From:	Bonnie Roe
To:	Finance Committee; All Alders
Cc:	Tishler, Bill; Schmiedicke, David; Mikolajewski, Matthew; Clerk; Mayor
Subject:	Opposition to File #93406 and #93412
Date:	Monday, June 29, 2026 7:36:43 AM

Dear Members of the Finance Committee,

I am writing to register my strong opposition to the proposed **$6.5 million Project Plan Amendment for TID 44 (Royster Clark, File #93406)** and the parallel **Project Plan Amendment for TID 46 (Research Park, File #93412)** currently before the Finance Committee.

While individual capital allocations like stormwater ponds, land banking, and sewer improvements are individually defensible, approving **$11.9 million in combined new capital expansions** that deliberately extend the operational life cycles of existing Tax Incremental Districts is **structurally irresponsible** while the city faces a severe General Fund deficit.

We cannot continue to treat our Capital Budget expansions and our Operational Budget crises as if they exist on two separate planets. **They are structurally linked**, and the recent pattern of handling our TIF districts proves it.

I urge the Committee to place a hold on or file these amendments based on three concrete fiscal realities:

1. The Pattern of Revenue Segregation and Artificial Starvation

Just weeks ago, the Common Council unanimously amended the Economic Development budget to authorize major TIF actions—including the **TID 54 agreement** assisting Realta Fusion at the old Oscar Mayer site and the **TID 55 amendment** to fund the purchase of four properties at the old Voit Farm (Starkweather neighborhood) for the city's land banking program.

While those projects may have clear policy goals, adding even more capital weight to older districts like **TID 44 ($6.5M** for Royster Corners site acquisition and Cottage Grove Road stormwater ponds) and **TID 46 ($5.4M** for West Towne area parks and S. Yellowstone Drive sewers) reveals a problematic administrative trend.

TID 44 alone sits on an estimated $114 million in incremental taxable property value. By continuously stacking new project costs into these mature districts, the city artificially prolongs their lifespans toward **extended closure windows (projected out to 2029 for TID 44). This strategy actively prevents hundreds of millions of dollars** in established property value from dissolving back into the general tax rolls, where they would directly relieve our cash-starved General Fund.

2. The Contradiction of Operational Austerity

The Mayor's Office has mandated a **2% across-the-board operational budget reduction** for city departments. We are telling our frontline services that they must manage service friction and personnel shortages because "the money isn't there." This includes the **Madison Police Department**, which is currently capped at 492 authorized officers and absorbing severe recruitment and field onboarding gaps; it also includes the **Madison Fire Department**, which is still **regularly running out of ambulances and crews** even after adding an extra unit in the last budget season.

Yet, on the very same docket, **the city routinely finds statutory mechanisms to borrow, spend, and allocate millions of dollars in TIF capacity** to buy real estate, bank land, and subsidize localized infrastructure. The public cannot reconcile a municipal ledger that **enforces austerity on street-level operational services** while consistently expanding capital debt to extend development districts.

3. Opportunity Cost and Structural Priority

Every dollar of borrowing capacity and every year of delayed TIF dissolution carries a massive opportunity cost. Pushing the closure of these mature districts out further simply to fund specialized, non-urgent capital expansions **shifts the tax burden directly onto everyday Madison homeowners (and indirectly, renters)**, while protecting ring-fenced development funds from stabilizing our city's core operational needs.

If the structural deficit is as severe as the administration claims, then **our policy choices must reflect that emergency across all funds.** We must stop expanding the spending scope of successful TIF districts to keep them open.

I request that the Finance Committee **vote to place on file or place a formal committee hold** on the **TID 44 amendment (File #93406)** and the **TID 46 amendment (File #93412)**. Let these successful districts move toward dissolution so their combined property values can begin serving the entire city's General Fund, rather than insulating localized capital projects at the expense of our frontline public safety and community infrastructure.

Thank you for your time, fiscal oversight, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Roe
District 11

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To:	Finance Committee; All Alders
Cc:	Tishler, Bill; Schmiedicke, David; Mikolajewski, Matthew; Clerk; Mayor
Subject:	Re: Opposition to File #93406 and #93412
Date:	Monday, June 29, 2026 6:25:15 PM

Dear Members of the Finance Committee,

Respectfully, Alder Vidaver is missing the forest for the trees. My argument was never that closing these two specific TIDs would single-handedly wipe out our structural deficit in the operating budget tomorrow.

My point is about the cumulative, systemic choices this body is making citywide. When you look at the macro ledger, the city is consistently choosing to use its statutory power to create and extend development districts all over Madison, sequestering hundreds of millions of dollars in taxable property value. This choice intentionally limits the natural growth of our shared tax base at the exact moment we face a severe, compounding structural deficit in the operating budget.

Using the Expenditure Restraint Program as a shield to defend these choices is fundamentally inconsistent. Tonight's presentation included a massive $10 million increase to the General Fund Metro Transit subsidy in 2027. That multi-million dollar operational increase is completely subject to the state's ERIP formula. This proves that when a project has executive backing, the city easily finds the technical and administrative tools to reallocate funds and stay under the state cap.

The Expenditure Restraint Incentive Program (ERIP) only restricts direct net operational budget growth. If we let TID 44 dissolve and bring that $114 million in property value back onto our tax rolls, this committee has multiple legal tools to use those funds. (This is just one example of many, to reveal a pattern.) You could use that revenue to pay down debt service, which is entirely exempt from the ERIP cap, automatically freeing up general fund cash for our police and fire operations, etc.

The ERIP isn’t stopping you from protecting our basic city services. Your own budget choices are. If this committee can find the room under the state's cap to absorb millions in new operational subsidies for transit, you cannot claim it is legally impossible to find the room to protect street-level emergency services from a 2% cut.

The issue isn't state-imposed technical limitations; the issue is that we are choosing to use our borrowing capacity to fund real estate acquisition and extend the lifespans of development districts, while using state caps as an excuse to enforce a 2% cut on street-level emergency services. You aren't trapped by the state; you are hiding behind it to protect your capital spending choices.

Please stop treating our capital TIF maneuvers as if they are insulated from the economic realities facing Madison taxpayers and renters. It is time to align our spending choices with our actual operational priorities.

Thank you,

Bonnie Roe
District 11

On Mon, Jun 29, 2026, 7:36 AM Bonnie Roe <bonnie.roe@gmail.com> wrote:

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