were other ways to support small producers (work with existing grocery outlets to increase share of local products?) that didn't require a huge investment in a new facility that has issues (not enough parking, competition from existing grocery outlets)
3. Could we have put the brakes on the second BRT line? Yes, I know that 75% of the initial cost may be funded federally. But there is a huge operational cost coming.
4. While land banking for the south side parcel that the city is purchasing for future development of a park and housing is a good idea in the best of times, some of these things may need to be turned down in times of fiscal issues.
5. We need to review what funding the city provides to NGOs for things like food pantries, community health, services of homeless and other endangered populations. How many organizations are we funding that are doing the exact same thing but all with their own overhead? All the needs are there but it seems like our approach is to fund any organization doing good work rather than trying to leverage the best of the current providers.
6. There is no money for a total redesign of the Lake Monona waterfront unless you can establish that there is significant private money committed. It's a nice plan but needs to wait.

Thanks for your work on the budget!

Bob Entwistle
2709 Center Ave, Madison (District 15)

From: [Natalie Evans](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Please adopt the resolution allowing a referendum in November
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 10:41:03 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from evansnatalie15@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Thank you.

I am from Alder District 5, ward 67.

--

Natalie Evans

From: [John Fons](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Cc: [Mayor](#)
Subject: Truth and Consequence
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 9:57:00 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jefons@aol.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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All Common Council Members,

Your referendum to increase property taxes in Madison guarantees higher rents in Madison. Landlords will not donate their income to your budget or subsidize your deficits with money that must stand in line for mortgages, insurance, utilities, maintenance or improvements to their property.

Rents will increase because you increase taxes.

No one believes you represent the needs of low, moderate or fixed income residents when your actions provoke higher rent and drive up the cost of living in Madison.

We watch you build a complicated bus system with a down payment of Federal dollars. We watch you spend hundreds of millions of dollars yet fail to balance the city's operational budget.

We endure disrupted traffic, impeded emergency vehicles, extravagant bus stops located dangerously in the middle of busy boulevards made all the more hazardous by constricted traffic lanes, not because we required it, but because someone wanted the city put on a perverse Road Diet.

Increased property taxes will be your next mistake.

John Fons
4634 Tokay Blvd.
Madison, WI 53711
608-236-0844 Hm
661-917-0850 cell

From: [Joanna Frasch](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Madison Common Council Meeting - Agenda Item #68 Public Comment
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 2:41:59 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jefra1313@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Council Members:

I am writing in support of approving the referendum option on the November, 5th 2024 ballot. I encourage to the Council to approve the resolution to put forth the \$22M property tax levy increase for the voters to decide.

It is an unfortunate circumstance that we are in, since city tax levies in Wisconsin are tied to the rate of new construction. For quite a while in the late 2010's, that rate didn't even keep up with inflation. Many cities and municipalities have similar issues since most states limit the capacity of their revenue-raising abilities. See: <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2021/07/local-tax-limitations-can-hamper-fiscal-stability-of-cities-and-counties>. Although Madison has attempted to remedy the situation by making cuts and increasing fees for over a decade, it's come to the point where we've cut and increased as much as we feasibly can - which is why I support bringing the referendum.

I had the opportunity to attend previous council meetings and the East Side budget workshop - it's clear to me that fellow citizens of our city do not want to see their services cut, nor do they want to lay off a mass number of their friends and neighbors (my union siblings) working for the city who provide these services. When asked for ideas, most people couldn't fathom cutting the number of services it would take to make up the shortfall. Madisonians, including myself, enjoy a lot of the city's amenities like: clean streets, nice parks, great libraries, public transport, the CARES program, and fantastically convenient garbage and recycling services! The citizens of Madison, although disheartened at the thought of further property tax hikes, understand that to maintain the level of services as they are, will choose to fund them.

Going forward, I would suggest the Council and the Mayor's office work to lobby against the State's restrictions on the fundraising abilities of cities and municipalities. Hopefully, with the November election, it will provide a greater opportunity to present legislative changes so that the city has more control over their financing abilities to work toward alternate means of revenue-raising. I think people see that there is something amuck with the budget shortfall our city is facing (due in part to the distribution system of shared revenue), and the massive three-billion-dollar State budget surplus - and I hope that will inspire them to act accordingly by voting in favor of this referendum while choosing their state legislators at the same time. The referenda is a temporary solution to a problem that we – the Council, the Mayor's office, and all citizens – must be willing to fight to find a permanent solution for.

Thank you,

Joanna Frasch

Resident of D17
Proud AFSCME Member
3348 Ambassador Dr #3

Madison, WI 53718

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Will Friedrich](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Resolution 84443
Date: Saturday, August 3, 2024 6:53:40 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from will-friedrich@outlook.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Madison Common Council,

You have my full support to adopt resolution 84443, and place the referendum question on November's ballot. I am actively engaged in Canvassing and political outreach activities in Madison, and if this resolution is placed on the November 5th ballot, I will work hard to increase voter turnout and inform Madisonians of their crucial need to get to the polls and pass this referendum.

I am extremely frustrated that the State legislature and the long-lasting impact of Scott Walker's governorship has let the irresponsible and irregular nature of shared revenue in Wisconsin hamper our thriving and noble city. Madison does not deserve to have only 18 cents on the dollar of state taxes returned to it. I first recently became aware of the issues of shared revenue while viewing reporting from Dan Shafer from the Recombobulation Area as he reported on Milwaukee's recent sales tax increase which was a means to stave off a similar budget crisis. This referendum must pass, and further Wisconsin legislators must rigorously and honestly take up the issue of shared revenue once again to invest in our state meaningfully and consistently. It is simply unacceptable policy at the state level. I applaud all the work the Common Council has done in the past thirteen years to level the budget and navigate the ever-increasingly difficult financial waters imposed by this shared revenue policy.

Sincerely,

Will Friedrich – resident of Mansion Hill neighborhood, Madison.

From: [Aedan Gardill](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [Harrington-McKinney, Barbara](#)
Subject: Common Council meeting 8/6 -- in support of #84443
Date: Sunday, August 4, 2024 12:23:34 PM

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Hello alders,

I want to email and express my support of agenda item #84443 for this upcoming Common Council meeting on Aug 6.

I agree that we should put the decision of who to bear the Madison deficit (either the residents or the public services) to the residents themselves.

Personally, I am happy to provide the ~\$20/month extra in property taxes to reduce the amount of budget cuts to public services, like the library. In the end, I think \$20/month per resident will have a MUCH smaller impact than cutting \$6 million to public services (and not to mention that the cuts to the public services will disproportionately affect low income residents).

I urge you all to vote yes to push this referendum forward.

Aedan Gardill
1110 Chapel Hill Rd

From: [david gebauer](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Budget referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 2:10:00 PM

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I am writing to you to let you know my opinion on the proposed referendum. I oppose a referendum. So far all we have heard from the mayor's office and the city council is threats of what cuts that would have to be made to services and programs. What we have not seen from the city is how the city can decrease budget costs now. Starting in the mayor's office, the mayor could sort out the necessary from the nice to have. For example, unnecessary staff positions, staff benefits, and unnecessary services. Myself, I can certainly live with a fair number of the proposed cuts in services and programs. Many are nice things to have as a city but not necessary. I will not bother going through the list of what those are, for I am sure that all of you can pick your own out.

Thank you.

--

David Gebauer

From: [Mary Jo Feeney Gebhardt](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Referendums that will raise property taxes
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 12:05:50 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from mjfgebhardt@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Please do not vote for the passing of such referendums. It is not fair to continuously raise our property taxes when this Mayor and this Council have put the city in this position by making poor decisions on how City money is spend and thinking that it grows on trees.

The City is in such dire straits now with what has been going on, especially with the rapid bus transit that has completely disrupted traffic in this city and will only be worse when buses twice the size of the regular city buses are trying to operate on the streets where lanes have been cut out and corners of streets will be too narrow for the buses to be able to make the turns.

Further more, having people getting on and off buses is an unbelievable dangerous idea and leaves everyone, bus riders, vehicle drivers and pedestrians in a very vulnerable state.

No More Referendums!

From: [noreply](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: [All Alders] 2025 Budget Referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 12:01:25 PM

Recipient: All Alders:

Tuesday, August 6, 2024 – 12:00pm

Sharon Genthe

92 OAK CREEK TRAIL

Madison, Wisconsin. 53717 Yes, by email. stgenthe@gmail.com All Alders 2025 Budget Referendum Mayor Rhodes-Conway and Alders

Excessive spending by election officials should not affect tax paying citizens. threats of cutting snow removal, road repairs and essential services is unprofessional and inappropriate. You should be able to find \$22 million worth of fat to cut in the large over \$500million budget. Spending federal government money is still spending our money. More prudent spending methods should have been implemented because you knew of this eminent calamity years ago. Statistics show and it will be proven in a short time that the BRT is a boondoggle. Yet, with a flick of the hand you expect taxpayers to pay for it. Taking away children's recreation, such as the Goodman pool, which was a donation from the generous Goodman brothers should not be held hostage by your inappropriate spending. Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway and the City Council should do everyone a favor and recognize the wrath of the voters should this ridiculous referendum go through to November. There will be hard fought opposition. This ask of taxpayers reflects very poorly on your stubborn inability to manage money and arrogance that Madison tax paying citizens will just have to pick up the tab. I wholeheartedly vote NO.

Thank you, Sharon Genthe

From: [John A Gerold](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Referendum Resolution Scheduled for August 6th.
Date: Sunday, August 4, 2024 11:54:34 AM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from jagerold39@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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To all the Alders:

I am strongly opposed to the \$22 million Proposed Referendum. Alongside the proposed School District's referendum, this will impose a very high additional annual property tax burden on a large majority of the city's population. I can stand the hit but a large majority of the population can not. Of the \$315 million plus that is being spent on BRT, the city will pay \$70 million. Since that is not complete and parts like the North/South route are still in the planning stage, those types of items should be postponed or stopped, until the City can get its financial house in order and probably saving a large part of the \$70 million, that then can be applied to supporting the highest needed city services and likewise reducing the need for the referendum at a full #22 million. I also believe the rainy day fund should be tapped to the fullest extent possible as another first step. I realize that can affect the City's bond rating, but in the meantime the city can continue to get its financial house in order. If that type of move puts a strain on the city down the road, then at that time, cures for that problem can be determined.. One area where the city could raise more revenue is a MUCH stricter enforcement program related to our traffic laws. Speeding, lack of proper license plates, unlicensed and uninsured drivers are a major problem. Maybe in the total scheme of things, stricter enforcement won't bring in that many more millions in dollars but it may be enough to not cut back on certain emergency services to a fuller extent.

John A Gerold
214 Saratoga Circle
Madison, WI 53705
[H] 608-833-5121
[C] 608-234-2253

“The greatest menace to freedom is an inert people.” Justice Louis Brandeis.

From: [noreply](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: [All Alders] Library funding
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 11:51:49 AM

Recipient: All Alders:

Monday, August 5, 2024 – 11:47am

Ari Gochberg

They/he

5416 eastland way

Madison, Wisconsin. 53716 No, do not contact me. All Alders Library funding sample language:

My name is Ari Gochberg and I have been a resident of Madison and a user of the Madison Public Library system since 2016. I am writing to you to express my strong support for the libraries in the face of potential budget cuts for the next fiscal year.

I am aware of Option A and B as proposed by the Madison Public Library Foundation. I do not find either of these acceptable. I want Option C. I support the proposal for a \$22 million referendum that would increase property taxes by about \$20 a month to balance the budget rather than taking \$6 million in cuts from city services. This is agenda item #84443 (Authorizing the Scheduling of a Referendum Relating to Exceeding the Municipal Property Tax Limits in the City of Madison) at the Common Council Meeting tomorrow (8/6/2024). I have already registered my support, although I will not be able to attend the meeting.

Libraries are essential to marginalized communities, providing free access to resources such as books, internet, educational programs, and safe spaces. They serve as a lifeline for low-income families, the elderly, immigrants, and people experiencing homelessness. Cutting library funding would disproportionately impact these vulnerable populations, deepening existing inequities in our city. Furthermore, maintaining robust library services is a smart financial choice; libraries contribute to the local economy by supporting workforce development, literacy, and lifelong learning, which in turn fosters a more informed and connected community.

From: [Eileen Goode](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Referendum opposition
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 9:21:03 AM

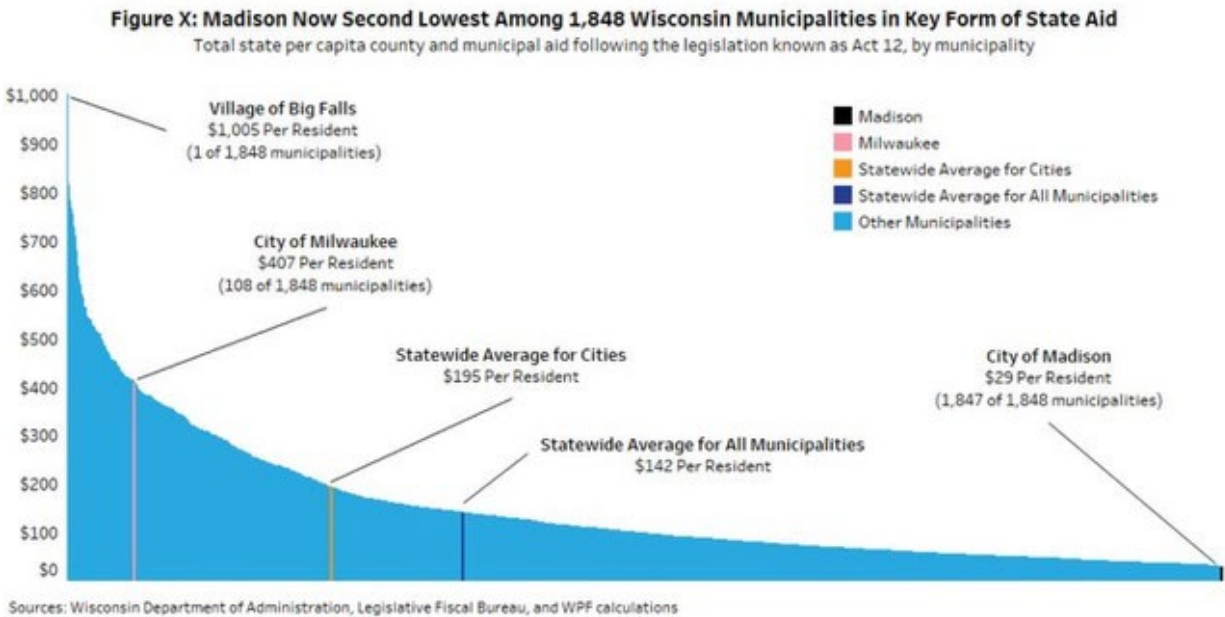
You don't often get email from eileen@ecg812.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Alders,

Can you explain the HUGE deficit that City of Madison receives with regard to state aid? Why is Madison so different from Milwaukee another large city? Why not review this discrepancy before going to homeowners once again for another big hit on taxes.

I would love to see some answers on this topic. I cannot attend Tuesday 8.5 City Council meeting.



Eileen Goode
21 Southwick Circle
Madison WI. 53717

From: [nancy53703](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Budget referendum resolution feedback
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 2:37:03 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from nancy53703@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hello,

To help lower costs to taxpayers (especially those of us who are trying to hold onto our homes), please save \$16 million by stopping design and construction bidding on the Imagination Center until a better budget situation develops. The Madison Market is a boondoggle, too, but already in development, so...

If you haven't read former Alder Erik Paulson's 4-part series about ideas to fix Madison's budget deficit, please do so!

Option 1: More short term risk, more long term benefit

My preferred option, we should maximize the amount of revenue authority the city has and increase the levy by \$28M in the November of 2024 referendum, which would close the budget gap for both 2025 and 2026, and leave a \$8 million gap for 2027.

To ease in the levy increase and to close the gap through 2027, the Common Council would commit to using \$11M in one-time funds in 2025 and \$5M in 2026 to reduce the levy impact. This means that for taxpayers, rather than a \$28M extra increase landing all in 2025, there would be an extra \$11M levy increase in 2025, an additional \$12M increase in 2026, and an additional \$5M increase in 2027. The remaining \$8M in one-time funds can close the 2027 budget gap.

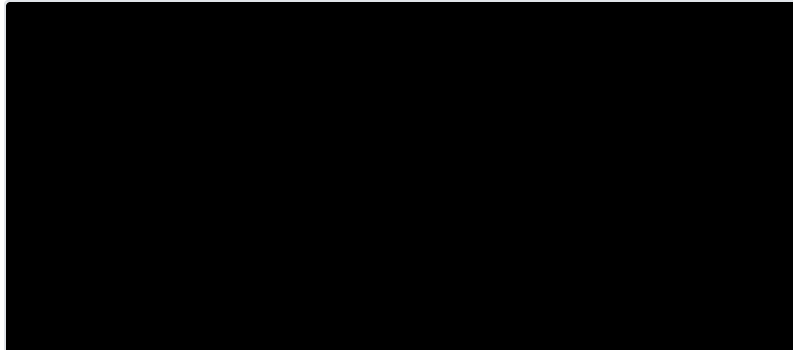
(We can do this without impacting our future levy. I explain how and show the math of the overall increase at the bottom of this post in the “nerdy details” appendix)

This option has the obvious downsides of:

Having a big number (\$28M) actually on the ballot, making it less likely to pass

Being very difficult to explain

[Madison's Budget Challenge, Part 4: We should do a City of Madison budget referendum. Here's how.](#)



Madison's Budget Challenge, Part 4: We should do a City of Madison budge...

Erik Paulson

The final post of the series, let's look ahead to a potential operating referendum.

Kind regards,

Nancy Gores
District 13

From: [kindley graf](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Budget referendum
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 4:26:50 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from kindley.graf@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Oppose a referendum to increase property taxes to meet the alleged budget deficit. Correct the deficit by reducing spending. Madison already sticks it to taxpayers by separately charging for municipal services then also hanging an additional charge on vehicle registration renewals.

Vote no. Do not proceed with a referendum.

From: [Julia Greenberg](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Please support resolution 84443
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 2:30:41 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from juliargreenberg@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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

Hi,

I am writing to urge you to support resolution 84443 in order to place a tax levy referendum on our ballot. I am particularly concerned about how the proposed budget cuts would affect Madison Public Libraries and I have read their statement on what services would likely be impacted. Like many parents of young kids, I take my children to the Hawthorne, Pinney, or Lakeview library at least once a week, sometimes more. Their programming is terrific and they allow for interaction among diverse members in our community in a way few other services do. Lakeview's Sunday hours during the school year provide a particularly important spot for us and many kids on the Northeast side during the cold winter months. Please support this resolution so that voters can weigh in on whether we feel a small tax increase is worth ensuring funding for our libraries and for other community services.

Thank you for your consideration,
Julia Greenberg

From: [Austin Griesbach](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Support for Agenda Item 84443
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 7:59:10 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from austin.griesbach@icloud.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hello,

I am writing as a City of Madison resident and homeowner in support of agenda item 84443, Authorizing the Scheduling of a Referendum.

I have no interest in austerity measures and reduction in services. If I disliked the services, or thought that the services weren't worth the taxes, I would have settled down in a town that didn't have them in the first place. If we are forced to go through with even half the service cuts that are currently on the table, we will be much worse off as a community.

Austin Griesbach
District 4

From: [noreply](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: [All Alders] Budget/Referendum
Date: Sunday, August 4, 2024 8:36:46 PM

Recipient: All Alders:

Sunday, August 4, 2024 – 8:32pm

Lori Groskreutz

Prefix

605 whitehall dr

madison, Wisconsin. 53714 Yes, by email. magpack1@charter.net All Alders

Budget/Referendum I recently saw on the news that 1- City of Madison looking into a referendum for MONEY 2- The Library has over a 20 million dollar short fall. subject 2- Library how can that be since we just completed the month of July. Where is the comptroller to over see the budget? Did the Head of the Library see the monthly statements that budget short fall? subject one- Where is the money going? did you all think covid money was never-ending? I checked past meetings and not ONE OF YOU that I can tell has stated - let's work on a budget (like the taxpayers) cut was in not a necessity, Freeze any pay raises, have employees pay more into insurance cost, also maybe the Convention Center, has that every turned a profit? maybe sell that to stop the money snowball. You are asking the taxpayers to pay more as they are receiving less in their income, paying more for living expenses, more for insurance cost, cut back to try to stay even. But you as alders have not proposed that for the city. 20 million here, 2 million short fall for shelter, WHEN does this stop? Referendum, after Referendum ? Please lead by example, for the TAXPAYERS. I am almost certain that no response from any one, but by goodness you will want me vote for alder and vote for a SPENDING referendum, I am betting no response from any alders .

From: [Samantha Cora Christian Haas](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [Finance](#); financecommittee@cityofmadison.com
Subject: Comment in Support of Referendum: We need thriving libraries and parks
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 8:09:55 AM

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Hello,

I have called Madison home for the last 10 years, and ever since starting a family during the pandemic I've become more aware of the importance of city services. At the top of the list are the beautiful libraries and parks, which would suffer tremendously by the proposed budget cuts. I support the \$22 million referendum, because I recognize how vital services like libraries and parks are to connecting our community with local resources and each other. We need "Third Places" like libraries and parks that are multicultural and multigenerational for our city to thrive. Please do not cut funding to the programs and people who make these spaces wonderfully welcoming, accessible, and inclusive.

Thank you,
Samantha Haas
5717 Hempstead Rd, Madison
920-248-2676

From: [David Handowski](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [Mayor](#); [Finance](#)
Subject: 2025 Budget Comments - Voting NO on referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 3:19:42 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from davidhandowski@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Alders, Mayor, and Mr Schiemdicke,

I am absolutely AGAINST, and will vote NO to any referendum that seeks to increase the levy or burden residents with additional property taxes.

First, I would like to thank, and acknowledge, Mr. Schiemdicke for all the public forums he conducted regarding the City of Madison finances. As always, he was knowledgeable and informative and gracious with a difficult task and forum.

However, he was not the person who should have been presenting to the public. That responsibility should have fallen to the owners of the budget which are Mayor and Council. Given Councils' lack of true participation in budget details for years, the Mayor should have been present to understand and address resident concerns.

The primary reason for a NO vote on the referendum is that you have lost all credibility in being fiscally responsible in managing our money. I personally feel you don't feel true ownership over every dollar the City is spending, questioning with passion what, why, where, how, if spending meeting a specific, quantifiable and measurable objective. When you plan to have work done in your own home, I assume you pay attention to details, you want bids to be competitive, you want the work to be guaranteed, you will follow up with the work to make sure it met contractual objectives and are personally satisfied with the work done. The single biggest question and priority is do you have the money budgeted to perform the work.

Many of us feel its simply a rubber stamp process with no true sense of

ownership. Plus, in our own homes, if we are over our budget, we are not continuing to spend and putting it on a credit card! This is what Mayor and Common Council have been doing for years.

There are very specific, and significant issues, that Mayor, Council and Finance have not addressed:

1. Use and application of ARPA (American Rescue Plan ACT) and other “one time” use funds – Rainy Day Fund, Bond Premium

a. Likely a significant amount of the budget shortfall is in how ‘one time’ funds have been incorporated into the normal annual operating budget. ARPA (and other funds) were never intended to be a liability transferred to a municipality’s constituents.

b. The transfer of this liability into annual operating budgets is “highly irregular” and is usually bound by specific rules. When and why was this initiated?

c. Lack of transparency in where these funds were applied, when, how much, why,

2. While at a critical juncture in City finances, there is \$10M (at one time \$12M) in ‘uncollected revenue’. When the City is starved for funding leaving monies uncollected is unfathomable.

3. Lack of clarity around BRT funding. Portraying grant monies from any governmental agency does not make it ‘free’ money. Capital assets require maintenance and repair (operating expenses) whether it’s a building, elevator, fire alarm/suppression system, bridge, road, bus, bus stop, bike path, etc. Any ‘net new’ asset drives maintenance as well as requiring funding (reserves) for future replacement. A \$200M grant will eventually require funding sufficient capital reserves, which will be a net new obligation for City and taxpayers. When ridership is falling this is a huge risk, and obligation, to citizens. What is the ridership model for the next 5 years, what happens if ridership declines, what

are mitigation plans if BRT is under water?

4. Threatening “layoffs” of City staff and a reduction in core services, when that is unnecessary. The City does not have an FTE problem but a services spending problem. I thank the City for releasing the latest “5% budget cut” model that makes the point.

a. Are members of Common Council requesting to see an FTE model from 2019 to current day for city staff. How much has staff grown as compared to City growth? A \$20M shortfall in 2025 is 200 FTEs at \$100K salary for round numbers. At \$75K that’s 266 FTEs. Where is staff growing? Shrinking? Does it align with core city services?

b. The core spend areas are in “purchased services” (from the budget release last night) which are vague, undefined, and lacking detail. These spends are significant, yet vagueness surrounds the details. Does Common Council understand where we are spending, with who, are they meeting measurable objectives with our funding? How often are those being audited for results, efficiency? Useful and actual information around where ‘one time funds’ (point #1) have contributed to net new operating expenses over time is critical. Who is asking those questions? Where are answers for the general public who are paying the bill? If you are not asking these questions WHY NOT?

c. From a professional standpoint asking for a flat 5% cut across all agencies was unnecessary. And you spun up staff when it was not required. If you have a department of 10 and all are ‘outstanding’ or high achievers, you are going to willingly cut good talent? You take 5% of all the bottom performers based on performance reviews. Private sector does this periodically and it typically increases morale, because your better employees have been picking up slack for poorer performing employees, and the general attitude is ‘it was about time’. And this is done at each layer. Where is the information about people, and department overtime? Does

anyone remember the bus drivers make more that \$225K a couple years ago? If Common Council is passing budgets you should be asking for information that is useful when evaluating budgets!

<!--[if !supportLists]-->d. When Chief Barnes has to remind you that a 5% cut will violate the principles of Act 12 and would cause the City to repay hiring grants tells me little thought was actually given to selectively and with purpose reviewing how budget reductions were requesting through City staff.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->e. Laying off City staff is the choice of Mayor and Council only. Staff reductions are likely not necessary. However, this appears to be the path of least resistance which is disappointing. It also highlights that City has no real interest in managing in a responsible manner. If staff reductions are preferable to cutting other spend and commitments, that is your choice. Not the choice many citizens would make. Your choice.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->5. <!--[endif]-->You continue to blame the state for lack of funding!

<!--[if !supportLists]-->a. This has been known for years.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->b. If Council has been applying one time funds for ongoing operating expenses then you knew years ago, what you know today. You are not the US Govt and you can't print money. And at some point this was all going to catch up with reality.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->c. Negotiations with the State should have been initiated years ago in preparation for this day. Madison is a key economic engine for the entire state. As dysfunctional as our state government is, they know this. Plus, you have Evers! Why have you waited?

<!--[if !supportLists]-->6. Last but not least – the Civilian Police Oversight Committee. For the millions spent to date there is still NO actual process in place to run the program. HOWEVER, do I see in file # 83848 that this body is proposing that the City will actually pay up to \$15,000 towards complainants attorney's fees to.....litigate against

the City of Madison? So, we are going to pay for both sets of attorneys in the same case? And there is no mention of a limit to the number of instances, whether the person wins/loses the case with prejudice? I mean, wow. How can this not be a conflict of interest? How does this make any rational sense to a taxpayer that we will pay for both the defense and prosecuting attorneys in the same case? The City is actually incentivizing court actions against itself? Mind boggling. If this is representative of what happens in other areas of our City government we have bigger problems than just the budget. If this is your money, how about each member of Council pay the first 20 \$15,000 bills personally. Would this make you look at situations like this differently in the future? I would hope!

I will not support a referendum. I would support having a member of Common Council sit in every exit interview for an employee who is cut, and to be present for every agency or supplier or person who has benefited from a service that can no longer be afforded. Perhaps then, it will make decisions more personal when funding issues come before Common Council.

I will be a NO vote until I see reason, personal responsibility and common sense in financial decisions.

David Handowski
District 1 resident

From: [Amelia Hansen](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Public Comment on Agenda Item #84443
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 3:32:43 PM
Attachments: [240806 Madison Common Council Public Comment AH.pdf](#)

Some people who received this message don't often get email from amhansen97@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hi,

Please see the attached PDF for my written public comment for today's Madison Common Council meeting.

Thank you,

--

Amelia Hansen
(she/her)

There is a genocide of Palestinians happening right now.
From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free.

August 6th, 2024

To: Madison Common Council

From: Amelia Hansen

18 South Bedford Street

Madison, WI 53703

Dear Madison Common Council members,

I will support the referendum to increase the percentage cap on raising property taxes (agenda item #84443 on today's Madison Common Council agenda) to fund Madison public services, if the purpose of the increase is to fund all Madison public services except the Madison police. To clarify, I will support a referendum that clearly states that the increased percentage cap on raising property taxes will not allow any revenue collected from increased property taxes beyond the current percentage cap to be given to the Madison police department budget.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Amelia Hansen

From: [Drew H](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Referendum
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 8:59:43 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from drewhansiii@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Developers could have helped avoid the city's budget issue if allowed to build more housing. But the city puts up too many barriers to new housing like the restrictive West Area Plan. So this government employee will be voting no on the city referendum.

Sincerely,
Andrew Hanson
Rolla Ln
53711

From: [Stacy Harbaugh](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Love my city, but voting no on the referendum
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 3:18:01 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from stacyrharbaugh@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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I appreciated the recent article in the Cap Times on the referendum on this fall's ballots. I vote in every election and typically am an enthusiastic cheerleader for referendums that approve funds for our public schools and city services.

The question on this fall's ballots is too soon after our last school referendum and comes at a time when taxpayers cannot afford an additional hike. Inflation is still impacting our pocketbooks at the grocery store. I'm in the process of trying to buy a home with a mortgage that may be around 6.5% interest. An additional tax hike while we're already dealing with corporate price gouging and an unreasonable housing market is too much.

I've no doubt our state legislators have carefully crafted laws to make this impossible, but perhaps if property tax increases could be applied only to single-family homes that are worth \$500,000 or more, voters would rush to vote yes to place more tax burden on the wealthiest members of our community. Those of us making five-figure salaries simply cannot afford another hike at this moment.

Stacy Harbaugh
336 Norris Ct. #3

From: [Lisa Hempstead](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Madison Public Library Board's Letter in Support of Referendum
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 3:01:37 PM
Attachments: [MPLB letter to CC 8-5-24.pdf](#)

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Please read the attached letter from the Madison Public Library Board to City Council Members explaining our support of a referendum (item #68) on the August 6th meeting agenda.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lisa Hempstead
MPL Board President and MMSD School Representative



MADISON
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

Dear Members of the Common Council,

The Madison Public Library Board is writing to advocate for a referendum that would support our beloved library system.

At the July 11, 2024, Madison Public Library Board Meeting, the Library Board passed a preliminary 2025 Operating Budget that would continue the current service levels at Madison Public Library and provide a pathway forward for the Imagination Center at Reindahl Park if certain conditions are met. However, the Board also approved a 5% budget reduction scenario that offers required reductions in priority order:

- \$120,692.63 - elimination of Sunday hours
- \$323,793.35 - elimination of 3-3.5 full-time equivalent programming staff and some program services & supplies, *with directions to prioritize the reductions of services/supplies over staff*
- \$644,205.12 - elimination of the equivalent of our evening hours, *while requesting that some evening hours be preserved over morning hours so we have a mix of daytime/evening hours for the community*

Now that the preliminary 2025 Operating Budget has been approved by the Library Board, it will go to the Mayor's Office to be incorporated into the City of Madison's budget this fall. **As the City of Madison works to draft a 2025 Operating Budget in the face of a \$22 million structural deficit**, the Library Board wants to express strong support for a referendum option that:

- funds the operational cost to continue, enabling the Madison Public Library to maintain its current service hours, staffing levels and programming.
- includes the funding needed to open and operate the Imagination Center at Reindahl Park

The Madison Public Library Board believes in the power of strong libraries to transform communities. As a board, we make budget decisions through an equity and access lens, and we know that libraries serve as critical lifelines for neighborhoods. Because of this belief, we are committed to seeing the Imagination Center move forward, as the Reindahl Park area has long been considered a service desert—not just for libraries, but for many other City services that libraries can help bring to the neighborhood. The Imagination Center at Reindahl Park has been in process since 2014 and funds have already been committed from both the City of Madison and the Madison Public Library Foundation for the construction of the library. While the Board would like to see the Imagination Center at Reindahl Park open and operating, we don't want it to happen at the expense of existing services without a deeper discussion of impacts across the city.

"The harsh restrictions imposed by the state legislature in 2011 have severely limited the City of Madison's ability to increase revenue through traditional means. This situation leaves us with no viable option other than a referendum to secure the funding

201 W. Mifflin St.
Madison, WI 53703

608.266.6300 ph
608.266.4338 fax



201 W. Mifflin St.
Madison, WI 53703

608.266.6300 ph
608.266.4338 fax

needed to maintain library services,” said Lisa Hempstead, Madison Public Library Board President. “Without the funds provided by the referendum, we will inevitably be forced to make difficult decisions that will lead to reductions in programming, staffing, hours of operation, and essential services.”

The Board recognizes that the City of Madison has worked creatively for the last 13 years to help lessen the effects of an increasingly difficult structural problem caused by strict levy limits imposed by the Wisconsin State Legislature in 2011. As a result of these limits, Madison residents and businesses get back only 18 cents for every one dollar of State taxes paid. In addition to the growth of the city, high inflation rates, and lasting impacts to City revenues from the Covid pandemic, alternative options are limited. While a referendum *would* increase property tax rates across the City, under the current proposal for a \$22 million referendum, the average impact to homeowners would be a total increase of \$240/year or \$20/month.

Prior to approving a preliminary 2025 Operating Budget, the Library Board heard from more than 60 citizens who expressed what they value about the services provided by Madison Public Library. Among those services were free and engaging programs, library books and collections, meeting spaces, technology and WIFI, research resources, voting, the Dream Bus, the future development of the Imagination Center at Reindahl Park, and so much more.

“This referendum represents a pivotal opportunity to invest in the heart of our community—a place where knowledge, culture, and community spirit converge,” said Hempstead. “The Madison Public Library is a cornerstone of our community, where worlds connect and dreams are built. Libraries offer invaluable resources and programs that support lifelong learning, cultural enrichment, and social engagement.”

The Madison Public Library Board encourages the City of Madison to add a referendum option to the November 5, 2024, ballot.

Lisa Hempstead, President and MMSD Representative
Mathias Lemos Castillo, Vice President
Tom DeChant, Secretary Treasurer
Alder Sabrina Madison, City Council Representative
Jolynne Roorda
Salúd García
Plumer Lovelace
Genevieve Carter

From: jhirsch@chorus.net
To: [All Alders](#)
Cc: [Finance Committee](#); budget@cityofmadison.com
Subject: #68 84443 Referendum Resolution
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 9:02:56 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jhirsch@chorus.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Alders:

I ask you to **OPPOSE** the proposed referendum to increase the property tax levy limit.

You can't continue to use the same scare tactics that were used when the \$40 wheel tax was implemented. Reductions to "...police, fire, garbage collection, parks and library operations..." have already been taken.

It's time to take a hard look at all other expenditures. There are plenty of "*nice to have*" items in the 2024 Budget, the proposed 2025 Budget and on each Common Council agenda. In a budget crunch, they are not "needs" and should be rejected or put aside until funds are available.

Let's roll up our sleeves. ***NOTHING should be off the table!***

Janet Hirsch
District 9

From: [Lori](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Madison Parks
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 12:50:39 PM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from lhouse2112@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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Please prioritize the parks system. We use the cross country ski trails and Goodman Pool. It is the parks that make the quality of living in Madison high.

Thank you,
Lori House

Lori Wendricks House
(608) 843-3265

From: [irenierenie](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: 22 Million Dollar Referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 8:54:14 AM

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First of all, we should not be in the position of cutting services that are expected by tax payers. Especially life saving services like Police and Fire. The City budget needs to be run like the budgets Madisonians have too. We first budget by expenses that are necessary such as mortgages or rent, utilities, food, credit card bills, etc. THEN we look at additional spending.

I am extremely disappointed in the spending decisions being made. Make sure you have the money necessary to cover expected City services BEFORE considering other expenditures. An example is the BRT. This is putting us in debt, and is not benefitting the majority of Madison taxpayers. Roads are a mess with Red paint, turns disallowed where needed, and traffic backups will occur causing road rage.

I am against a 22 million referendum and cutting expected life saving services, such as Police and Fire. I also expect my garbage to be picked up. Money was spent irresponsibly, now do what we have to do as Madisonians and don't take on projects and spend before expected services are paid for.

Thank you,
Irene

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

From: [Fred Jaeckle](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Comment on Referendum Resolution
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 1:10:15 PM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from fwjaeckle@msn.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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I am opposed to asking voters to approve a referendum to allow city to increase spending beyond state limits. This covers the entire city deficit with no real spending/program cuts.

It is time to take a look at spending reductions. Prioritize budget items. the city clearly has too many "nice to have" projects on their plate. Focus on spending on "must have projects". It is also time to look at how many positions are actually needed to operate the mayors office, and other departments in the city. For example, I see no benefit in even having the Police Oversight board or whatever it is. NOTHING has been accomplished since it has been started. Although the budget is not that large, no benefits have been received by the citizens of Madison except for the board members and chair getting paid.

Time to tighten your belt, or there will indeed be a taxpayer revolt, and it will manifest itself at the ballot box.

From: [Dustin Johnson](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Concerned Northsider
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 8:52:50 AM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from dustinjohnson1995@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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Hello! I haven't ever submitted anything to an alder before (or any public government figure) but I figured this is the time to share.

I moved to Madison in 2013 to attend UW-Madison and moving from central Wisconsin to a city 4x the population of my hometown, I was thrilled by the potential opportunities. I don't have to tell you how much I absolutely love Madison - you all live here too!

Fast forward to the pandemic, we're all stuck inside and contemplating how both my girlfriend and I will work out of our studio apartment. It made for some comical times since I was constantly on the phone and there were no walls separating the 600 sq ft we worked/lived.

We moved from the Autumn Lake apartments off Lien Rd. To the Marling on East Wash. A great upgrade to get a 1 bedroom + den, and it was perfect until it wasn't. We needed more space. We knew we wanted to stay in Madison, contribute to the community, grow our roots, and thrive here in this city.

We bought our house on Longview St. in 2022, with the most amazing luck of closing before interest rates rose. I'm only saying this to emphasize that there are people in MUCH tougher financial position than I am due to the interest rates that their lenders charged them and are charging them, of which we have no control over.

I want to see Madison's communities thrive. I want to see Madison grow! I love this city, now spending almost half of my life here. We NEED more homeowners, we need more investment into the people that build this community.

I moved out of apartments to get more space, but I can't underscore enough how big of a deal it was to get out of the rising rent cycles. I NEED my housing payment to be consistent and I'm sure many of new, first-time homeowners would agree.

None of us have budgeted for property taxes in the first place, but none of us deserve this assault on our new(ish) homes. The money that the city is seeking in all of its efforts to raise property taxes in the next few years is just not the way to get it done.

There is already a squeeze on us first time homebuyers, and to see multiple entities call on property tax increases for means of increasing their budget is disheartening at the least, and bullshit if I'm being an honest community member.

We need to find other ways to get what we all want. We cannot continue to push the burden on the average community member (and NEW HOMEBUYERS!!! - PLEASE DON'T FORGET ABOUT US!!!)

I cannot build a high rise apartment to get the tax credits to cover my property taxes. I don't get any tax credits from the city for living here. I don't have kids, I don't use public transit, and many of the programs that I'm already funding with my property taxes I do not use. I cannot let my monthly housing payment increase. Countless others cannot have their housing payments increase.

Please keep in mind the incredible challenges that a city who prioritizes growth over current residents. We want to be a welcoming community, but not as a burden to the people that live here and want to spend their lives in Madison.

I'll be actively encouraging the northside neighborhood to vote against any future property tax increases on the ballots. I hope you keep the little guys in mind.

-Dustin

From: [brian johnson](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Why I don't support raising the tax levy
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 10:27:17 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from brian48johnson@hotmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Madison Alders

Before you ask to increase the tax levy to cover the budget deficit, you need to show that you are good stewards of the taxes you already collect and spend

Case in point:

Four years ago, you created the Police Civilian Oversight Board and The Office of The Independent Police Monitor. Since then, you have budgeted almost \$2 Million for these programs – despite the fact that they have not delivered on their mandates.

- The PCOB still does not have a complaint process for citizens to use and as far as I know has not taken on any cases.
- The PCOB and IM have not delivered any of the annual public reports your ordinances mandate.
- There doesn't seem to be a public outcry for the services the IM and PCOB were created to address.
- Portions of their budgets appear to have gone unspent while other city services could have used more funding.

For the past four years, both the PCOB and IM appear in violation of the ordinances you created while failing to deliver any tangible public benefits - yet no one seems to hold them accountable while our tax dollars continued to be funneled to them.

I would be happy to have you correct me if I'm wrong here but I have made polite requests over the past couple years to the IM and PCOB for any information regarding their progress, accomplishments and focus and have never received any answers other than "we are working it".

The continued funding of a program that has consistently failed to deliver every year since its inception, casts a shadow of distrust over the city's ability to manage and hold tax funded programs accountable for success.

Before raising our taxes again, the you need to demonstrate that you have the fortitude to cut programs when they don't deliver and redirect the funds to programs that work.

At this time, I do not support raising the tax levy limits.

Sincerely,

Brian Johnson

From: [Tish Johnson](#)
To: [Brogan, Dylan](#)
Cc: [Mayor](#); [All Alders](#)
Subject: Still Concerned
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 8:45:47 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from tish.johnson920@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hi Dylan,

It looks like I received the answer to the question I posed a couple of weeks ago asking which services the mayor plans to cut. I see this information in the update finally released yesterday. To say I'm disappointed is beyond an understatement.

Please understand how threatening this looks when the mayor plans to go after such basic services as police and fire and transportation. And to threaten services that support the homeless population is beyond my comprehension.

The interesting parts are these:

- What about the Mayor's office? Are there no cuts that need to be made there? 4-5 deputy mayors is excessive.
- Where is the detailed plan for capturing the unrealized revenue from State utilized municipal services? The same for lobbying for improved shared revenue and an RTA tax? (Would our community tolerate any of this if they knew what revenue potential was involved in these areas?)
- When basic services like this "must" be cut unless we agree to pay even more property tax, it puts everything the mayor says into question. How can we trust the mayor to keep adding large projects (next will be the huge Monona Terrace renovation)?
- Where and when does this stop? If an additional \$22 mil doesn't completely address the deficit it is hard to see this is the end of the demands or threats for cuts.

With this update and it's timing, it is clear the council is prepared to vote to approve the referendum. And unfortunately, when people vote, they will only have part of the picture - by design.

Dylan, please know this only makes me more concerned about the Mayor and Council's ability to effectively and responsibly manage.

<https://www.cityofmadison.com/news/2024-08-05/update-on-2025-budget-process>

Sincerely,
Tish Johnson
5505 Tolman Terrace

From: [brian johnson](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [Mayor](#)
Subject: Ideas regarding what to cut from the city budget
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 12:56:45 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from brian48johnson@hotmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Before you consider cutting heads in important city services like Fire, Police etc - I hope that you are seriously looking at cutting heads first from the Mayor's administrative staff.

I see at least four Deputy Mayors listed - Two of whom have Housing in their remit and one, Rueben Sanon, who has no job description in his bio on the Mayor's webpage. Does a city our size really need Deputy Mayors over positions that more directly impact the day to day needs of our citizens? Consider cutting this number in half by consolidating the Housing & Sustainability and Housing & Human Services positions into one and drop the position held by Rueben Sanon. I'm guessing that would save approximately \$100,000.00+/yr

Additionally, as mentioned in my earlier email, eliminating the Office of Independent Monitor and the Police Citizens Oversight Board (which has delivered zero benefit over the past four years) would free up over \$500,000.00/yr.

By making these moves, you could save over \$600,000.00+/yr.

Sincerely,
Brian Johnson

From: [Amy Kell](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [Conklin, Nikki](#)
Subject: August 20, 2024 Meeting, Agenda Item 84443
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 10:48:02 AM
Attachments: [Letter to the Common Council Regarding the 2025 Budget and Proposed Levy.docx](#)

Some people who received this message don't often get email from amykell0450@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Please see attached comments regarding the proposed 2025 budget and budget levy.

Thank you,

Amy Kell
Madison, WI

August 5, 2024

TO: AllAlders@cityofmadison.com

FROM: Amy Kell, Madison Wisconsin Resident

RE: Item Number 84443
Proposed 2025 Budget and Levy, Common Council Meeting on August 20, 2024

Alders, there are ways to reduce costs and avoid the proposed levy without austerity. Some combination of the following would be sufficient.

1. The City's solution to the \$22 million currently projected deficit is to raise revenues through an increase in taxes through a proposed levy. The City has proposed minor reductions in costs. For example, the City notes that over the past five years, agencies have underspent their authorized budgets by about 4% annually. But it proposes only a 1% across the board reduction, resulting in a \$3 million dollar savings. By reducing agency budgets by the full 4% that they already do not utilize, that alone results in a \$12 million savings toward the \$22 million deficit – or 54.55% of the projected deficit.
2. According to the Finance Department's "2025 Operating Budget Update", total projected expenses for General and Library Funds are 6.4% higher than the 2024 adopted budget, which includes ARPA funds. The City notes that major factors contributing to a higher budget include a \$14.5 million increase in salary and benefits including a 3% COLA for all employees.

Why aren't salary and benefit increases being foregone and/or limited in 2025 in order to reduce the deficit, especially considering the fact that there have been salary and benefits increases every year this decade? This \$14.5 million amount alone would cover nearly 66% of the currently projected \$22 million deficit.

3. According to the Finance Department's Outlook for the 2025 City Budget, "Madison's Spending in Context", the City of Madison's spending on Health and Human Services is 698% of the average rate of Health and Human Services programming of the 35 largest Wisconsin cities over 20,000 in population. In fact, the City of Madison spends the most of any city per capital on Health and Human Services.

Why can't these expenditures be more in line with other Wisconsin cities? (The math: $\$249 \text{ per capita} \times 270,000 \text{ people} = \$67,230,000$). A reduction of 1/8 (one-eighth) in Health and Human Services costs alone would cover 38.20% of the projected \$22 million deficit or \$8,403,750 (the math: $(\$67,230,000 \times 0.125 = \$8,403,750) / 22,000,000 = 38.20\%$). In addition, the City of Madison and Dane County should work together to find efficiencies in human services delivery that would benefit both municipalities.

4. The city estimates that the current \$22 million deficit is projected to grow exponentially between now and 2030, when the budget gap is estimated to be \$67 million. Note that this project is based on the Cost to Continue model, which means that the City would provide the same level of service each year. The data above suggests that the staffing level is not necessary nor warranted.

A reduction in long-term debt reduces operating expenses by reducing debt service payments as well as the interest on those debt payments. Lower debt also maintains our high credit rating. Debt service payments rose 35.23% from 2018 to 2024 – \$47,239,110 to \$63,879,000. Debt service payments represent the second highest budget function (category) after Public Safety and Health.

From: [Shannon Kennedy](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Agenda item 84443. Referendum to raise property tax levy limit
Date: Sunday, August 4, 2024 2:29:37 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from purefeline@aol.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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The Mayor and Common Council Alders want to have an increase of \$22 million to the state-imposed property tax levy limit.

I suggest you review the projects that were approved and cut some expenditures there! This would be the responsible option.

The Common Council Alder and Mayor are threatening to hold hostage from its citizens, - "funding for police, fire, garbage collection, parks, library operations, and other City services and operations." What were the OTHER city services and operations?

I consider this black mail.

I am not experienced in the processes of city government. I suspect I am not alone, just like some of our Common Council Alders and most citizens of Madison.

What were you and the Mayor thinking when you over budgeted on these projects? Did you think it was going to be easier to ask forgiveness and more funding than permission to overspend? What will the operating costs of all your new projects cost its citizens in the future?

Again, I suggest you review the projects that were approved and cut some expenditure there. This would be the responsible option. CITIZENS will continue to look for more cost cutting in their daily and monthly budgets as a matter of necessity. Now it's your turn to make some cuts.

- Retired people living on a fixed income will continue to struggle paying bills and need to make cuts.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->House sales will continue to dwindle.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->The supposed, Affordable housing locations will continue to have rents raised again. It was not really affordable to begin with and costs keep rising.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->Brick and Mortar companies continue to close and cut employees.

- <!--[endif]-->There a no new manufacturing jobs here in Madison that I am aware

of. If people need to find jobs and work outside of Madison, they will also be looking for more affordable living arrangements there.

- People are looking for housing as it's been told. Are you building for low to middle income wage earners or high income?

Thank you for your time.

Shannon Kennedy

From: [Joseph Keyes](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Oppose Property Tax Referendum
Date: Sunday, August 4, 2024 8:53:36 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jkeyes1a1@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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To Madison City Council Alders,

I oppose the property tax referendum. The proposed property tax increase referendum will place a great and undue hardship on Madison's taxpayers. 63% of Americans cannot cover a \$500 emergency bill from savings and 37% lack the funds to cover a \$400 emergency bill. This tax increase will force taxpayers to make gut wrenching cuts in their already stretched and thin budgets to cover this increased cost.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Keyes
District 11

From: [Kurt](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Agenda Item: 84443 - Authorizing the Scheduling of a Referendum Relating to Exceeding the Municipal Property Tax Limits in the City of Madison
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 3:18:32 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from ksensenb@protonmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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My partner and I own and live in a duplex in Madison. We rent out the other unit usually to young couples. My property tax in 2022 was \$5,770.69, in one year it jumped to \$8,667.23. Where do you expect us to make up that \$2,896.54 difference?

In a city that is experiencing a housing crisis and a housing affordability crisis, raising property taxes, especially for multi-family dwellings, will only exacerbate the crisis.

I am against raising property taxes on multi-family properties.

Thank you,
Kurt

From: neilnewsltr@charter.net
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: I support City Budget Referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 8:13:33 AM

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In addition, can the common council and mayor's office help organize a Madison resident campaign to lobby the legislature to increase Madison's shared revenue?

Neil Lerner
1 Laredo Court
Madison 53719

From: [Eva Lewandowski](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: 84443 budget referendum comment
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 10:14:39 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from elewandowski@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hello Alders,

Regarding the proposed budget referendum, item 84443, I wish there were an option for a slightly smaller referendum with slightly more budget cuts. There is a pretty big difference between the 1% efficiency cuts needed if the current referendum amount is passed and the 5% cuts needed if not.

I would support moderate increases in property taxes with cuts to things like water in city fountains, the library's Kanopy subscription for online movies, Arts Grants program, and Sunday hours at the streets drop-off site. There are many programs like this that are nice luxuries, but are not essential to the health and wellness of our residents or our community.

Thank you,

Eva Lewandowski

--

Eva Lewandowski

From: [ALLEN R LIEGEL](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Cc: [ALLEN R LIEGEL](#)
Subject: resolution 84443
Date: Sunday, August 4, 2024 9:15:48 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from arliegel@wisc.edu. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear City of Madison Council Members,

My name is Allen Liegel and I live on Madisons west side. I think that it is important for the City of Madison to have the mayor, city attorney or someone in a city department look into why our city has not challenged a 2023 state law that says that Madison only gets about \$29 per resident in shared revenue from the state when the statewide average for municipalities with more than 20,000 people get \$ 114 per resident, according to the Wisconsin Policy Forum. Why are we being penalized? Is there no recourse for us to seek to overturn this decision? Does it have anything to do with the liberal bent of our community? I do support the increased levy of \$22M extra for 2025 but currently do not support this every year going forward until we find out why we are treated so unfairly when it comes to shared revenue and have exhausted the cities efforts to have this injustice corrected. Ideally it would be good to have this corrected before the 2025 budget is finalized but I realize that this may be an unrealistic request.

Sincerely,

Allen Liegel
6 Southwick Circle
Madison, WI 53717-1415

From: [Beverly Louis](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Property tax increase for deficit
Date: Friday, August 2, 2024 11:14:33 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from tigerlouis@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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A number of things that have been outlined should take place (reduce services, remove positions in department budgets that are not currently filled, cuts in department budgets, put a hold on any projects that have not started, no new projects created, minimal property tax increase, etc.) Tax payers and renters should not have to absorb the total deficit. The current governing body should have been able see this coming and had a decent plan to present so this city would not be in this situation.

[Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer](#)

From: [Kay Lum](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Referendum resolution 84443
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 12:30:49 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from kayserbaser@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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The city of Madison is growing and we need to keep up with infrastructure. Our parks and park services are one of the things that bring people to Madison, keep them here, and keep them happy and healthy! I love the bike trails and the hiking and ski trails, the pools, skate parks, pump tracks... all of it keeps kids busy and active and healthy and out of trouble! It also keeps their parents happy and healthy... I dont have kids, and it keeps ME happy and healthy! why have splash pads if the water is not turned on? Why have ski trails and grooming and snow making if they cannot be used? why have bathrooms if they are locked? If we want Madison to be a place that tourists want to come to and people want to move to, then we need these services!

Please vote for this resolution. Thank you!

--

Have a Golden Day!
Kay Lum
608-225-3578

Check out my websites
For my graphic design work go here:
kaylumdesign.com

For wild lycra clothing go here:
absurdudeez.com

From: [James Mand](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: ITEM 68 ON AGENDA
Date: Sunday, August 4, 2024 10:08:17 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jimmand1948@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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In all good conscience, I cannot support a referendum by the City of Madison asking for an extra \$22 million dollars per year above the mandated levy limits. The city keeps making one expensive mistake after another.

First spending several hundred thousand dollars to remodel the Fleet service bldg. as a men's shelter during covid.

Close to downtown and the Beacon and other homeless support services.

Then deciding instead to build a brand new facility on the far northeast side away from most support services.

And the cost keeps going up. What is it now, \$21,000,000?

Instead, deciding to create a new City Market, using the Fleet Service bldg.

When Soglin first proposed it, it was to cost \$1,500,000. And be self-supporting.

And paid for by private fund-raising. I donated some funds to it.

Mayor Satya was against it, until she got elected. Now she is for it.

Why do we need a pie-in-the sky vanity project?

There are farmer's markets all over the city. And on the Capitol Square.

And the Feed Kitchens on Sherman Avenue, which has spawned several successful food related businesses.

Such as Beef, Butter, BBQ.

In the meantime, the cost of the City Market keeps going up. What is it now, \$13,000,000?

And worst of all is the new BRT system.

After abandoning all the transfer stations around the city, including by the new apartment complexes behind Oscar Mayer.

And the large transfer station across from Woodman's on Milwaukee Street.

So, most of the start-up cost for the BRT system, electric buses, and entire new infrastructure of stations is being paid with Federal \$\$\$.

But Madison still has to cover a substantial amount of the cost. And the cost of operations after startup.

The City of Madison seems to have no limit to spending on grandiose projects, with constant construction cost overruns.

Sincerely,

James F. Mand
49C Golf Course Rd.
Madison WI 53704

Jimmand1948@gmail.com

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

From: [geri marsh](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [geri marsh](#)
Subject: 84443
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 5:24:01 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from gerimarsh57@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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I oppose this referendum of \$22 million ongoing tax levy.
Geri Marsh

From: [J.M.](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Please put the referendum on the general election ballot
Date: Sunday, August 4, 2024 9:21:53 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from joseph.c.matte.3@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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The people of Madison should be able to vote on whether they want a tax increase or not.

From: [Aaron McGee](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Cc: [Gartler, Marc](#)
Subject: Reduce garbage collection, not library hours
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 11:33:50 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from aaronmcgee@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Alders,

Please don't allow the mayor to close libraries early or reduce library hours. Madisonians value our libraries. We should be expanding weekend hours at all libraries not reducing them. And closing libraries early on weekday evenings would eliminate patrons' ability to visit after work hours. Please do everything possible to expand library hours.

If revenue is needed, please consider increasing local sales taxes (not property taxes). Property taxes are making Madison too expensive to live in.

Also, while libraries are essential to a smart and healthy community, weekly garbage pick up is not. Garbage collection could easily be reduced to bi-weekly pick up to save money without reducing the quality of life.

Thank you for considering the importance of accessible library hours in a progressive community.

Aaron

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"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated."
Mahatma Gandhi.



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From: [Sara Meredith](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [council](#); [Finance](#)
Subject: Support for Agenda Item #84443
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 8:38:10 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from smeretactics@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Good morning Alders, Common Council Members and City Finance Department,

Emailing to let you know of my support for having a \$22 million referendum to increase property taxes \$20 a month rather than cutting city services - including the library, parks, and elimination of arts grants (to name a few)

I'm also emailing in my capacity as an artist AND full time volunteer of arts non- profit Communication. We believe cuts to many of the city services like the library would have an unfair impact on the city's poorest and disabled residents.

We want our city to be accessible and if that means those who can afford homes and properties pay a bit extra to ensure vital and most accessible city services remain available - then that is what needs to happen.

Thank you for your time and dedication!

photo



Sara Meredith

Communication Shop Manager, Artist Smere Tactics

She Her Hers| smeretactics@gmail.com

www.smeretactics.com



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From: [noreply](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: [All Alders] VOTE NO ON REFERENDUM
Date: Sunday, August 4, 2024 10:31:29 AM

Recipient: All Alders:

Sunday, August 4, 2024 – 10:29am

Paul Nelson
1805 Spaight St

Madison , Wisconsin. 53704 No, do not contact me. All Alders VOTE NO ON REFERENDUM I plan to vote “NO” on any referendum to raise property tax revenue to address the budget shortfall.

From: [Ed Niles](#)
To: [Rummel, Marsha](#); [All Alders](#)
Cc: [City Budget](#)
Subject: Comment on proposed \$22m property tax referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 3:52:02 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from eniles@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Madison Common Council Members & staff,

I am unable to attend this evening's Council meeting to provide my thoughts in-person, but I wanted to provide a quick comment related to one item of business (proposed \$22m property tax referendum).

To set the appropriate context upfront, given the situation the City of Madison finds itself in regarding the budget I am personally in favor of a referendum to provide some amount of increase above the state-imposed property tax levy limit to help address Madison's budget shortfall. However, as I've expressed to Ald. Rummel and heard from others during community outreach sessions on this topic, I feel it is extremely important that the council and mayor's office take seriously any past spending increases which contributed to the current size of the structural deficit (regardless of whether that structural deficit is "fair" or not). Thus, I'd like to propose that the council take two specific actions:

1. Request that staff prepare a list of any new or adjusted programs or policy changes voted on over the past decade, which contributed a significant amount of annual increased spending in the operating budget above some threshold (maybe >\$150K/year). This list should be made available to the council members and the public, and reviewed for possible items to cut before deciding on a final budget referendum amount. I suspect that given our current budget concerns, regardless of how the council members or citizens may have felt at the time about a particular spending item, there are at least a few things with price tags which look rather foolish under the current circumstances.
2. As city finance staff have pointed out during this process, the City's second largest expense is debt service, which is how the City pays back borrowing for capital projects. Going forward, when the council is voting on a capital budget expenditure of a significant amount, an estimate should be made of how much debt service that specific item would add annually for the next 10 years. This could be a relatively rough estimate utilizing some simplified formula, but it would provide a comparative baseline with other projects under consideration as time goes on. Hopefully by surfacing this aspect of the cost, in addition to the overall capital cost for a given spending item, might help the council make wiser decisions in the future and reign in increases in our debt service.

I thank you for your time in consideration of these ideas. My hope is that by taking these actions (or others of a similar nature) that the council & mayor would show that they have some skin in the game and are reversing some past spending into this deficit. Sharing the burden in this manner should make it easier to ask citizens of Madison to add to their property taxes in a referendum.

-Ed Niles
2129 Linden Ave, Madison, WI 53704

From: [Benjamin Noffke](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Support Levy Limit Referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 1:37:39 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from bnoffke3790@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hello Alders,

I'm writing to voice my support for a levy limit increase referendum. Cutting city services will have an enormous impact on the quality of life in Madison, affecting our most vulnerable citizens. If we combine this referendum with continued reform to lower the barrier to new construction for incremental density, I would feel much better about Madison's financial future to keep up quality services.

Thanks for your time,
Ben Noffke

From: [Jo Ann Wagner Novak](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: budget referendum
Date: Saturday, August 3, 2024 5:26:35 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from joann.wagnernovak@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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I believe I understand and have read enough information on the referendum for weeks. I don't envy the decision you must make.

It really places quite a financial load on those who own a home and pay property tax regardless of age.

In future, I wish the Council could create a method for sending a clear message from the WI state voters to the Legislature. That message needs to be heard in many state municipalities and communities. For any of us who've been paying attention, this last state budget from the state legislature again continued the clear that just a very few cities in this state are being targeted, short-changed on Shared Revenue. .

How can we drive home this severe political division so that all voters see the danger?

The very few communities that are targeted are the same ones who are responsible for serving up safety and health protection

for all of the state citizens who visit to enjoy the highlights of our capitol city.

In the current communication age, we have lost local journalism, who conveyed these issues to citizens across the state.

Until we have the backing of enough voters throughout the state, we'll still be stuck at the bottom of the Shared Revenue barrel. I anticipate you will end up approving the referendum.

Thank you!

From: [PJ Nowak](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: New Taxes
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 9:38:54 AM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from nowak44@sbcglobal.net. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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Dear Alders:

I am very concerned about the proposed referendum. Between the \$22M you seek, and the forthcoming MMSD referendum you are talking about raising our taxes close to \$1,000 per year. We are retired and living on a fixed income. We recognize that taxes increase each year, but this is a very significant amount.

I would suggest that you find places in the budget where cuts can be made without touching essential services such as police, fire, and library. Please do not raise taxes or threaten our essential services as that would be the easy way out of the current structural deficit. Work hard and find places in the very large city budget where reasonable cuts can be made. We are approaching a point where we will contribute to solving the city's housing crisis as you tax us out of our home,

Thank you,
Pete Nowak

From: [Mary Odell](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Budget
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 3:43:24 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from odellme@att.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

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It appears that the Mayor and the City Council have not investigated possible funding sources over the last couple of years. It is a cheap shot to blame the Legislature for the problem. In your personal budget I am sure you would have asked more pertinent questions to "live within the current rules" and or have sought solutions before things got so tight.

The worst scenario is that this referendum will only solve this year's shortage. I cannot believe that you as a Council continued your spending without any restraint. And more significantly, you adopted the most expensive BRT version and then did not account for an operating budget for it.

The Mayor has front loaded her Administration with 13 advisors; I would recommend that at least 5 of those positions be cut as they never provide any on the ground services such as you propose to cut.

Certainly this situation should cancel any dreams the Council has of becoming full time. And why go with projects like the Monona Lakefront re-do? Grants result in additional costs for the operating budget, in ad finitum!

Another expense that has become habitual is consulting fees. It is obvious that consultants only work from paper drawings and cost a lot of tax dollars. I have a personal anecdote that probably covers a multitude of consultants: Madison Metro person (consultant) stated that the re-design was predicated on the idea that Madison had never has a bus system. We lost a lot of neighborhood service as a result. Yes, the person said this to a group of residents. Seems counter to improving the system.

As a Council, it is important to take pro-active measures to resolve the budget mess. First please own it as a Council as you followed the Mayor in this spending dilemma. Secondly ask the tough questions. Thirdly scrutinize the developers' proposals and protect the neighborhoods from top down planning.

Sincerely yours,
Mary Odell

From: [Harry Richardson](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Approve \$22 Million dollar city referendum and work to get voters to approve it.
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 4:10:12 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from richardsonharry348@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Greetings,

I urge all the Madison city alders in the strongest possible terms to support Item 68 on tonight's agenda, to put a referendum on the November ballot to plug the \$22 million dollar gap in the city budget next year. It is vital that we maintain and improve city services, especially for the neediest among us. We need improved city services, not cuts to the library hours, cuts to the buses (there has already been a decline in bus service in the process of the brt set up with bus stops removed and longer walks to get a bus among other problems) Without this money the city services would likely be harmed by staff layoffs. This would hurt those in need of city services and the affected workers. I understand property taxes would likely go up, media accounts say \$240 for an average Madison home. As a renter I would expect my landlady to pass on this cost to me and I support this. I will willingly pay more to support vital city services. I say this in full recognition of the school district referendum which is likely to be passed onto me as well.

Once this referendum is passed I would urge all council members to use all available means to educate their constituencies on why this referendum is necessary and why they should vote for it. I will certainly do my part and share my concerns publicly, in groups I belong to and with my friends and neighbors. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and for sitting through what is likely to be a long meeting tonight with more work in the several weeks to come.

Sincerely,
Harry Richardson
456 N Few St.

From: [Kim I. Richman](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [Mayor](#)
Subject: Agenda Item #68 (08/06/2024)
Date: Sunday, August 4, 2024 7:46:13 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from krichman@pm.me. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Madam Mayor and alders;

Inflation has its grip on us taxpayers. The cost of medical care is up, housing prices are up, insurance coverage is up, gas is up, home energy costs are up, groceries are up, and on and on.

The proposed property tax increases you're considering will add to the already suffering folks we fight for every single day; middle- and lower-class residents, ESPECIALLY those on low and fixed incomes.

If the referendum passes, most taxpayers will be forced to make cuts to their budgets that the city did NOT want to do with their own budget.

Without a doubt this will force some Madison residents out of their homes and out of the city.

To ignore these facts is one of the most irresponsible things I have seen from ANY Madison common council. Remember, you work for us we don't work for you.

- A [SecureSave survey](#) found that 63% of Americans could not cover a \$500 emergency expense by tapping their savings.....
- According to the Fed's 2022 Economic Well-Being of U.S. Households [survey](#), some 37% of Americans lack enough money to cover a \$400 emergency expense, up from 32% in 2021..... Yet you're asking for a ridiculous property tax increase.

There are 21 people who got us into this dilemma, you should get us out of it with more responsible spending, accountability of those receiving funding, **and especially listening to constituents, apparently which nobody did after all of those budget meetings on the different sides of town.**

I am registered and advocating in opposition to Agenda Item #68 (84443) to Authorize the Scheduling of a Referendum Relating to Exceeding the Municipal Property Tax Limits in the City of Madison.

Do the right thing and figure out a way to take the burden off of the taxpayers for your irresponsible spending.

Regards,
Kim Richman
16th District
#

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) encrypted email.

From: [Elinor Riley](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Referendum question
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 2:36:13 PM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from elinorandron@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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

Dear Alders,

Please accept this email in response to the question regarding a potential referendum by the City of Madison Common Council. We do not support this notion of increasing taxes to help defray the increasing city budget. Please vote no to the this proposal.

Respectfully,

Elinor Riley
Ron Towle
Residents of 6 Springwood Circle, Madison 53717

Sent from my iPad

From: [Rob And Deb](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Agenda item 84626
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 5:18:10 PM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from redmanslake@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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

This is radically wrong.
Please fight to keep our skyline from being destroyed forever.
There is a reason that this ordinance exists and has for a long time.
I hope there will be much public outcry over this.
Too many issues like this get pushed through by developers/investors.
Please do what is right.

From: [GERRY ROESING](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Scheduling a referendum for exceeding municipal property tax limits
Date: Sunday, August 4, 2024 3:57:42 PM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from garoesing@aol.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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

Hello Alders,

I am writing with regard to a potential referendum to exceed state municipal property tax limits. I cannot understand how city government and city schools can continually think they can go to the taxpayers whenever there is a budget crunch. As alders, your role is to manage city spending in line with city revenues. You simply must not exceed the amount of monies available in carrying out city services. While it might be painful to reduce services to make that happen it is, simply, your job. This is one of the reasons you became an alder, to manage city government in a responsible way. To go to the taxpayers for more money whenever there is a shortfall is simply mismanagement and failure to carry out your mandate.

Managing my home requires control to meet my needs within my budget. I cannot get a new roof if I do not have the money to pay for it. I cannot improve my landscaping if I cannot pay the landscaper. And on and on. It seems so simple. Why cannot you alders apply that thinking? Do you all have a rich uncle you can call whenever you want some improvement to your homes that you do not have money to pay for? When your kid wants something you cannot afford you tell them that they cannot have it. Do the right thing and manage city services in a like manner. You will feel better about it in the end that you did the right thing.

Sincerely,

Gerry Roesing
City of Madison resident

Sent from my iPad

From: [David Rohde](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Public Comment on Referendum Resolution Scheduled for August 6
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 9:20:50 AM

You don't often get email from dbrohde@charter.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

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

I prefer that the City of Madison live within their means and not increase taxes to fund basic services. We have already seen substantial increases in taxes due to inflated property values. Instead, reduce funding in non-essential areas unimportant to the majority of Madisonians, such as BRT and other "fluffy" projects.

From a concerned tax paying citizen in District 7.

From: [noreply](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: [All Alders] Budget Referendum 8/6
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 1:56:26 PM

Recipient: All Alders:

Tuesday, August 6, 2024 – 1:52pm

Rachel Rovinsky
746 W Main St
Apt 306

Madison, Wisconsin. 53715 Yes, by email. rachirovinsky828@gmail.com All Alders Budget Referendum 8/6 Hi, I am a graduate student at UW-Madison and Madison resident. I am urging the Common Council to approve the \$22 million referendum that would balance the budget and allow for continued support of public services, including our libraries. This money collected from property tax should go towards services that support our most marginalized communities. This means allocating more money towards libraries, fire department, garbage collection, and parks, NOT police, as police primarily harm BIPOC residents of Madison.

From: [Michelle Russell](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Cc: [Madison Mayor](#)
Subject: Item 68, Referendum resolution 84443
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 11:58:22 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from mmartellrussell@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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

Hello esteemed Alders,

We all wear many hats and hold many roles in our community. I'm a mom, a public school advocate, a neurodivergent parent of a neurodivergent child, a fervent democrat, a covid-conscious reluctant homeschooling family, a teacher. Of the ones I juggle, the role of an advocate for immigrants/English learners is one I would like to speak for today.

Prior to moving to Madison, I worked as an English Language Development coach/teacher for a school district, supporting teachers in learning best practices for working with a growing number of English-learners. After the election in 2016, I volunteered to teach English as a Second Language (ESL) at Sandburg Elementary. It was a need in our community that wasn't being met. The first meeting was standing room only, full of moms, dads, and grandparents, all neighbors who had the need to learn English. All of the members of my ESL class were immigrants, with limited schooling in their home countries. All of them wanted the chance for a better life here in Madison, and they knew that learning English was key to that success.

The Imagination Center at Reindahl is integral to the development of our community to be a place that fully supports our growing number of youth and immigration population. The resources it would provide for people at all stages of life (parents, learners, preschoolers, babies) is a right that not all people in the Sandburg community get. A lot of families do not have the access to a vehicle or time to get to a library in the Madison library system.

The Imagination Center at Reindahl would be a place to gather and learn. (I had many, many challenges in finding availability in time and space to hold my classes at Sandburg.) There is an equity divide from the free programming my kids have access to because I have the means to bring them to another MPL, albeit not convenient. These families are missing out on early childhood development classes, skill-based offerings (such as ESL, taxes), and enrichment. All of this programming would enrich a child's life, English language development, and support their parents in becoming active members of our community. My kids went to school with children who **never** visited the library before. Here, on the Northeast side of Madison, Wisconsin. This is an access issue. This remains an unfulfilled promise for residents of the Greater Sandburg Area.

Please approve the referendum to not delay the building and funding of the Imagination Center again. The success of the children and families of the community here needs it.

Thank you,
Michelle Russell
Great Sandburg Resident

From: [Suzanne Rybeck](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Opposition
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 7:51:39 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from srybeck@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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

Dear City of Madison Alders,

I strongly oppose the property tax increase referendum.

Please see below:

"The proposed property tax increase referendum will place a great and undue hardship on Madison's taxpayers. 63% of Americans cannot cover a \$500.00 emergency bill from savings and 37% lack the funds to cover a \$400 emergency bill. This tax increase will force taxpayers to make gut wrenching cuts in their already stretched and thin budgets to cover this increased cost."

Sincerely,

Suzanne Keyes Rybeck
408 Marston Avenue
Madison, WI 53703

From: [Glori Sabin](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Opposition Of Agenda Item #68
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 7:52:42 AM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from kdietzman@sbcglobal.net. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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

Dear Alders,

I implore all of you Alders to NOT authorize or approve any reference relating to exceeding the municipal property tax limits in the City of Madison. Home owners are already struggling with the exceedingly high inflation of daily living without further devastation. We CANNOT pay anymore than you have already authorized by approving expenditures out of the realm reason and necessities. You are jeopardizing our ability to continue living in our homes with out of control spending. Please listen to your constituents who are pleading with you to eliminate any thought of exceeding the municipal property tax limits. Thank you for making sound and responsible decisions.

Glori D Sabin
10 Jubilee Cir
Madison Wi 53718

From: [Glori Sabin](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Budget Cuts
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 12:01:29 PM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from kdietzman@sbcglobal.net. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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Dear Alders,

If there are any suggested budget cuts to City of Madison services, the almighty overspending Mayor's office positions and maybe even her salary should be THE FIRST on the chopping block! She should be incredibly embarrassed as she sees no fault in her greediness to ADD high paying positions to her office and budget. How and why were these warranted? Really, all of you need a critical thinking course along with sound and conscious decision making. Shame on you! I'm a disgusted resident of the City of Madison.

Glori D Sabin
10 Jubilee Cir
Madison Wi 53718
Sent from my iPad

From: [Chris Schatzi](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: FOR MEETING AGENDA
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 12:48:29 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from cschatz@riseup.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

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

Why would we spend more money on this city, when the city is being treated like a playground for the military and not as the wonderful place to live it once was and definitely no longer is. *Address the elephant in the room: **The F-35s have to be relocated—the question is how, when, and why did you do this to us in the first place?*** Speak for your constituents, and make this right ASAP. Thank you!

Chris Schatz
2429 Hoard St.

p.s. Noise is a major neighborhood concern in my neighborhood, beyond even the F-35s. The use of public space by city services is contributing to this, so you do not have my support to spend money on those until some improvement (or I move, as seems inevitably the only solution).

From: [Keith Schlesinger](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Madison Tax Referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 12:44:37 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from keith.schlesinger@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Alders,

I am reading an online story on WKOW and it said the Mayor is listening to residents on how to deal with the deficit.

First of all, listen to your taxpayers when they send a suggestion to the Mayor's office. She has a staff but NOBODY bothered to respond to my email.

I am addressing the park and ride lot at Dutch Mill Road, in southeast Madison. You are giving FREE PARKING to people in that parking lot while they hop a coach to O'Hare or Midway. Dane County charges \$10 per day to park at the MSN airport. The City of Madison is working AGAINST the County of Dane by giving away free parking at Dutch Mill.

Look at how many parking spaces you have there. Yes, go out there and count them. If it is a true park and ride facility, give them a 24 hour in and out policy with no charge. Otherwise, \$10 a day to park there.

You are missing revenue big time. You need to make this a user fee parking lot if parked for more than 24 hours. It is a simple ticket in ticket out system.

I just hope you guys listen to taxpayers. The Mayor's office does not.

By the way, I will vote NO on your referendum to raise taxes. I am retired.

Keith Schlesinger
District 16
Madison

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

From: [Fields, Debbie](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: FW: Vote NO on tax referendum
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 8:51:26 AM

Alders,

Following please find a message that was received in the Council Office inbox.

Best,
Debbie Fields
Program Assistant 2
Common Council Office
608-266-4297

-----Original Message-----

From: Schoff Brothers <5942southhill@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, August 4, 2024 6:23 PM
To: council <council@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Vote NO on tax referendum

[You don't often get email from 5942southhill@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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

Dear Alders,

I cannot attend the upcoming council meeting to speak.

I am strongly opposed to the city plan for a request for an additional \$22,000,000 by referendum.

Property taxes for homeowners are already crushing because of steep increases in property values. And, with those increases, the city must be bringing in far more dollars than just 10 years ago.... And yet you "need" more?

The school district has blown through the \$300,000,000 from their recent referendum and is also planning to ask the taxpayers for more.

In the last 5 years, the city seems to readily spend money with reckless abandon on extravagant projects like the public market, BRT, and Monona lakeshore improvements. While each of these projects has merit, none of them is truly necessary or represents a core part of the city's responsibility.

Two former mayors have publicly expressed concern about the city's finances.

Despite considerable financial support from the federal government for the BRT project, the city's share of the cost of these projects far exceeds the \$22,000,000 you plan on asking for.

In light of the many large projects the city is pushing, the decision to cast the "need" for a referendum as the only way to avoid deep service and personnel cuts appears deeply disingenuous.

Please do not approve a referendum.

Please go back to the budget, determine what the core responsibilities of the city are, and construct a spending plan that stays within the available resources without further raising taxes.

Sincerely,
An increasingly unhappy lifelong Madisonian

From: [Christine Schwartz](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Support for budget referendum
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 1:34:49 PM

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

I am writing in support of the referendum for exceeding the municipal property tax limits. One of the reasons that Madison is such a wonderful place to live are our parks, services, good schools, and clean and safe environment. We should have local control to make our own determination about the level at which we wish to tax ourselves for the benefit of the community. I strongly support the proposed referendum.

Sincerely,
Christine Schwartz
117 Van Deusen St
Madison, WI 53715

From: [Erin Skarivoda](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: FUND OUR LIBRARIES
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 5:33:32 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from erin.skarivoda@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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

Dear Common Council Members,

I am a staff member at UW-Madison and a constituent of District 6 here in Madison. **I am writing in support of agenda item #68 (84443)** for the August 6 Common Council meeting. Increasing property taxes is far preferable to cutting library services. **I urge you to take action to support our local libraries and city services.**

Libraries are an essential part of our community. The resources they provide go far beyond books and information. They have free meeting spaces for entrepreneurs, free children's programming for families, and free community events. At the library, anyone can get help filing their taxes, mending their clothes, and learning all different kinds of new skills. Libraries have internet access for people who may not have it at home. They have safe, warm shelter for people who may not have a safe, warm house or home. All of these things are important to the safety, sustainability, and happiness of Madisonians.

If you want safer communities, reduce funding to the Madison Police Department (for example, starting with Matt Kenny) and increase the funding to the Madison Public Libraries.

Thank you for your time. I urge you to vote in favor of this referendum and continue working to find ways to resource our community.

Sincerely,
Erin

Erin Skarivoda

she/her

email: erin.skarivoda@gmail.com

phone: 920-606-1849

From: [Jon standridge](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: August 6 referendum meeting
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 9:21:10 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jonstandridge66@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Since I am on a fixed retirement income, the proposed tax hikes will have an impact on my household. It seems to me that the city has been on a spending spree. I have two suggestions aimed at reducing spending and reducing the size of the referendum amount.

1. Put phase 2 of the BRT program on a permanent hold.
2. Reconsider and eliminate every new position created in the last 5 years, starting with the new communications position in the Mayor's office.

From: [john.steines](mailto:john.steines@gmail.com)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Re: District 15: Meeting and Event Highlights for the Week of August 5, 2024
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 9:21:11 AM

You don't often get email from jsteines@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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

Regarding # 83. 83601 SUBSTITUTE: Amending Section 27.05 of the Madison General Ordinances to refine lawn and property maintenance provisions.

I strongly support authentic institutionalized guidance toward pollinator-friendly habitat wherever it can be found.

Comments you've already received speak to 'lawn' grasses & care behaviors of people who thrive in maintaining them (not me), lack of a list of unacceptable invasives (potentially including the native invasive pokeweed - all of the parts of which are toxic, and is now spreading adjacent to Fair Oaks Ave/Starkweather Creek. I guess we're stuck with that! Especially if there's no educational program to address & encourage enlightened removal of dangerous species, in favor of care of native habitats (pollinator-friendly & minimization of outdated 'lawn-grass' ethic).

Respectfully, John Steines Chicago Ave, Madison WI.

On Mon, Aug 5, 2024 at 12:03 PM Alder Martinez-Rutherford, District 15

<noreply@cityofmadison.com> wrote:

[View this email in your browser](#)

[City of Madison](#)



[Front entrance of the City-County Building on a sunny day](#)



Meeting and Event Highlights for the Week of August 5, 2024

HOW DO I PARTICIPATE IN COMMON COUNCIL MEETINGS? The Common Council generally holds meetings twice a month on Tuesdays, starting at 6:30 pm in hybrid format. Members of the public can participate in the following ways:

- Watch Online
- Attend In Person or Virtually
- Register for Public Comment
- Provide Comments before a Meeting

To learn more about how to participate in Common Council meetings, visit: www.cityofmadison.com/council/meetings-agendas/participate-in-council-meetings.

Boards, Commissions, and Committee Meetings

Note: This is not a complete list of meetings for this upcoming week. All meetings and their details can be found at the [Meeting Schedule page](#).

- **Common Council:** The Common Council meeting will take place on Tuesday, August 6, in hybrid format at 6:30 p.m. Agenda items include taking public comment on a resolution authorizing the scheduling of a referendum relating to exceeding the municipal property tax limits, as well as a resolution limiting the granting of “Class A” liquor licenses for the purpose of limiting density and proximity of such licenses to sensitive sites.
 - [Meeting Details](#)
 - [Meeting Agenda](#)
 - [Register for Public Comment](#)
 - [Watch Online](#)
- **Sustainable Madison Committee:** The Sustainable Madison Committee meeting will take place on Monday, August 5, in virtual format at 4:30 p.m. Agenda items include refining lawn and property maintenance provisions of Madison General Ordinances.
 - [Meeting Details](#)
 - [Meeting Agenda](#)
 - [Register for Public Comment](#)
 - [Watch Online](#)
- **Landmarks Commission:** The Landmarks Commission meeting will take place on Monday, August 5, in virtual format at 5:00 p.m. Agenda items include adopting the Northeast Area Plan and adopting the West Area Plan.
 - [Meeting Details](#)
 - [Meeting Agenda](#)

- [Register for Public Comment](#)
- [Watch Online](#)

If you would like more information about becoming a member of a City board, commission, or committee, please visit [the page linked here](#).

Public Information Meetings

- [Neighborhood Meeting on the Völker Development Proposal & Deon's Live Bait License Renewal, Monday, August 5](#): A neighborhood meeting to hear more about the Völker Development proposal is scheduled for Monday, August 5, 2024, at 6pm in the Bloom Bake Shop space at Northstreet, 557 North Street. After the development team's presentation, you will have the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, Madison Petroleum LLC, owner of Deon's Live Bait and Minnows located at 2301 Commercial Avenue, was unable to submit their Class A Beer License renewal paperwork by the deadline. As a result, they have now applied for a new Class A Beer License so they may continue selling beer at the convenience store. If you'd like to hear more about the license application, or if you have questions or feedback to share, there will be an opportunity to do so at the Monday, August 5, 2024, neighborhood meeting about Völker Development proposal.

News & Announcements

- [Public Comment on Referendum Resolution Scheduled for August 6](#): The Madison Common Council is encouraging residents to submit public testimony on an important resolution affecting the City budget at its next meeting. *[posted August 2, 2024]*
- [Road Closures - Stevens Street Reconstruction](#) *posted August 2, 2024*

Beginning Monday, August 5, Stevens Street will be closed to through traffic from North Franklin Avenue to Grand Avenue. This is part of the North Franklin Avenue and Stevens Street Resurfacing project that will replace aging and deteriorating... *[posted August 2, 2024]*

- [August Moving Days: How to Set Out Appliances, Furniture, & Other Large Items](#): When placing large items out for pickup, follow these guidelines... *[posted August 2, 2024]*
- [August Moving Days: Daily Collections of Carts in Student Move Area](#): Starting at 6:30 a.m. on Monday August 5, 2024 residents in the downtown moving days area can place trash and recycling collection carts out for daily pickup. The Streets Division will have crews patrolling the move-out area emptying collection... *[posted August 1, 2024]*
- [City of Madison Absentee Ballot Drop Boxes Updated Ahead of Primary](#): Madison's 14 absentee ballot drop boxes are getting an updated look ahead of the Aug. 13 primary election. *[posted July 31, 2024]*
- [August Moving Days: How to Recycle Televisions, Computers, and Other](#)

[Electronics](#): Electronics must be delivered to the Streets Division's drop-off sites, or to a reputable private electronics recycler in the area. All electronics are accepted for free from City of Madison residents at the Streets Division drop-off... *[posted July 31, 2024]*

- [In-Person Absentee Voting Begins Today](#): In-person absentee voting for the August 13 Partisan Primary begins today. "Avoid lines at the polls on election day and visit one of our local libraries to cast your ballot early," said Mayor Rhodes-Conway. "In-person absentee voting has begun. You... *[posted July 30, 2024]*
- [August Moving Days: How to Use the Large Item Work Order System during the Move Out](#): Starting the week of August 4, 2024 and ending on Friday, August 23 2024, the large item work order rules are different for residents who live in the student move-out area. *[posted July 30, 2024]*
- [Want to Vote by Mail? Request Absentee Today](#): With just two weeks remaining before the August 13 Partisan Primary, the City Clerk's Office urges voters wishing to receive an absentee through the mail to submit their requests today. "Don't lose the opportunity to make your vote count," said Mayor... *[posted July 29, 2024]*
- [August Moving Days: Make a Plan and Donate Today](#): The annual August Moving Days for downtown Madison will soon get underway. Thousands of Madison residents will be changing homes within the downtown moving days area and you will need to decide just what to do with all their stuff. The... *[posted July 29, 2024]*

Please [visit the City news webpage](#) to find additional news and announcements and to subscribe to receive notification of news releases as they are posted.

Events

- [Hospitalized Voting Begins, Tuesday, August 6](#): Beginning today, voters who are hospitalized can [appoint an agent](#) to:...
- [Blood Pressure Screening, Tuesday, August 6](#): Free Blood Pressure Screening is available to older adults, on the first and third Tuesday, 11:15 - 12:00 pm. Please find additional upcoming Madison Senior Center events listed on the [Madison Senior Center event calendar](#).
- [Madison Night Market, Thursday, August 8](#): The Office of the Common Council is excited to host its resource table at the Madison Night Market on Thursday, August 8. We welcome you to stop by and say hi and share your feedback with Council staff and alders!
- [Dane Dances: Luisito Rosario / V05, Friday, August 9](#): Food and cocktails are available for purchase at 4:30 PM. [Lake Vista Café](#) will be open for your enjoyment along with [La Taguara](#), [Melly Mells Catering](#), and Kipps Kitchen. Visa and MasterCard accepted. Feel free to bring a blanket, chair, and picnic basket Sorry, carry-in alcohol is prohibited. Seating on the rooftop is limited.
- [Ride the Drive 2024, Sunday, August 11](#): It's thousands of happy healthy people coming together to experience parks and open streets in a single,

one-day, free, community event. Since the inaugural Ride the Drive in 2009, this event continues to celebrate Madison's commitment to a healthy, active lifestyle focusing on the environmental and economic impacts and the importance of social integration.

Parks Alive Dates!

Parks Alive builds stronger neighborhoods and connects neighbors to their parks through fun, family-friendly activities, music and free food. Events are held in parks across the city and throughout the summer. Connect with your neighbors and engage with your community at a Parks Alive event near you! Events start at 5:00 p.m.

- [Parks Alive at Hammersley Park on Wednesday, August 7](#)

Please find additional upcoming City of Madison Parks events listed on the [City parks event calendar](#).

Additional upcoming events can also be found on the [City events calendar](#).

[View full blog post](#)

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City of Madison
210 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Madison, WI 53703

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From: [Donald Taylor](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [Kat Taylor](#)
Subject: Referendum question
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 6:10:27 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from taylordat@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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

It says on the website that you want to raise the spending at 20,000,000 otherwise 150 positions will have to be cut.that breaks down to 134000 per position. That seems very high. What positions would be cut and would it make more sense, I salaries are that high,to give a pay cut so as to afford keeping those positions?

[Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer](#)

From: [Steve Verburg](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: in favor of budget referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 1:40:19 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from stverburg@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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

Alders,

I'm writing to express support for placing the budget referendum on the ballot as a way to protect crucial social services and other city services that mitigate the harm caused by Madison's racial disparities.

Best,

Steve Verburg
Wendy Ln
Madison, WI

From: [JW](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Input on additional property tax referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 7:25:58 AM

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

We do not support the increase to cover the 22 million so called budget crisis funding. It is only your view that it is a "crisis" but too us its a fiscal mismanagement and refusal to actually live within a budget.

We saw the mayor on the news last night and sensed her vail threat said with a smirk (that just appears as Bully tactics and not true concern). We want to know what to keep and what to cut"! A very smooth move to threaten people to vote yes out of fear!

Our administration has done many wonderful improvements to this city over the past years, and their motives are right for doing so...instead of kicking everything down the road like past administrations have. Thank you!

However, we feel that some things seen as progressive priorities maybe so, but do not all have to be done right away, like the massive metro changes, a rail corridor and station for Amtrak...maybe costs should be put on a time plan and done when the incoming reserves are there, not pushing overspending on taxpayers and threatening them by cutting services. If that needs to be done, then do so. You can't give everything to everyone all the time!

Sometimes sacrifice is necessary to fund priorities, and other things worked in as the city grows and tax revenues. One way to increase revenue is to bring in more small through large businesses...Madison is hard to work with from a business perspective and we have seen many businesses leave, turned away or turned off by the administrative polices and TAXES here...and the surrounding communities got Epic, major retailers, and many more businesses that should have been here.

And stop all the tax incremental financing tax breaks for all these residential developers...they are not paying their fair share and it costs a fortune to build out the infrastructure and maintain it. Its a real boon for T Wall and the many others who are getting rich while you overtax the working homeowners and renters through their rent increases.

We appreciate your social consciousness and wanting to care for your community, but don't pass that burden on us all the time assuming that we agree with all your social good programs...yes, in a perfect world and economy, we would readily say yes to all, but with all the inflation and job cutbacks, slowed wage growth and TAXES, we just can not do it all to fulfill the plans you have..consider that. Yo are driving us out of our homes.

It has gotten so expensive to live here we are planning to sell our home to get out of this city and county, our house value has dropped 60K the past three months according to market stats after you sent us our assessment...the basis for the real property taxes, so we will be paying more taxes than we should if market value is truly fair...!

You say you care about local business and people expect high levels of services and community services, yes, that is wonderful, but not if you no longer have the discretionary income to pay and enjoy them...please explain to the small businesses that people aren't spending and patronizing them anymore or as much because of out-of-control costs of living and your tax increases! And less patronage to business is less county and city taxes for you too...think of that mayor and alders!

We have strong feelings about the fiscal situation and lack of good management and could go on, but you get our point, and no if the vote is 51 to 49, yes it is a majority and politicians like you say the voters have spoken, but not true, you only hear those who support your agenda and ghost the rest of us. So, let the librarians feel anxious, let them cut their hours some...our employer just chopped 20 jobs in one month, and have not filled another ten who left or retired the past six months off loading work on the survivors in the office..now that really causes anxiety! Poor librarians...at least they have a job! And great benefits thanks to the mayors generous raises following covid.

Last, lets not forget inflation continues despite the CPI made up numbers people, lets not forget the school referendum for one half trillion dollars coming up, and lets assume the county, state and MATC will likely increase their taxes too! How much can you bleed out of working people until they collapse.

How much are you taking away from us actually being able to enjoy living in this once wonderful small-town city and all of the High level of services and amenities when we have no money to enjoy them? We guess we can drive by and look at those who enjoy all the subsidies and freebies given by the city on our wallets,

We can ride around and look at all the panhandlers you allow to roam the intersections...and support all those you feel we need to support when they move here with noting. Again, we'd love to take care of all budget and other peoples needs. But our funds our finite, unlike the City of Madison's tax extraction (and when you use vail threats and fear its extortion) systems.

We know you may read this. Doubtful, and will sneer and chuckle as you do and ghost us and cancel us as non-supporters and hit delete! That is how we feel when contacting you anyway. Madison Wisconsin is a wonderful place, but we can no longer afford to live here...so you will say.."if you don't like the politics and policies, move...sadly you are forcing us to do so"!

Thank you for at least encouraging us to voice our feelings, but we doubt it matters. Remember too, that a majority of those that vote these referenda are students and short time residents who do not have to pay for and live with the consequences of their votes...that is a hazard of university towns and others who vote for everything that pay little or no taxes to get more free services...our government has weakened Americans through masking social support as a hand up when in reality it makes them weak and entitled and unmotivated to EARN the American Dream—a fallacy today! We love to come home from work to see the news of those who don't work having rallies and marches protesting for more privileges after we work all day to pay for our lives and theirs! Now that is real social justice our council and leaders support.

Warm regards,

Just two meaningless 40-year residents who will hopefully soon be former ones

PS, please forgive any spelling, grammar or typographical errors, I have lost much of my sight, so this took considerable effort to draft!

From: [taylor warsek](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Referendum Comment
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 9:11:13 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from taylor.warsek@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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We will not be voting yes on this referendum. The current mayor has been in office as mayor for almost the last 6 years and was an Alder for a few years before that. All during that time, Madison has been "brewing" this budget deficit. And all the while she has started a number of "pet projects" , for what appears to us, to be a way to pad her resume to seek a better job opportunity in DC. The spending on these projects has been what we consider Fiscal Mismanagement in light of the increasing deficit. It also appears the mayor has cunningly developed a core of alders who vote yes on all her project spending to assure her projects always go forward, no matter the cost. And now we ,as taxpayers , are expected to foot the bill. And now the threats have started of what will happen if the referendum is not passed. This seems like a type of "blackmail" to us. Before ANY layoffs or job cuts are instituted, It seems the real pain ought to start at the top of a very heavy and expensive Mayor's staff and all her "pet projects".

Rick Taylor and Linda Warsek

From: dpwaugh@gmail.com
To: [All Alders](#)
Cc: bob.klebba@gmail.com
Subject: budget consideration - the referendum question
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 1:22:36 PM

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Dear city leaders,

My first thought is one of concern about what raising property taxes will do on housing costs. These increases will directly impact those already struggling to pay rent. I think the exercise of a reduced budget is very important and helpful and might be worth trying on. It strikes me that this is an equity issue because while the most affluent among us can afford the increase, we will be making life harder for quite a number of others.

One piece of the puzzle that is missing for me and would like more clarity on is the impact TIF districts have on revenue and services. I understand that those funds have strict use requirements, however, should we be evaluating closing or shrinking geographically some open TIF districts? Do we need to rethink the whole idea of public subsidy to fund development? Should we be having more coordination with county government to better manage competitive development across municipal boundaries?

Plus, please sell the bus barn on East Washington. That type of use is more appropriate elsewhere and is contrary to the nature of transit oriented development planning.

Best
David Waugh
704 E. Gorham St

From: [Jan Weatherhogg](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: City Budget- URGENT!!!!
Date: Sunday, August 4, 2024 4:39:39 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from downija@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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It's time for the City Council and Mayor to pay attention to the needs of the Madison taxpayers, not how to pass more expenses on to the taxpayers! Your job was supposed to work within a budget, not add additional expenses and misuse funds. Your solution to cover the budget deficit is to increase the property tax. That transfers your lack of fiscal management and responsibility to the taxpayers and that is unconscionable! You obviously do not care that 63% of Americans cannot cover a \$500 emergency bill from savings and 37% lack the funds to cover a \$400 emergency bill. This tax increase will force taxpayers to make cuts in their already stressed budgets! We have always budgeted for our property taxes, that is our responsibility! Now, it's time for you to do your job, you work for us. We're tired of doing your job!

From: [Larry and Ginny White](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [Conklin, Nikki](#)
Cc: [Mayor](#)
Subject: REJECT Tax Levy Referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 2:58:44 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from lgwhites@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Alders: After watching the budget briefing given by the mayor and budget director at your July 16th meeting, we remain unconvinced of the need for a tax levy referendum.

The mayor said a structural deficit has existed since 2012 when the Republican legislature and Governor Scott Walker imposed harsh revenue restrictions. We can't help but wonder, "Why has she spent freely during five years in office and only now is developing a five-year plan to address the deficit?"

We understand why she and many alders prefer to use a cost-to-continue budget model. It's easier than having to evaluate the need for and effectiveness of all budget items and make difficult choices.

The proposed language in the referendum is expected to say that it's "for the purpose of funding police, fire, garbage collection, parks and library operations *and other City services and operations*" (emphasis ours). This is a well-known tactic from the bureaucratic playbook: lead with essential services and continue to fund a catch-all category of nice-to-have positions, programs, and projects.

In discussing the impact of a rejected referendum, the mayor spoke in terms of the number of jobs that would be lost. Framing the issue as jobs lost is simplistic and intended to strike an emotional chord. Now she has introduced another tried-and-true scare tactic: deep cuts to popular city services like library hours, the Goodman pool, street repair, Madison Metro Transit service, a police program on gangs and neighborhood crime, and more.

She doesn't mention potential cuts in other areas, for example:

- Tax credits or benefits granted to third parties such as developers and community organizations
- Spending on health/human services programming at seven times the average rate of Wisconsin's 35 largest cities
- Foreign and domestic travel by the mayor, city staff, and alders
- Mayor's Office staffing
- Specific programs and new or planned initiatives and infrastructure.

We've seen no evidence of good-faith efforts on the part of the mayor and alders. You don't acknowledge that you helped grow the deficit, nor will you and the mayor try to make strategic cuts to nonessential positions, projects, and programs. Instead, the mayor recently filled a communications manager position

(approved by alders) at a salary of over \$90K/year. We think he might well have been hired to help convince taxpayers to support the referendum. But, personally, we remain dubious and are planning to vote NO.

Respectfully,

Ginny and Larry White
71 Oak Creek Trail
Madison, WI 53717

From: [noreply](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: [All Alders] Make cuts - quit spending more money
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 9:51:47 PM

Recipient: All Alders:

Monday, August 5, 2024 – 9:47pm

Christine Wolf
4617 Eldorado

Madison, Wisconsin. 53716 Yes, by email. 1wolfchris@gmail.com All Alders Make cuts - quit spending more money Why aren't more cuts being made to planning staff and community development? Instead, you & mayor are threatening cuts for the BASIC SERVICES, such as trash, collection, fire and police. And you're approving MORE spending on items like Reindal Park. Your planning department is the "central power." No cuts to upper management, just the lowest level of staff. Your own personal budgets must be a mess if you just keep spending. Very disrespectful to us city residents.

From: [Sally Young](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 11:41:34 AM

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

To: Madison City Council

In the past, Madison residents have been generous with voting to voluntarily increase their property taxes. However, I would like to go on record as being against the city's upcoming referendum. I am on a fixed income that is not keeping up with inflation. We have an ambitious mayor and I have not seen the city council doing much to restrain her ambitions. It is no surprise that the state has unfairly targeted us with a paltry amount of state funding. It is no surprise that the pandemic funds would end soon. So, why did this 'crisis' materialize in the past year? Why were we not working harder to balance the budget by forgoing wonderful, forward-looking but unnecessary projects two, three, four years ago?

Sally Young

4112 Major Ave.

"One of the most dangerous illusions of the climate crisis is that the technology of modern life makes us invincible...our bubble of invincibility is far more fragile than we know."

Jeff Goodall author of *The Heat Will Kill You First: Life and Death on a Scorched Planet*.

From: [Jacklyn DaWalt](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 4:18:22 PM

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Voting NO on a City Referendum is somewhat foreign to us but we believe this administration has been spending money frivolously on projects and an excessive Number of Deputies to the Mayor - are they truly necessary? BRT is another ego booster for the Mayor and not a necessity. We are well aware of the different pots of City money but it is past time to spend on essential services and do those correctly.

Jacklyn and Judy Da Walt
4119 Jerome Street

Sent from my iPad

From: [James Ford II](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 4:23:44 PM

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The mayor's approach to budgeting, in my opinion, is based on fear tactics. Vote for my referendum or face budget cuts and higher fees. Either approach places most of the burden on homeowners. What about the out-of-state corporate developers getting rich off Madison residents? Let's use four commercial properties to underscore the point - Whitney Point, Whitney Reserve, Hampton Place, and Sequoya Commons. The properties have 48, 49, 59 and 101 units and the property tax per unit are \$3,172.9, \$4,355.19, \$3,911.33, and \$4,469.85 respectively.

U.S. News and World Report puts the average annual cost to educate a student in Madison at \$16,137. For taxes at these properties to cover the MMSD infrastructure, no more than 9, 13, 14, and 28 students can live at each of the four properties respectively. If the student number is greater, these property owners are not paying their fair share to support the city infrastructure.

I raised this issue at a May budget meeting and shared my concerns with the alders and city finance staff. No response. So, I will ask again -how will city leaders ensure that out-of-state developers pay equitable property taxes to support the city infrastructure during construction and afterwards?

Plans to balance the budget need to consider all options including new ways to raise revenues for the out of town and in town developers who are profiting from the residents of Madison without covering the cost associated with the changing infrastructure that their new developments introduce to the city of Madison.

We should not be talking about cuts to fire or olive services or the Goodman Pool, the libraries, or to poll workers. It's time to stand up to the Mayor and say no to her fear based approach to budgeting and make sure that the profiteering out of town and in town developers are paying their fair share and not passing the burden to taxpayers or those who are paying ever increasing rents.

Sincerely

Jay Ford
5026 Marathon Drive
Madison Wisconsin 53705

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad](#)

From: [Cam Yang](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: In Opposition of Resolution 84443
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 4:23:47 PM

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Hello,

My name is Cam Yang and I am writing in opposition of Resolution [84443](#). The Madison police department does not need any more increases to their budget, and in addition, this property tax increase will only increase the current cost of living for the most vulnerable communities, especially during economic times such as these. I'm asking that you all rework this resolution, remove the police department from this resolution, and come up with a better economic algorithm/equation that allows vulnerable homeowners (who are living paycheck to paycheck) a better fighting chance to keep their homes.

Best,

--



Cameron PajYeeb Yang, they/them/theirs/nws

Development Manager

cyang@freedom-inc.org

(608) 515-5518

2110 Luann Lane Madison, WI 53713

From: [Sarah Hamilton](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Agenda 84443
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 4:29:25 PM

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

I am opposed to this referendum to increase property taxes to balance the budget.

The mayor needs to start managing the known existing funds and stop expecting the citizens to bail her out. Before accepting federal funds you should be sure you know if you have the funds to pay the city's share. OR have a referendum asking the citizens if they are willing to pay more taxes before accepting federal funds. Citizens can't continually cover for the mismanagement of funds. We are retired and do not have endless funds. We have a tight budget to cover our own household expenses and can't continually be expected to cover you mismanagement. Stop overspending! Stop expecting citizens to bail you out!

Sarah Hamilton
401 Blue Ridge Pkwy
Madison, Wi 53705

Sent from my iPad