

**From:** [Jill Angelo](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** NO to ref 84443  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 3:57:48 PM

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[Some people who received this message don't often get email from [jillangelo85@yahoo.com](mailto:jillangelo85@yahoo.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.

Please vote NO to referendum 84443 and also alder rummell's amendment. Affordable housing, will be further out of reach because of a yes vote on tax increases or special charges. Any vote yes by an alder or the mayor on a tax increase, would make you part of the continued cause/problem of unaffordable housing here in Madison. (As was last year's common council members - very irresponsible, knowing of a huge budget deficit's for the coming years for Madison, and then to increase it!)

If the state is not giving Madison, their fair share of tax revenue, then go after them, put focus there, not the home owners here. Or have visitor fees on lodging and entertainment, etc.

Those who are worried about the libraries, can vote no on the tax increase, then write out a check for \$240 to Madison Libraries.

Also, with the increasing housing here, that should have brought in more tax money?? How much revenue was brought in from increase housing in Madison, last year, and projected for this year?

Also, it would be great information to the public if all alders and the mayor, releases to the public, what their primary residential real estate tax bill that has their name listed as owner, has been for at least the last two years.

Thank you to all those who will vote NO on ref. 84443, and Rummell's amendment on it. Please work on ways to cut the taxes and fees for the residents of Madison. You will be the ones trying to keep Madison living affordable!

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Books24u](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Possible referendum funding.  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 1:55:36 PM

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Some people who received this message don't often get email from books24u@aol.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hello Alders,

Some folks who have commented on the budget mentioned how the State is funding a part, or all, of what the issue is via shared revenue funding which is low for Madison. I believe it's a vast problem. But at the same time I like what Alder Rummel has proposed as careful sifting and winnowing of a budget is paramount.

As far as the Republican legislators at the State Capitol who have essentially "defunded" Madison budget through low State revenue allowances, something needs to be done and shown by the Madison Common Council about this. Are you going to just sit back and take it, or do something about it such as letting City of Madison and other Americans about this harmful situation.

And truthful wording is critical, not political spin, about this. My suggestion is that since all City of Madison budgets are affected by the budget which means that all City of Madison budgets are being defunded. So Republican leaders in the State Capitol have "given it" to Madison. This defunding is shameful. What about Police and Fire Protection? What is the cut for those departments? Are Police and Fire Protection being defunded by the reduced level of shared revenue that's allocated to all Wisconsin cities? Then the Republicans at the State Capitol are really defunding the Police and Fire Protection Services. Careful and truthful ways to discuss the budget is needed.

It looks that way to me. Good luck at the meeting tonight!

Peace out!

Steve Books  
625 Spruce St.  
Madison, WI 53715

**From:** [Melissa Cheeks](#)  
**To:** [Figueroa Cole, Yannette](#); [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Library Referendum  
**Date:** Friday, August 16, 2024 9:07:48 PM

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

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To All Alders,

Please approve adding a referendum option to the November 5, 2024 ballot in support of the Madison Public Library Board's suggestion.

I have lived in Madison since 2011, and started a family here in 2016. My children have grown up in the library. Now at ages 6 and 8, their love of reading has been fostered by the ability to check out library books weekly. We love visiting city libraries for their excellent programming- our favorite traditions throughout their lives have included storytimes, craft projects, and deeply needed connection between fellow parents. During the pandemic, I remember library staff curating books for us to put out on a socially distanced cart for pickup. Library staff goes above and beyond in caring for the Madison community- facilitating connection between families, and fostering a true love of reading for all ages. Our current weekly craft tradition at the Sequoya library marks the beginning of our week and brings our family so much joy.

The thought of cutting arts programming and Sunday hours is deeply disappointing. Our city needs more of what the library fosters: a welcoming and supportive place where all people can gather and thrive. Cutting resources and hours does the very opposite.

While the city budget already made some crucial mistakes, you have the opportunity to give the library system a fighting chance, and approve a referendum to be added to the November 5th ballot. I urge you to do so. Libraries are the soul of community, and we need to support them now more than ever.

Always,  
Melissa Cheeks, district 10 constituent

**From:** [Nancy Daane](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Referendum  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 8:48:40 AM  
**Attachments:** [Letter for November 2025 referendum .docx](#)

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### **To Whom It May Concern:**

The following is my opinion on the referendum in November of 2025. First of all I will vote no. I don't want to put people out of work or cut our services, but our property taxes are getting out of hand since our Mayor was voted in.

She needs to be voted out of office and if that doesn't happen then deny her any pay raises along with all of the folks that have been a part of this deficit. Maybe then they'll feel what we feel every tax season.

The following are some of the issues that upset myself and others as a taxpayer in the city of Madison.

### **The bus situation:**

Is the city being reimbursed what it is actually costing us as tax payers for the bus service that goes to Verona, Fitchburg, Sun Prairie, Middleton, etc.? To include the drivers pay, overtime and his/her benefits. Does it help cover all vehicle insurance and any other insurance needed for accidents, etc. or is our taxes picking up the tab. Most of the time when I see these buses they're empty or just one or two people on them.

Are these communities being assigned a \$40.00 wheel tax when they renew their car plates? Why not? The wheel tax was assigned for the bus service, but since then she has torn down all the transfer points and made it more difficult for Madison bus riders to get to their destination.

East Washington Avenue: for months they've preached about the people getting hurt by the traffic, so now putting bus stops in the middle of the thruway, what? Is having people walk across the busy street to get on the bus and again to get off the bus safe? I don't think so. The same situation is going to happen on Mineral Point Road, Whitney way and any other place they're making these changes.

And, was that expensive paint necessary? That must have cost thousands and thousands of dollars. I've had people tell me that the paint is slick when wet and the vehicle traction was less than perfect.

### **Apartments:**

Are the apartment owners taxed the same rate for property school taxes per unit? Those apartments are full of kids and these owners should be taxed the same rate per unit as we do for our stand alone homes.

**School Vouchers:**

I'm totally against giving kids vouchers to attend private, charter or parochial schools. I/we pay school taxes for all children and if parents want to send their child to a one of these charter/private schools then they should pay tuition for it, like we did when our children went to a private schools.

**Cherokee Condos:**

Some of the Condo's in Cherokee pay Waunakee school taxes. Why? When is the city of Madison going to change that? Why does the city of Madison help with Waunakee taxes? Wouldn't it make sense for city of Madison residents pay for own school taxes verses a richer communities school taxes? I would think so.

**Bike Paths:**

I think we should ease up on the strong focus on bike paths and focus on some of the other issues that affect all Madison residents. Bike paths are great, but it seems they come first and is that a priority when there are other more pressing issues in this city, for example snow removal. Bike paths were plowed and city streets were not. Last winter was unacceptable for what we went through with the condition of the streets.

Arboretum

**Turning Lanes:**

Congrats on the turning lanes on Odana Road, etc. But, why upset a good thing with putting those island in the middle of them. They've been a nuisance and most people I talked with agree and can't see why the city saw the need to add those little islands. They're beginning to be an eyesore now with all the chips from the snow plows.

Thank You,

Nancy, a concerned citizen

**From:** [Nicholas Davies](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Cc:** [Martinez-Rutherford, Dina Nina](#)  
**Subject:** 84443 - budget referendum - let voters speak!  
**Date:** Sunday, August 18, 2024 12:39:20 PM

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Dear alders,

While I believe that there are budget cuts that the city could handle, and potential revenues to pursue, it likely doesn't add up to the amount needed, and we should put it to the city as a whole, in the form of a referendum, before making more drastic, inequitable cuts to city systems.

These budget considerations are currently only being discussed in Common Council and committee meetings, and as someone who does engage in city government at that level, I'm aware that many people don't have the time and resources to do so. Especially on a complicated, nuanced issue like the budget.

You all have a lot of tough decisions to make, about what can be done before going to referendum, and what that referendum amount needs to be. But I want to make sure you all recognize the aim of the small, vocal anti-referendum group: to keep this decision-making authority on a tax increase to themselves, and out of the hands of voters city-wide.

Amongst the public comment from that camp, I've found no serious consideration of *how much* of a referendum amount they would consider acceptable vs. not, nor any serious budgetary solutions. The mayor's office had a budget of \$1.5 mil for this year. The mayor's office does not have \$22 mil to spare.

Concerns regarding the proposed cuts:

#### **Assessor**

Eliminate the City's property listing service. Reduction of 2 FTE (\$216,046)

Attorney

- If this is referring to Madison Property Lookup, this is an incredibly valuable resource that I've used countless times for a variety of reasons.

#### **Building Inspection**

Eliminate Code Enforcement Officer, Housing Inspector, and Information Clerk positions.

Would slow down inspection and approval process. Reduction of 3.0 FTE (\$264,647)

- Slowing down inspections and approvals is exactly the wrong thing to do right now.

#### **Clerk**

Reduce poll workers to minimum required levels, increasing wait times. (\$149,969)

- Around the state and the country, we see this having an inequitable impact. People most impacted by wait times are those with less flexibility and security in their work, and/or childcare duties.

## **Community Development**

End City's financial contribution to agencies providing Youth Restorative Justice Services (\$180,000)

Reduce the City's financial contribution to case management and outreach services for persons experiencing homelessness (\$438,000)

End the City's participation in the Northside Early Childcare Zone (\$38,000)

### **Economic Development**

- These are textbook examples of cuts that would have inequitable impacts. Additionally, homelessness assistance and restorative justice programs are typically shown to be cost-saving programs overall.

## **Fire**

Reduce CARES program from three teams to one resulting in the loss of coverage on weekends and holidays and less capacity during the week. Reduction of 5 FTE (\$848,000)

- Cutting back on CARES will not eliminate these calls for service, it will just shift the burden of them. But those experiencing mental health crises will be the ones who experience the difference, when armed police show up instead of trained mental health responders.

## **Fleet Service**

Shift trailer maintenance to biennial schedule from annual schedule (\$21,497)

Reduce minor body damage/repairs (\$130,000 plus decreased resale value).

Defer maintenance for Fleet vehicles (\$39,426)

- We need to take into account that delaying maintenance on city vehicles can allow problems to get worse, and accelerate the timeline for those vehicles needing full replacement

## **Information Technology**

Discontinue or reduce coverage of various BCC meetings, discontinue edited podcast support, discontinue show productions, reduce event coverage and special project requests. Reduction of 1-2 FTEs (\$88,877 – 177,754)

- As waves of COVID continue to wash through our community, vaccine regimens fail to keep us, and the CDC treats it as a personal responsibility issue. But there is an entire population of immuno-suppressed people who are left out of public life when participation involves risk of infection. And with this, we are talking about excluding people from committee proceedings.

## **Library**

Eliminate Sunday hours making access more challenging for some residents. (\$120,693)

Eliminate evening hours making access more challenging for some residents.

- Libraries are highly valued by everyone, but these cuts will have a disproportionate, inequitable impact.

## **Parks**

Eliminate Aquatics Program. Reduction of 1 FTE (\$318,312)

Eliminate ice rink program, bench cleaning service, reduced restroom support, reduced maintenance of Forest Hill Cemetery. Reduction of 3.75 FTE (\$381,810)

- Eliminating aquatics and reducing restroom support will have clearly inequitable impacts.

## **Police**

Close district windows and reduce services provided by records staff; experiment with private transcription service for police reports. Reduction of 8 FTE (\$324,387)

- Eliminating armed response to traffic collisions might not be all bad, but we have already

seen police departments (including UWPD) weaponizing a lack of records staff as a way to avoid legal avenues for police accountability after police brutalized protesters on campus.

### **Public Health**

Eliminate Violence Prevention Contract - Focused Interruption Coalition has been the recipient of this funding since the funds were allocated. Funding provides hospital-based intervention and prevention services to those involved in violent incidents. (\$210,000)

- We need to consider whether this might also be a net cost-saving program, where interrupting a cycle of violence means reduced calls for police and ambulance.

### **Streets**

Reduce street repair by 52%. Reduction of 5.5 FTE (\$790,564)

- Will this actually save money in the long run? Or will unrepaired streets need to be rebuilt sooner?

### **Metro Transit**

Reduce night/weekend service:

Eliminate late night service (\$800,000)

Eliminate most Saturday service (\$1.2m)

Eliminate most Sunday service (\$1.2m)

Eliminate specific routes:

Route O (\$600,000) – South Side, Brooks to Fish Hatchery

Route L (\$800,000) – East/North Side, Sherman to Owl Creek

Route J (\$700,000) – West Side, Westfield to Brooks

- We definitely need to consider the equity impacts of these route and time reductions. It will have a different impact on people who would take transit opportunistically vs. those who rely on it.

### **Traffic Engineering**

Reduce crossing guard program. (\$79,624)

- Another cut that will have inequitable impacts on those who cannot drive kids to school, or act as their own personal crossing guard program.

### **Other potential revenue sources:**

+ Parking enforcement has a \$1 mil surplus as of July, after reaching "full" staffing. This indicates that right now every parking enforcer we add is pulling in more than they cost.

+ The golf program has been net positive (right? it isn't clear to me whether this is just because of land sales); if so, profits could support the wider Parks budget instead of being reinvested into just the golf facilities. If not, we could leverage further land sales to keep it profitable.

+ Things that the city charges rent for, like Monona Terrace, could be rented at-cost, or if the market supports it, at profit. This is especially important as Monona Terrace is being rented out below-cost to arms dealers, meaning that the city has been effectively subsidizing genocide. This also goes for subsidized parking facilities.

+ Similarly, we have been lending out MPD staff, and not at-cost. This year we lent them out to the GOP, and did not get reimbursed for all associated costs, in what was effectively an in-kind donation from City of Madison to the GOP.



+ To encourage incremental densification, the city could allow certain zoning district transitions to be administratively approved, rather than going to Plan Commission. This would increase population, transit ridership, and tax base. Anything we can do to streamline redevelopment will help.

+ Gradually transition Fire from full-engine response to sending only ambulances to non-fire-related calls. For future fire engine replacement, purchase less-enormous vehicles on smaller chassis. Possibly the department could accelerate this transition, at a profit, by reselling the high number of larger vehicles to other municipalities and replacing them with fewer, smaller ones. This would decrease response times (since smaller vehicles can navigate traffic more easily), and have secondary cost savings because roads would no longer need to be built to a >20' width, requiring less pavement, less plowing, etc.

Thank you,

Nick Davies  
3717 Richard St

**From:** [THOMAS ESCH](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** \$22 million shortfall  
**Date:** Sunday, August 18, 2024 4:26:13 PM

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We are responding to requests for comments on the City's budget shortfall. Before there is a referendum to raise taxes we think the City should be sure everything possible has been done to cut the expenses and raise revenue. Here are some suggestions :

1. Cut some percentage of all administrative positions in the City. How about 10% of all non-union positions starting with the mayor's office.
2. Freeze the salaries of all non-union positions in the city for at least the next two years, maybe longer, if needed.
3. Start collecting a usage fee from all adults who ride bikes in the city to help pay for all the bike lanes, bike lane marking, bike paths, plowing of the bike paths in winter, bike lane/path signage, special crossing lighting, etc. How about \$50.00 a year per bike? There are currently special fees going to the city on the car licenses we purchase so bike people should start paying for the amenities that they are receiving.
4. Enforce the traffic laws for everyone in the city, including bicyclists. On our street alone there are at least 50 times a week when the cars and/or bikes drive through the stop sign on the corner without stopping. That alone would be a couple hundred dollars a week. With the number of streets/bike paths in the city we think quite a bit of revenue could be generated.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

Tom and Lana Esch

**From:** [James Ganther](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Referendum Opposition  
**Date:** Sunday, August 18, 2024 10:51:35 PM

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Hi,

I wish to express my opposition to holding a referendum to increase property taxes. I encourage you to vote against this proposal and make cuts to the budget to avoid the referendum. I have looked at the budget and based on the budget and other observations believe there are areas that are ripe for cuts. These areas are as follows:

1) The mayor's office

It is loaded with highly paid administrative staff. I believe there are 5 deputy mayors and two sustainability coordinators. No way is that amount of administrative staff necessary. I would cut five of those positions which would save around a million of dollars that wouldn't be missed by at least 99.9% of Madison residents.

2) Madison Metro

The BRT is a huge waste of money! It is completely unnecessary! The second line should be canceled. More and more people are working from home and Madison Metro ridership is way down compared to what it was before the pandemic. Why is Madison spending a lot more on something that people are not using in sufficient levels to justify additional spending in that area? BRT will also significantly disrupt automobile traffic. It is the biggest boondoggle in Madison history. Words cannot express how stupid BRT is and the amount of money wasted on the East West work makes me really angry. Just a total waste of taxpayer dollars. All that work and expense to save riders a few minutes on a crosstown bus ride boggles my mind.

Also, there are lots of empty and nearly empty buses going around Madison. This is especially true later in the evening. Most late evening service should be canceled. It isn't being used. Another total waste of taxpayer dollars!

3) The Police Civilian Oversight Board Should be eliminated. It is a totally useless, do nothing body and is completely unnecessary. Eliminate it and save around a million dollars a year.

4) Employee Raises

Madison city employees received 6% pay raises this year. This is far more than a lot of employees received including most state and university employees. It is totally unfair to raise the taxes of state and university employees that are getting 2% raises to give higher raises to employees that received at least a 6% raise in 2024. Pay raises at most should be in the 1 or 2 percent range. Anybody making over \$100,000 a year should have their pay frozen. It would help make things more equitable.

5) Planning staff should be reduced. Much of their work is not necessary and is out of tune with what many Madison residents want in terms of development.

6) A hiring freeze for non-essential positions should be implemented.

I hope you will take these suggestions seriously. I'm sure there are many other areas that money could be saved as well.

The mayor is trying to scare people into supporting a referendum by threatening cuts to popular spending areas rather than cutting her wasteful spending. Don't go along with her game! She is terribly incompetent and doesn't care one bit about Madison taxpayers. I think she will lose if she runs again because it is clear for all to see now how totally incompetent she is at running Madison.

Show that you care about struggling Madison taxpayers who already pay extremely high property taxes compared to most other property owners in the United States. Please reject the referendum and make the necessary budget cuts to avoid having one!

Sincerely,

James Ganther

**From:** [Fields, Debbie](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Endorsement of Resolution Language  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 9:27:52 AM

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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

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**From:** Kevin Gundlach <[kevin@scfl.org](mailto:kevin@scfl.org)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 8:56 AM  
**To:** council <[council@cityofmadison.com](mailto:council@cityofmadison.com)>  
**Cc:** Mayor <[Mayor@cityofmadison.com](mailto:Mayor@cityofmadison.com)>  
**Subject:** Endorsement of Resolution Language

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To the City of Madison Common Council members and the Mayor of Madison,

Thank you for your hard work and dedication to the residents of the City of Madison.

The Delegates of the South Central Federation of Labor met last night, the evening of August 19th. These come from both the public sector and the private sector. They represent Federal, State, County, City, School District, University, and Technical College workers. They represent Building and Construction Trades, Manufacturing and Industrial Trades, Service Sector and Healthcare, Printing Trades and Utility Trades, Tech workers and more.

During the meeting, these delegates, who represent thousands of union members and their household members who live and work in the City of Madison, Unanimously Voted to Endorse a YES VOTE for the following Resolution language (or similar version), under file 84443:

"Under state law, the increase in the levy of the City of Madison for the tax to be imposed for the next fiscal year, 2025, is limited to [2.5%], which results in a levy of [\$296,296,440]. Shall the City of Madison be allowed to exceed this limit and increase

the levy for the next fiscal year, 2025, for the purpose of funding police, fire, garbage collection, parks and library operations and other City services and operations, by a total of [7.4%], which results in a levy of [\$318,219,440], and on an ongoing basis, include the increase of \$ 22,000,000 for each fiscal year going forward?”

We encourage your support for this Resolution and thank you again for your service. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

Respectfully,

Kevin Gundlach, President  
South Central Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO  
1602 S. Park Street, #228  
Madison, WI 53715

*The South Central Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO is an umbrella organization consisting of 100 Private and Public Sector Unions representing thousands of workers in 11 Counties within South Central and South Western Wisconsin. We work with non-profits, unions, governmental agencies, elected officials, university & college systems, job training organizations, apprenticeship programs, cooperatives, and businesses in order to achieve economic and social justice for all workers and their families within our shared communities.*

**From:** [jhirsch@chorus.net](mailto:jhirsch@chorus.net)  
**To:** [Conklin, Nikki](#)  
**Cc:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Referendum  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 8:15:00 AM

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Alder Conklin

Alder Conklin:

Tonight, you and the other alders will be voting to place the referendum on the November ballot. Although I am unsure of the amount, I expect it to be approved.

Keep in mind that this is just the beginning of your work to solve the City budget issues.

Going forward, your constituents will be paying attention as the Council votes on frivolous spending and unnecessary expense items that appear on the Council agendas. Now is the time to take a hard look and prioritize our "needs" over our "nice to haves".

Janet

Janet Hirsch  
District 9

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**From:** [Roderic Lakes](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** tax  
**Date:** Monday, August 19, 2024 8:34:43 AM

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This is a very poor time for a tax increase. Families are struggling with inflation.

The food pantries have seen record demand because people in the community are hurting.

A tax increase would increase the hurt and cause further loss of confidence.

The city needs to live within its means. After all, the citizens do so.

best,  
R. Lakes

**From:** [Rick Marx](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Cc:** [Jackson Walt](#); [Christine Powell](#)  
**Subject:** Tonight's referendum  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 2:00:44 PM

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

Thank you for your support of City employees and programs by making sure there is an opportunity to allow taxpayers to fully fund the City's budget through the most progressive option we have, a referendum.

Supporting the referendum supports City workers ability to maintain family sustaining wages, supports City programs to serve the needy and supports our Madison values because we won't allow outside influencers to force us to abandon them.

Solidarity,

Rick Marx  
AFSCME L6000 Staff Representative



**From:** [Juli Wagner](#)  
**To:** [noreply](#)  
**Cc:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Budget - District 6: D6 Items of Interest Week of August 19, 2024  
**Date:** Monday, August 19, 2024 9:03:54 AM

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Hi Marsha,

Assuming that higher cost properties associate with higher income is faulty for a segment of Madison homeowners. Incomes change over the course of time, many with retirement but many with changes in employment. Property values have of course gone up but that does not mean income has gone up and for many income has gone down.

For a segment of long time owners, housing costs have been more stable than renters but taxes have gone up. Putting the burden of tax increases on this group puts their long term path at even more risk. If forced to rent, in Madison, the risk is greater given the market.

I would be curious how many high income earners are the renters who may come for a period of time then leave the area, whether Madison, Dane County or the state. I've seen this with multiple individuals, often Epic associates. Meanwhile, long term residents are saddled with the cost to support the incoming, and, outgoing populations. The city chases and praises the younger working generations while there are multiple generations to consider with multiple income strata.

My tax bill went up 10% last year, \$1000. That is unsustainable if it continues. I am concerned I will again be saddled with larger increases merely because of the value of my home, owned for 15+ years, 25+ years of ownership in the city. I'm fortunate this has been the case but I feel at risk given the current conditions. And, I want to recognize there are so many at greater risk than I, and the numbers of unhoused.

Thank you for reading, and the tough work on this issue.

Best,

Juli Wagner  
S Franklin St resident

On Sunday, August 18, 2024, 11:38 PM, Alder Rummel, District 6 <noreply@cityofmadison.com> wrote:

[View this email in your browser](#)

City of Madison

Front entrance of the City-County Building on a sunny day



D6 Items of Interest Week of August 19,  
2024

The Common Council takes up the question of authorizing and scheduling a referendum on Tuesday.

**I will be proposing an amendment that will be posted in Legistar [84443](#) with the fiscal note tomorrow. I will ask the Council to consider reducing the Urban Forestry Special Charge (the UFSC's cost to continue in 2025 is \$7.5 million) by \$7 million while increasing the amount of the property tax referendum from \$22 million to \$29 million.**

For most Madison households, this amendment will reduce the financial impact of a property tax referendum by lowering the cost of their municipal service bill.

Additionally, a \$29 million referendum provides more in revenue for the 2025 budget, as well as future City budgets, compared to the \$22 million referendum. This could potentially delay the need for new special charges. The Mayor's long range plan (see link below) adds new special charges in 2025 if the referendum fails and in 2027 if the referendum passes, so moving the majority of the Urban Forestry Special Charge back onto the tax levy allows us to delay new charges and gives us more options before adding new special charges (infrastructure or parks).

Property taxes are less regressive than special charges. Whether a household is worth \$350,000 or \$700,000, the Urban Forestry Special Charge is flat. Every residential household pays the same amount. In 2024, it was \$84 per year. Unlike special charges, taxes on residential properties are tied to the value of the home.

**A \$7 million increase in the referendum amount (to a total of \$29 million), would add \$73/year to taxes average value home of \$457,300, above the \$230/year increase associated with the \$22 million increase. The difference in the increase in taxes for the average value home between a \$22 million or \$29 million referendum is \$6 month (\$19 vs \$25).**

A property tax increase would be lower for lower value properties (e.g., an additional \$7 million on the property tax levy would increase taxes on a residence valued at \$350,000 by \$56/year) and higher for higher value properties (e.g., the increases in taxes on a residence valued at \$750,000 would be \$120/year).

At the July 16 Council meeting, Mayor Satya outlined her long range budget [plan](#). The Mayor provided two scenarios: 5 year plans with and without a referendum (see pages 7 and 8). Many of you have seen news stories about city agencies offering 5% cuts for the Mayor to consider in her Executive Operating budget. The requested agency cuts total more than the \$6M the Mayor proposes to cut in 2025 if the referendum fails.

**If the referendum fails, according to the Mayor's scenario, we will need to find \$6M in reductions every year for the next six years. We can't cut our way out of this.**

I don't know whether my Council colleagues will adopt my amendment. I understand the referendum amount is higher than the \$22M reported gap, but I believe it meets the Guidance for Developing the 2025 Budget the Council

adopted in April. One of the key values included choosing the most progressive revenue options and the amendment follows the guidance to look at options to replace existing non-property tax revenues. Given that higher taxes are coming whether through a referendum or new special charges, I believe this amendment to increase the referendum amount and move the Urban Forestry Special Charge back on the tax levy would provide a benefit for the average property taxpayer.

### **First annual Madison Housing Week**

AARP of Wisconsin is holding the first annual Madison Housing Week along with a coalition of housing advocates including 350 Wisconsin, Madison is for People, Sierra Club WI, Strong Towns, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, Realtors Association of South Central Wisconsin, Downtown Madison Inc, Smart Growth Greater Madison, WHEDA, and more.

Programming continues through the week with presentations by leaders from Bayview and Madison Area Community Land Trust and others to discuss affordable and social housing, universal design, missing middle housing and building for climate change.

The Madison Housing Week ends with a Dane County Executive candidate debate on housing Thursday August 22 at 6p at the Tinsmith. Registration and more details [here](#)

## **Boards, Commissions, and Committee Meetings**

- **Common Council:** The Common Council meeting will take place on Tuesday, August 20, in virtual format at 6:30 p.m. Agenda items include authorizing the scheduling of a referendum relating to exceeding the municipal property tax limits in the City of Madison.
  - [Meeting Details](#)
  - [Meeting Agenda](#)
  - [Watch Online](#)
- **Habitat Stewardship Subcommittee:** The Habitat Stewardship Subcommittee meeting will take place on Tuesday, August 20, in virtual format at 4:30 p.m. Agenda items include the Habitat Management Plan for Moraine Woods Conservation Park.
  - [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](#).

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](#).

## **Announcements and News Releases**

- [Northbound Lane Closure – N Lake Street](#): Starting Monday, August 19, R.G. Huston will be restricting N. Lake Street, from University Avenue to

Langdon Street, to one southbound lane to facilitate their sanitary sewer replacement project. Vehicles wanting to travel northbound on Lake Street... *[posted August 16, 2024]*

- [Friends of Goodman South Madison Library to Host Book Sale on August 24](#): The Friends of Goodman South Madison Library are hosting a book sale event that will coincide with the Black Business Hub Ribbon Cutting and the 10th Annual Unity Picnic on Saturday, August 24. *[posted August 14, 2024]*
- [Resurfacing – Maple Grove Road, Putnam Road and Stratford Drive](#): Starting Tuesday, August 13 Payne and Dolan will be reconstructing the asphalt surface on Maple Grove Road from McKee Road to Putnam Road. Contractors will be working from Chester Drive to McKee Road during the project and will maintain one... *[posted August 13, 2024]*
- [Madison Maintains Aaa Bond Rating 51 Years in a Row](#) : This is the highest possible rating and reflects the City's strong and diverse economy. *[posted August 12, 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

- [Lunch Time LIVE! 8/20: The Toolies](#): Chairs or walls may be used for balance assistance. On Tuesdays - June through August - a FREE outdoor concert series will take place from noon-1pm on the King Street walkway of the Wisconsin State Capitol. Chairs will be available, and blankets and lawn chairs are welcome on the lawn nearby.
- [Rooftop Movie Night: In the Heights \(PG-13\), Tuesday, August 20](#): Come and enjoy a movie on the beautiful rooftop of Monona Terrace: Based on the stage musical by Lin-Manuel Miranda and Quiara Alegria Hudes, In the Heights tells the story of the predominately Dominican community of Washington Heights in New York City, where a bodega owner saves his pennies and pines for a better life back in the Dominican Republic. Directed by John M. Chu, the film stars Anthony Ramos, Corey Hawkins, Leslie Grace, Melissa Barrera, Olga Merediz, Daphne Rubin-Vega, Gregory Diaz IV, and Jimmy Smits. (Free and Open to Public, Musical, Runtime – 2hrs 22m)
- [Capitol View Farmers' Market, Wednesday, August 21](#): The Capitol View Farmers' Market is held weekly on Wednesdays (3:00-7:00pm) from late May through mid-October. Join us each week for great local vendors, live music, food carts, and special activities from week to week. Visit our website and follow us on social media for the most up-to-date information and schedules!
- [Movie in the Park \[Burrows Park\], Wednesday, August 21](#): Grab a blanket or lawn chair and join Madison Parks for a free movie in the park! [Top Gun](#) (1986), PG 1h 49m

- [Learn to Pontoon with Madison Boats, Thursday, August 22](#): We've partnered with Madison Boats for this Learn to Pontoon class at Marshall Park. Join our amazing captains as they demonstrate the basics of driving a pontoon boat. This program is limited to adults over 25 looking to gain boating confidence from Madison Boats captains. Participants will learn how to properly drive a pontoon and to learn the basics of boating safety. Cost to participate is \$10.55 per person. Register through [Madison Boats](#).
- [Orton Park Festival, Friday, August 23, Saturday, August 24 & Sunday, August 25](#): The 59th annual [Orton Park Festival](#) brings an incredible lineup of music to close out the summer, plus Cycropia Aerial Dance, vendors from the best of local restaurants and artists, craft beers and wines, kids' games and more!
- [Dane Dances: Grupo Candela / Eddie Butts Band, Friday, August 23](#): Dane Dances is a free, family-friendly event held every Friday evening in August on the beautiful Monona Terrace rooftop. The much-anticipated summer music series promotes inclusivity for all ages and is a great way to get down and dance with your friends, family, or coworkers.
- [Water Lantern Festival, Saturday, August 24](#): Our event is a family-friendly festival that brings together people from all walks of life. The festival includes local food vendors, music, and the release of water lanterns onto the water at sunset for a 90-minute window.
- [Movie in the Park \[Peace \(Elizabeth Link\) Park\], Saturday, August 24](#): Join Downtown Madison's Business Improvement District (BID) and Madison Parks for a free movie in Peace Park! [The Little Mermaid](#) (2023), PG 2h 15m

### **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 21](#)
- [Parks Alive at Owl Creek Park, Thursday, August 22](#)

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](#).

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**From:** [Shannon Barry](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** In regards to Authorizing the Scheduling of a Referendum Relating to Exceeding the Municipal Property Tax Limits in the City of Madison  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 4:18:04 PM  
**Attachments:** [Outlook-i4hfdiaf](#)

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

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Dear Alders,

I am writing on behalf of DAIS in support of Authorizing the Scheduling of a Referendum Relating to Exceeding the Municipal Property Tax Limits in the City of Madison (agenda item 84443).

On the heels of the second domestic violence homicide in the City this year, and in reflection that in 2023, domestic violence was the leading cause of homicide in the City, this is clearly not the time to put critical services such as those offered by DAIS, UNIDOS, Freedom, Inc., and others at risk through reductions in City funding. Across the state, domestic violence and sexual assault programs are facing severe cuts from federal and state sources. Those cuts will be felt most deeply here in Madison which is the fastest growing community in the entire state of Wisconsin and where we already cannot keep up with the need.

We know that one in two women, and one in three men will experience intimate partner violence at some point in their lifetime. Rates of IPV and sexual assault are even higher for those who are transgender or nonbinary. **At the same time, less than one-quarter of domestic violence is ever reported to the police**, meaning that victims and survivors are relying on friends, family members, and **the critical safety net of non-profit providers** here in Madison to achieve safety from those who have caused them harm.

Many people assume that services offered by DAIS and others are entirely government funded. In reality, the vast majority of our funding comes from donations. We have had to work hard to sustain what we can by increasing our reliance on fundraising – to the tune of \$2M in 2024 alone. Expecting donors to pick up more of the costs of what should be basic services is unsustainable. If taxpayers understood all that they help support through their property taxes, they may be more likely to vote in favor of a referendum. So many lives in our community are touched every single year by domestic violence and sexual assault – every single one of us knows someone who has been touched by this issue and would want those people in our lives to get the services and support they



deserve. I don't believe anyone in our City wants to see domestic violence homicides increase should services dwindle. To that end, again, I encourage you to support the addition of this referendum to the ballot so that the voters can choose.

Thank you all for your service to our beautiful city.

Warm regards,

Shannon

Shannon Barry, MSSW  
Executive Director  
Pronouns: She/Her/Hers  
DAIS (Domestic Abuse Intervention Services)  
2102 Fordem Avenue, Madison, WI 53704

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[shannonb@abuseintervention.org](mailto:shannonb@abuseintervention.org) | [abuseintervention.org](http://abuseintervention.org)  
Facebook: [Domestic Abuse Intervention Services](https://www.facebook.com/DomesticAbuseInterventionServices)  
Twitter: [@DAISofDaneCo](https://twitter.com/DAISofDaneCo)  
Instagram: [DAISofDaneCo](https://www.instagram.com/DAISofDaneCo)

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24-Hour Help Line: (608) 251-4445



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**From:** [Erik Paulson](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Cc:** [Mayor](#); [City Budget](#); [Haas, Michael R](#)  
**Subject:** I (mostly) support Alder Rummel's amendment; keep the 2025 calendar in mind  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 4:25:54 PM

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Alders -

Two quick things:

1. I like Alder Rummel's amendment. I think that the property tax is a more progressive option than the charges for services. However, I can understand how some of you might have different opinions and prefer the service charges, which all parcel owners (including and especially the state) will pay.

The thing that does give me pause with Alder Rummel's amendment is the "sticker shock" that voters will face. Yes, it does save folks money and for some quite significant, but I do worry a little bit about folks who may not have had time to really follow the issue and that \$29M is an even harder ask than \$22M.

I think I'd still prefer the \$29M levy/lower UFSC and trust that if folks were going to support a \$22M amount they'll support a \$29M, but I'll be a bit more nervous in November.

2. If your inclination is to put the referendum on pause for now and go into 2025 with some combo of a larger rainy day drawdown/new charges, keep in mind if you want to use a referendum to exceed the levy limit in 2026, the last day you can decide that is January 21st 2025 - 70 days before the April 1st 2025 election. Barring a change in state law, there are no fall elections that you can use for the referendum.

It seems unlikely that there will be any budget deal on local government funding in place by January of 2025 with the state. You would at least know if the Assembly has changed party control, but that's not a lot more information than you have now. (For what it's worth I think turnout in April of 2025 will be very high because there is a State Supreme Court race on the ballot)

So you'll have to decide your plan for 2025 tonight and your plan for 2026 in the next few months. I think the safest move is to assume no new state help in the next two budgets.

-Erik